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Beyond the Boundaries of Post-Space: Domestic Limitations in Kuntowijoyo's "Rumah Yang Terbakar"

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Abstract

Sara Upstone's study of postcolonial space posits that space is an empty abstraction devoid of rigid boundaries. In the aftermath of colonialism, space becomes an absolute entity, endowed with a name, history, significance, materiality, and defined boundaries. In instances of overwriting, the construction of place becomes chaotic and the forms that limit it become fluid, this is referred to as post-space. This research aims to examine the manner in which Kuntowijoyo constructs postcolonial spaces in his short story entitled Rumah Yang Terbakar. This research is applying qualitative research method with a postcolonial approach, which involves collecting data in the form of words from Kuntowijoyo's Rumah Yang Terbakar and the subsequent analysis of said data through the lens of Upstone's spatial politics in postcolonial contexts. The findings indicate that the spatial construction in the short story comprises a village divided into northern hamlets (priyayi) and southern hamlets (abangan). Subsequently, the space is delineated by absolute boundaries, as evidenced by the construction of places, including houses, mosques, and houses of ill repute. Moreover, the aforementioned boundaries become chaotic when Ustadz Yulianto overwrites by providing religious discourse and customary values with the intention of destroying and burning the house of sin. Following the burning of the house of sin, it was discovered that a couple, comprising a man from the northern hamlet and a woman from the southern hamlet, were engaged in sexual intercourse. This resulted in a further breakdown in spatial order, with the northern hamlet no longer regarded as priyayi and the southern hamlet no longer considered abangan. The boundaries of these spaces, which had become fluid, were subsequently referred to as post-space.

Keywords: Post-Colonialism; Post-Space; Rumah Yang Terbakar; Sara Upstone

1. Introduction

Despite achieving independence, Indonesia, as a postcolonial country, continues to be influenced by colonial political and cultural power (Faruk, 2007). This lingering impact can be seen not only in its societal structures but also in the ways it grapples with the legacies of colonialism. In the realm of literature, the works of Indonesian authors are inextricably linked to these colonial histories, serving as a reflection of the racial and cultural confrontations that define a society shaped by colonial experiences. These literary works often explore the tensions between tradition and modernity, indigenous culture and foreign influence, all of which have become hallmark features of a colonized society. Postcolonial literary works, encompassing both poetry and prose, are typically characterised by discourses of resistance, ambiguity, mimicry, and identity. Through these texts, authors confront and resist the dominant Western narratives, offering alternative perspectives on history and cultural identity. These works also engage with the complex process of transitioning from colonial to postcolonial space, where authors seek to reclaim their voices, assert their cultural heritage, and challenge the enduring power structures established during the colonial era (Rahariyoso, 2014). Ultimately, Indonesian postcolonial literature not only serves as a site of reflection but also as a means of resistance, reimagining the possibilities of a society free from colonial domination.

A foundational aspect of postcolonial studies is the concept of space. In this context, space is often examined not only in terms of its physical dimensions but also in its social, political, and cultural implications. Postcolonial space studies frequently draw a distinction between space as an abstract, often theoretical concept that lacks clear physical boundaries, and place as a material

location or entity that is defined by tangible characteristics such as a specific name, history, meaning, and set boundaries. This distinction is crucial in understanding how colonial powers imposed spatial divisions that were not merely geographical but deeply ingrained in societal structures.

The boundaries established by colonizers in space are particularly significant because they provide a discourse—a system of ideas and narratives—that serves to construct individual's sense of identity, comfort, and belonging. These boundaries help create a perception of distinct, often hierarchized, natural identities, which can be racial, cultural, or national. Consequently, each boundary not only demarcates physical space but also defines the limits of the group to which an individual is considered to belong, further entrenching power dynamics that define who is included and who is excluded. In this way, the space constructed by colonial powers becomes a tool for reinforcing their dominance, shaping the ways in which people understand their own identities and their relationships to others.

The influence of the discourse on postcolonial space has resulted in literary works that serve to illustrate how community cultures influence the formation of identities. One such example of this is Mangunwijaya's *Durga Umayi*, which employs tension and contestation of the 'ideal house' as a place that continues to be coveted, as a means of illustrating the spaces formed by Iin Sulinda. Furthermore, the concept of the 'Body'—as the most minute aspect targeted by colonialism—is articulated in Joko Pinorbo's poem *Sakramen*, wherein the ideal 'Body' is depicted as the spirit (idea) of Christ as God, characterised by perfection and wholeness, devoid of transience. The material body of the human becomes a mere problem in itself and is destined to be destroyed by the passage of time. Consequently, the question arises as to whether embracing the tradition of spaces can serve as a catalyst for the formation of one's individual identity.

Among the most prolific Indonesian writers in the genre of prose, in the form of short stories, is Kuntowijoyo. For three consecutive years, Kuntowijoyo's short stories were named the best short stories by Kompas, in 1995 with *Laki-Laki yang Kawin dengan Peri*, in 1996 with *Pistol Perdamaian*, and in 1997 with *Anjing-Anjing Menyerbu Kuburan*. Of particular interest is the fact that three of Kuntowijoyo's 18 short stories were included in the 1997 collection, one of which is short story entitled *Rumah Yang Terbakar (RYT)*. This short story tells of a prolonged conflict between two hamlets in one village that can never unite. The northern hamlet is characterised by a community identity as traders, while the southern hamlet is a farmer. The northern hamlet is inhabited by the *priyayi* community, who adhere to a set of religious rules and regulations. In contrast, the southern hamlet is populated by the *abangan* community, who do not adhere to religious beliefs.

The hamlets are the construction of space formed in the short story *Rumah Yang Terbakar*, and moreover, the space becomes more rigid when a house built on the edge of the southern hamlet, which was originally for teaching religious teachings, is then used as a place of immorality. Eventually, the unrest caused by the incident led a group representing the 'northern' hamlet to burn down the house. It is therefore important to consider the condition of the space displayed in the short story with the order that accompanies it. Furthermore, it is pertinent to explore whether the burning of that house can be considered a space of postcolonial community experience, thereby allowing identity to become fluid again.

The present research aims to examine the manner in which the concept of postcolonial space continues to exist in the reality of societies that perceive themselves to be in a postcolonial condition. In this context, postcolonial space is not only understood as physical or geographical space, but also as a social, cultural, and psychological space shaped by the lingering effects of colonialism, which remain felt despite the country's independence. This condition is reflected in various aspects of societal life, such as mindset, value systems, and social dynamics, which continue to rely on colonial legacies. One way to delve deeper into the existence of this postcolonial space is through literary works, which can represent these experiences in more subtle and profound ways.

To this end, the short story *Rumah Yang Terbakar* by Kuntowijoyo has been selected as the object of study, as it fulfils the criteria of a literary work that prominently portrays the experience of postcolonial space as a central element of the narrative. Through the interactions of its characters with spaces and times torn by the colonial past, this short story depicts how the colonial legacy continues to leave its mark on everyday life. The text provides insight into socio-economic conditions and illustrates how memories and experiences of a conflict-ridden past shape an individual's perception of their living space. Through analysis of the text, this research seeks to reveal how postcolonial space is constructed and functions in shaping the identity of postcolonial societies, which are in a process of transition and self-discovery.

The present research employs the postcolonial approach, as delineated by Sara Upstone in her publication 'Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel' (2009). In contrast to the postcolonial approaches of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Upstone's postcolonial approach emphasises the politics of space, conceptualising the postcolonial as the period of a region that was formerly occupied, controlled, and exploited by colonial powers until the region gained independence. Upstone contends that there are still colonial spaces extant in the former colonies. This suggests that even though these regions are formally independent, the influence of colonial space continues to dominate them.

In relation to the study of space, postcolonial theory often distinguishes between space as an abstract, empty area and place as a material location or site with a specific name, history, meaning, and boundaries. As Upstone (2009) quotes from Kate Darian Smith, Liz Gunner, and Sarah Nuttall (Adzhani, 2014), they state, "it is place that holds meaning, while space is simply ... a container." Upstone implies that place reflects a specific form of control tied to the colonial system, while space refers to something

broad and more flexible, or forms that colonialism sought to obscure. Consequently, space can be regarded as an abstract physical concept, in which the notions of colonial hegemony are embedded.

Teverson and Upstone (2011) state that “the idea that place plays a significant role in how that identity is defined by others is continually foregrounded in postcolonial studies”. The boundaries represented by place play an important role in the definition of identity, both in terms of how the individual defines their own identity and how others define it. A space, at first glance, appears to have no obvious physical boundaries, yet it is through the influence of the ‘Other’ that it is identified as a space with specific political and power implications. This is a colonial strategy employed in the colonisation of a country, whereby boundaries are established both geographically and politically.

All forms of space imposed by the colonisers were utilised to maintain the stability of colonialism, with the boundaries offered by the colonisers being intertwined in spaces and presented as natural boundaries. The introduction of colonial boundaries into indigenous spaces serves to accentuate their visibility and the absolute and unassailable nature of colonial power (Upstone, 2009). Colonial laws, religious doctrines, educational systems, and social norms appear more sophisticated to indigenous populations, thereby fostering a perception of colonial superiority. The imposition of colonial concepts of space and boundaries has the effect of obscuring indigenous preferences for those aspects of life that were already in existence prior to the advent of colonialism. Imperialism consolidated its dominion over these territories, which were subsequently delineated as its domain, and instilled its superiority within the sphere of power, thereby engendering a perception among indigenous populations that this was an inherent aspect of the prevailing order.

Referring to Foucault’s ideas, Upstone (2009) argues that the understanding of space can serve as a context for explaining the negotiation of power and identity. Upstone’s concept of space is fluid and open, viewing space as inherently heterogeneous, shaped by diverse voices and experiences, and emphasizing difference and subjectivity (Upstone, 2009). This contrasts with the concept of colonial legacy space, which is often seen as rigid and absolute. Upstone challenges this perspective by offering a more dynamic understanding, where the heterogeneity of experiences within a space leads to a state of chaos.

Chaos functions as an attempt to deconstruct fixed views and introduce new patterns of understanding and experience, thereby requiring a spatial fluidity that is absent in colonial or traditional concepts, or in the dichotomy of Western and Eastern boundaries (Rahariyoso, 2014). Chaos, in this sense, describes a new postcolonial space, one that is no longer confined by colonial boundaries. Spaces characterized by their own heterogeneity are no longer viewed negatively. This chaotic approach does not seek to eliminate all stability, but rather to dismantle fixed perspectives and instill new patterns of understanding based on fresh experiences, allowing space to become fluid once again.

Building on this, the concept of post-space emerges. According to Upstone (2009: 15), post-space refers to a concept that transcends colonial and traditional boundaries, existing both beyond and before these boundaries even emerge. Post-space can be described as hybrid, fluid, and mobile, lacking fixed demarcations. Upstone categorizes postcolonial spaces into several levels, ranging from expansive spaces such as nations and journeys, to more intimate and significant spaces, such as cities, homes, and bodies, all of which are imbued with political elements that demand expression.

Interpreting postcolonial space through Upstone’s frameworks of space, place, chaos, and post-space opens up possibilities for negotiating spatial boundaries. Postcolonial texts interrogate alternative possibilities or discourses regarding the order and boundaries of space imposed by colonialism. Thus, the study of postcolonial space becomes an effort to renegotiate the definitions of identity and culture, both in terms of desires and dreams (utopian), and, potentially, in the form of resistance.

This research is significant as it seeks to explore how the concept of postcolonial space persists in societies that perceive themselves as being in a postcolonial condition. Despite Indonesia’s attainment of independence, the lingering effects of colonialism continue to be felt in its social, cultural, and psychological structures. As postcolonial theory suggests, these lasting effects are not merely historical but deeply embedded in the everyday lives and practices of former colonies. Through the study of literature, particularly works that reflect postcolonial experiences of space, this research aims to reveal how the colonial legacy shapes identity and societal mindsets. By analyzing literary works such as *Rumah Yang Terbakar* by Kuntowijoyo, this study will explore how space, understood as a social and cultural construct—not merely a physical dimension—shapes the redefinition of identity in societies undergoing transition. This research provides insight into how literary works serve as a means of resistance against the enduring power structures that continue to shape postcolonial social and cultural spaces, while simultaneously opening up new possibilities for renegotiating identity and culture within a postcolonial context.

2. The Method of the Research

This study adopts a qualitative research design that is grounded in postcolonial theory, specifically focusing on the concept of postcolonial space as articulated by Sara Upstone in her work *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* (2009). The analysis centers on Kuntowijoyo’s short story *Rumah Yang Terbakar* (1997) as a representative literary text that explores the socio-political and cultural dynamics of postcolonial space. The research employs a textual analysis methodology to examine how the narrative constructs and represents postcolonial space, with particular attention to the interplay between space, identity, and power structures.

The methodological framework of this study is built upon Upstone's theoretical distinctions between space and place, as well as her exploration of chaos and post-space. Space, in this context, is conceptualized not merely as a physical or geographical entity but as a social, political, and psychological construct shaped by the lingering effects of colonialism. Place, on the other hand, is understood as a material location imbued with specific meanings, histories, and boundaries, which are often imposed or manipulated by colonial forces. By applying these distinctions, this research seeks to reveal the ways in which colonial spatial practices continue to influence the formation of identity in postcolonial societies (Upstone, 2009).

The primary source of analysis, *Rumah Yang Terbakar*, is selected for its depiction of spatial conflict and identity formation within a postcolonial context. The short story presents a community divided by rigid spatial boundaries, where a house symbolizing religious authority and moral values becomes a site of contestation and violence. Through a close reading of the text, the study investigates the representation of space as a means of resistance, cultural assertion, and identity negotiation within a postcolonial framework. According to Tyson (2014), postcolonial literature frequently utilizes spatial metaphors to represent the complexities of identity and the persistence of colonial legacies.

The research also incorporates an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from sociology, cultural studies, and geography to deepen the understanding of how postcolonial space functions not only within the narrative of *Rumah Yang Terbakar* but also in the lived experiences of individuals in postcolonial societies. By examining the text through this multidimensional lens, the study aims to explore the persistence of colonial spatial practices and their role in shaping contemporary identity formation and resistance (Barry, 2017).

In terms of data analysis, the study utilizes thematic coding to identify key motifs related to space, power, identity, and colonial legacy in *Rumah Yang Terbakar*. These themes are then analyzed within the context of postcolonial theory to explore how the narrative reflects, resists, and redefines the boundaries imposed by colonialism. Special attention is paid to the concept of chaos as a means of disrupting fixed spatial boundaries and enabling the fluid negotiation of identity and culture in postcolonial contexts.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how postcolonial literature functions as a site of resistance and renegotiation of space and identity. By analyzing *Rumah Yang Terbakar* through a postcolonial spatial lens, the study provides insights into the ongoing processes of cultural reimagining and identity formation in societies that are still grappling with the legacies of colonialism.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. A space affects a place

The concept of "place" carries significant implications. When conceptualized as "Home" (with a capital letter), Walsh and Bouma-Prediger's (2004) characteristics of Home offer a compelling illustration of how colonial narratives can engender a sense of comfort in their inhabitants, often leading them to remain unaware of their subjugation.

First, home functions as a fixed entity, prioritizing family values. In the context of the concept of 'place', home can be regarded as a stable space that fosters a profound sense of family. However, with the rapid growth of mobility in the era of global capitalism, many individuals have experienced the dissolution of their sense of belonging, both in a literal and emotional sense. They no longer feel the warm bonds created within their own families, communities, or cultures. In this increasingly fragmented world, they often find themselves compelled to live without the sense of security that typically accompanies being part of a deep family or community.

Second, the concept of home as a repository for historical significance and memories is of paramount importance. Home is not merely a physical shelter, it is a space imbued with meaning that transcends temporal boundaries. It serves as a conduit for history, memory, and remembrance, passed down through generations. Every corner of the house, every object within it, and even the very story behind it can serve as symbols of a rich historical past. These memories influence an individual's sense of identity and connect them to their cultural heritage.

Third, home serves as a sanctuary of tranquility. It provides a physical and mental refuge, enabling residents to unwind after a demanding day. Home offers a space for individuals to find solace, release their physical and psychological burdens, and revitalize for daily life. The home thus functions as an oasis amidst the tumultuous demands of daily life.

Fourth, Home as a place of hospitality and openness to others. One of the important characteristics of home is that it is welcoming and open. Home serves not only as a place for its inhabitants, but also as a space where others can be warmly welcomed. The hospitality offered by the home creates a space where individuals can let go of their control, open up, and build deeper friendships. In this open atmosphere, mutual respect grows which enriches the quality of human relationships, creating stronger and mutually enriching bonds.

Fifth, Home as a place to live. A home is not just a building or a physical structure; it is a place that is inhabited, a space that requires attention and care from its inhabitants. Residents who love their home will actively look after and care for it, both

physically and emotionally. This process creates a deeper bond between the individual and the place, strengthens the sense of belonging, and builds a sense of responsibility towards the home. This relationship involves a deep sense of intimacy and concern for the sustainability of the home as a place that provides a sense of comfort and security.

Sixth, the home should provide life direction. Home becomes the starting point for the formation of life orientation. From home, one embarks on a journey to find one's purpose in life and search for meaning in the outside world. Home is not only a place to live, but also a source of inspiration and motivation for individuals to develop and pursue their hopes. In this context, home serves as a foundation that gives direction to the journey of life, equipping its inhabitants with values and outlook on life that will guide them towards the future.

Seventh, Home as a place where one feels belonged, accepted, and supported. Home is a space where individuals feel accepted and empowered. Within the home, one finds a place to be oneself, to feel safe, and to be valued. As a place where one feels owned by others, home also provides an opportunity for individuals to accept that place and make it a part of their identity. This process of give and take creates a strong bond between the occupants and the home, making the home more than just a physical place, but also an important emotional place in their lives.

3.2. Building the space defines the place

In the context of literary analysis, the concept of "main space" in a story refers to the primary setting described in a narrative. This term is employed when the spatial elements depicted in a story are limited in scope, potentially overshadowed by broader, more expansive settings. A meticulous examination of the text, followed by a holistic interpretation, is crucial to ascertain whether the primary focus lies in the vastness of the environment or in the confined spaces depicted. A predominant theme in RYT's short stories is the construction of a village or a neighborhood, underscoring the human tendency to create and inhabit distinct spaces. Kuntowijoyo's narrative technique can be characterized as a reduction of the vastness of the world into a manageable, comprehensible scope. In this reduction, the world is compared to a village or urban village, where the inhabitants share similar life goals, positions, rights, and obligations. This reductionistic approach mirrors the human condition, where individuals share fundamental purposes in life, positions, rights, and obligations. The excerpt from RYT's short story that illustrates this concept is as follows:

"Pantangan pertama ialah orang tak boleh kawin dengan orang dari dusun di dekatnya, dusun yang terletak di sebelah utara pematang, meskipun secara administratif masuk dalam kelurahan yang sama." (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

As indicated by the aforementioned quote, the *kelurahan* or *desa* is characterized by heterogeneity in terms of its inhabitants culture and the magical elements that permeate their lives. While Kuntowijoyo initiates the narrative directly by highlighting the taboos that should not be violated by the two hamlets within a *kelurahan* or village, a broader perspective reveals the heterogeneity of the community prior to the establishment of boundaries that define order. In this context, the expansive space depicted in RYT's narrative represents the initial state of affairs, characterized by its vastness and malleability, unbound by constraints. This vastness is further accentuated by the equitable treatment of all individuals within the community, irrespective of their status as villagers or as human beings. The concept of a vast and flexible space, unrestrained by the limitations of order, serves as a fundamental tenet in the narrative. As Upstone (2009) asserts, the concept of "pre-colonial space" encompasses a broad and flexible territory. However, the colonialists introduced the notion of "limited space," which emerged as a consequence of the establishment of boundaries delineating territory, race, and culture. These boundaries, according to the colonial perspective, were deemed legitimate and natural.

Meanwhile, when space becomes heavily influenced by various actors, such as military forces, trade groups, corporations, landowners, religious missions, and colonial projects, it can be regarded as a series of acts of "geographical violence". In such cases, space transforms into a place, and each place cultivates its own unique order, shaping the identities of individuals within that locale.

The construction of space in RYT's short story is characterized by an initial broadening, followed by a narrowing down. The largest space is the neighborhood or village, followed by spaces characterized by boundaries, beginning with the northern and southern hamlets, the house of worship (*surau*), the mosque, and culminating in the special house (place of immorality). The order that emerges in each constructed space determines the final space accepted by the people of the southern hamlet. Notably, the last room also leads to a remote location. It is situated in the midst of a teak forest, devoid of any other structures, fostering an atmosphere of enigma. RYT's short story is set in a specific geographical locale, comprising the northern hamlet, the southern hamlet, the house of worship (*surau*), the mosque, and the special house (place of immorality). Each of these locales is characterized by a distinct order, with the initial division of the neighborhood or village into two distinct regions, namely the northern and the southern hamlets. These two hamlets are bound by a set of taboos, which prohibit intermarriage between their inhabitants. The text's discourse is reinforced by the presence of an invisible creature (*mbaureksa*) which lurks in the village. The northern hamlet's perspective is characterized by a strong religious affiliation, while the southern hamlet's identity is rooted in Javanese traditions and culture. The prevailing belief among the populace of these two hamlets is the non-intermarriage policy

between the northern and the southern communities due to their distinct occupations and cultural identities, with the northern community being predominantly *santri* and the southern community being predominantly *abangan*. As the following narrative excerpt:

“... orang tak boleh kawin dengan orang dari dusun di dekatnya, dusun yang terletak di sebelah utara pematang ... orang tidak boleh mendirikan surau di dusun itu.”

“Pantangan pertama bisa dimengerti karena ada perbedaan pekerjaan. Di sebelah selatan adalah petani, sedang di sebelah utara adalah pedagang. Engkau tak akan bahagia kawin dengan orang pelit, apa-apa dihitung, kata orang-orang tua ... kebetulandusun di sebelah utara adalah santri dan mau tidak mau orang selatan harus jadi abangan. Demikianlah, untuk menyambut kelahiran orang utara akan slawatan dan orang selatan klenengan.” (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

The place obtained from the northern hamlet and the southern hamlet have their own rules that give legitimacy to the community. The people of the northern hamlet are expected to adhere to religious beliefs, adopt a calculating lifestyle akin to that of merchants, and be classified as individuals of high material standing. Conversely, the people of the southern hamlet are expected to adhere to the principles of *Kejawen*, which emphasizes the value of Javanese customs. They are expected to lead a life akin to that of village farmers and to uphold a higher position in terms of Javanese identity. Consequently, the space of *desa* or *kelurahan*, which was initially characterized by its loose, pluralistic, and fluid nature, underwent a transformation into a physically measurable and rigid entity with the emergence of discourses that impose limitations on these spaces, both geographically (north and south), and in terms of the discourse of rules and taboos within the community.

The subsequent locale is the house of worship (*surau*) and the mosque. The house of worship (*surau*) constructed by Jokaryo is situated in the midst of a teak forest. Jokaryo himself is a *santri*, hails from the southern hamlet, yet he is prohibited from building a *surau* in his yard. Consequently, he constructed a house in the teak forest to worship and impart religious knowledge, effectively functioning as a *surau*. This house adhered to Islamic rules that differed from those of the southern hamlet's residents. Consequently, this community became a minority within isolated and ostracized by the dominant population of the southern hamlet.

Then after Jokaryo died, no one continued the function of the house of worship (*surau*). So it became empty and looked creepy. However, unbeknownst to most, a mosque had emerged in the southern hamlet, populated by individuals who adhered to a religiously motivated way of life. As the following narrative excerpt:

“Jokaryo pun mengalah dan membangun rumah cuma surau di tengah hutan jati. Sehabis maghrib mereka akan bertemu, bersama-sama berdzikir sampai malam. Sebagian kecil orang, terutama di sekitar masjid (tidak ada yang tahu kenapa akhirnya yang ‘mbaurekso’ pun mentolerir pembangunan masjid), sangat tidak setuju dengan ulah Bu Kasno.” (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

The last place depicted in RYT's short story is the house subsequent to its rehabilitation under Bu Kasno's authority. The deterioration of the structure, due to a lack of maintenance, was addressed by Bu Kasno, who undertook its restoration. Subsequently, the house was utilized as a venue for the consumption of alcohol and the practice of prostitution. The former *surau* subsequently served as a venue for the fulfillment of the desires of the people from the southern hamlet. The people from the southern hamlet exhibited a favorable response to this new establishment offered by Bu Kasno. As the following narrative excerpt:

“Rumah itu begitu terlantar, genting-genting pecah. Maka datanglah Bu Kasno sebagai penyelamat. Dia mengganti genting-genting yang pecah, kayu-kayu yang lapuk, dan dinding-dinding yang menganga. Beberapa bagian dicatnya. Bu Kasno telah menyulap bangunan tua di tengah hutan itu jadi tempat yang hidup di malam hari. Rumah menjadi semacam pulau kebebasan yang terlengkap di dunia: ada tempat minum-minum, ada bordil.” (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

Upstone emphasizes that the establishment of colonial spatial structures is also supported by scientific principles, thereby solidifying the spatial framework and establishing definitive boundaries. Consequently, the delineated boundaries of space are often perceived as inherent or natural. Concurrently, Walsh and Prediger (2004) assert that a dwelling transcends its functional purpose, serving as a repository for historical significance, memory, and the cultural transmission of these elements across generations. The construction of the house from the time of Pak Jokaryo and subsequently under Bu Kasno's oversight bears distinct historical and memory implications. During Pak Jokaryo's era, the house functioned as a *surau*, a place of worship, and served as a symbol of goodness. However, under Bu Kasno's administration, the house transformed into a locale of immorality, thereby embodying malevolence. This phenomenon underscores the intertwined nature of space and time in the construction of social and cultural identities. The temporal progression depicted in RYT's short story, as articulated by the “old people” (p. 20), encompasses the period when Pak Jokaryo constructed the original structure, which functioned as a *surau*, and the subsequent phase of rehabilitation undertaken by Bu Kasno, aimed at introducing an element of ugliness. This sequence of events contributes to the formation of the spatial order.

Furthermore, the narrative incorporates a magical view, which serves to accentuate the significance of each locale previously mentioned. In accordance with Brenda Cooper's (1998) concept of reality effect, the existence of shared space in a fictional world can represent several possibilities, including evocative, mysterious with history, factual events or footage of locations, events,

times, and characters that refer to historical data. This understanding enables the interpretation of the depicted world as one that possesses historical significance.

The legitimacy of space restrictions is further reinforced by their association with magical views, customs, and norms. In RYT's short story, the presence of a figure known as *mbaurekso*, who is tasked with the organization of the northern and the southern hamlets spatial order, serves to reinforce the formation of space. In addition, when Bu Kasno builds the space of the house, it is reinforced by her friend or *perewangan* to get the utopian thing of wealth. In addition, the term that people must have an identity reinforces that the boundaries built in the space are absolute and rigid.

3.3. Beyond the boundaries of post-space

The whole construction of space with rigid and absolute boundaries, as stated in the previous sub-chapter, will become fluid again when it gets an opposite response or experience as a negotiation of individual identities formed in that space. The power of the constructed space that is displayed can be responded to with a new discourse as a resistance to the space and return the colonial space to a fluid and heterogeneous postcolonial space, as said by Upstone, namely 'overwriting'. This act of overwriting will make the space blurred and certainly leave traces or marks as colonial space. This is what is called a chaotic space. In fact, according to Upstone (2009) all postcolonial discourses make the colonial space chaotic and enter a hybrid post-space situation, open to the possibility of new constructions.

The act of overwriting in RYT's short story occurs twice. First, when Pak Jokaryo wants to fight the spatial construction of the northern and the southern hamlets by building a *surau* in his yard. The strong construction of the southern hamlet space at that time made Pak Jokaryo's attempt to build a *surau* fail. As the following narrative excerpt:

"Dia ingin mendirikan surau di pekarangannya. Tentu saja itu membuat marah besar danyang dusun. Kabarinya umpamanya suatu hari sebuah tiang selesai dibangun, pagi harinya tiang itu sudah pindah ke tengah hutan. Kalau suatu hari dinding-dinding telah dibuat, pagi hari dinding akan terlihat di tepi sungai." (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

Even when he fails to make the construction of the space between the northern and the southern hamlets filled with orders chaotic, Pak Jokaryo instead creates a new space, by building a house of worship (*surau*) in the middle of the teak forest. In the end, pak Jokaryo's action did not chaos the space, but instead added a new space.

Meanwhile, the second overwriting action is the emergence of responses to the house space (place of immorality) offered by Bu Kasno to the people of the southern hamlet. Among the people of the southern hamlet who most disagree with Bu Kasno's actions is Ustadz Yulianto. Ustadz Yulianto is a migrant from another area who teaches religious knowledge at the mosque in the southern hamlet. Armed with qualified religious knowledge, he is willing to live in the mosque with almost no salary. He saw that what Bu Kasno was doing was a heinous act. However, he could not do anything about it when it was even supported by the village officials who also used Bu Kasno's house (place of immorality). Because he felt he had a responsibility, Ustadz Yulianto tried to provide a counter discourse on the ethics of life based on religion. Supported by the people around the mosque, Ustadz Yulianto then added the strength of the discourse that such things were not in accordance with any traditional teachings.

In the RYT's short story, Ustadz Yulianto's attempt to dismantle the very rigid and absolute spaces with their strong order boundaries is not only by providing discourse. However, Ustadz Yulianto wishes to burn down the house (place of immorality) managed by Bu Kasno. The conditions that support the action are when Bu Kasno's husband died, then the house (place of immorality) was closed for a week. Finally Ustadz Yulianto had the opportunity to launch his action to burn the house one early morning quietly without the knowledge of the people. As the following narrative excerpt:

"Apa yang dikerjakan Yulianto? Membakar rumah alias surau bekas peninggalan Jokaryo ialah pekerjaan utama seorang ustadz! Itu berarti nahi 'anil munkar, mencegah kejahatan.'" (Kuntowijoyo, 1997: 22)

By bringing up religious discourses and customary norms and burning the house, which was done by Ustadz Yulianto, the short story can be said to make the order of the built space that has been constructed neatly and strongly *chaotic*. This is also reinforced when the house was burned down and it turned out that two people were burned and died in it. As described in the following narrative excerpt:

"... banyak orang mengerumuni rumah itu. Api telah padam. Orang mulai bergerak maju melihat apa yang tertinggal. Tiba-tiba seorang berteriak, 'ada orang di sini!'. Orang-orang pun mengeluarkan mayat dari reruntuhan."

"Tahulah orang bahwa mayat perempuan itu adalah gadis dusun itu, dan mayat laki-laki adalah pemuda dari dusun utara pematang. Orangtua gadis itu melarang mereka berhubungan. Mereka telah terbakar di tempat itu waktu berpacaran."

"Dari kerumunan muncul Ustadz yang memandang dengan nanar pada dua mayat. Kemudian ia terjatuh dan tak sadarkan diri." (Kuntowijoyo, 1997)

The two people were a young couple who were secretly in love. A woman from the southern hamlet and a man from the northern hamlet. This condition reinforces that the entire spatial order in the short story is destroyed and opens up all the

possibilities of the ambiguity of the existing spatial order. Why is this so? First, Ustadz Yulianto, who represents a *santri* (Islamic student), a person who reflects a group from the mosque community, and a person who has good knowledge in religious matters, becomes ambiguous, on the other hand he destroys a place of immorality, but on the other hand he kills a couple in the burned house. So that, the assumption that the northern hamlet that has been depicting good people, who are religious, but can also do bad things. Secondly, based on this, a contradiction can be drawn, that Bu Kasno, who has her own space, namely the house (a place of immorality), also becomes ambiguous. Even though it is true that it can tarnish the good name of the southern hamlet, Bu Kasno provides a separate place for people who like to do so, namely playing gambling, drinking, and even playing with women. Therefore, the reason why Bu Kasno's offerings were accepted by the people of the southern hamlet was because they had a habit of living like that. Thirdly, when the two bodies of the young man and woman are burned together, it means that their skin is blistered and rubbed off from one another. So it can be said that the people of the two hamlets can be united and the rules that prevent the northern hamlet and the southern hamlet from being united have been broken.

Thus, when the chaos that occurs destroys the spatial order in the RYT's short story, then the space leads to what is called post-space. Upstone's concept of post-space can be said to be a hybrid, fluid and moving space, so that it no longer has certain boundaries, as in this short story, which is a space that is again flexible and spacious after the house burns down.

4. Conclusion

Kuntowijoyo's short story entitled *Rumah Yang Terbakar* offers a compelling depiction of the fluidity of postcolonial spaces, where rigid spatial boundaries imposed by historical and cultural constructs are challenged and ultimately dissolved. Through the narrative, the division between the northern and the southern hamlets, with their distinct cultural and moral frameworks, becomes blurred as acts of resistance and negotiation unfold. The concept of post-space, as articulated by Sara Upstone, is realized in the story's portrayal of chaotic and hybrid spaces that transcend fixed colonial and traditional boundaries.

The study demonstrates how the burning of the "house of immorality" by Ustadz Yulianto disrupts entrenched spatial and cultural orders, creating a space where identities and norms are renegotiated. This event, coupled with the discovery of the intermingling of individuals from opposing hamlets, signifies a breakdown of the rigid dichotomies that previously defined the community. Consequently, the story reflects the broader dynamics of postcolonial societies grappling with the remnants of colonial structures while seeking to establish new, fluid identities.

In summary, Kuntowijoyo's *Rumah Yang Terbakar* encapsulates the complexity of postcolonial space as a site of conflict, resistance, and transformation, offering a nuanced exploration of the interplay between space, identity, and power. The narrative underscores the potential for literature to serve as a medium for critiquing and reimagining the socio-cultural landscapes of postcolonial realities.

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