

The Space in “Kisah Kota Kwon” A Short Story by Indra Tranggono

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Abstract

This study is to find out the form of space presented in the short story written by Indra Tranggono entitled “Kisah Kota Kwon.” The study analyses the space, in this case is place and chaotic space to describe the opposition as inheritance of colonials. Although the short story has no direct relation with colonialism, yet by doing the study, the nation (colonial space) can be seen clearly. The method used in the study is descriptive qualitative. The results show that the place in the short story can be represented by the Kwon town, meanwhile the chaotic space can be seen from the journey taken by Molly as the representation of self conflict to the town itself.

Keyword: *postcolonials, space, place and chaotic space, Kisah Kota Kwon*

Introduction

Literature illustrates permanent expression in written or spoken form about life and the universe, both real and fictional. The expression of imagination or thoughts can express through literary works. Literary work defines as an art that uses words as a basis for building depictions, thoughts, or stories in a meaningful way. Abrams in Sakina (2023: 11) says that literature as an imitation, or reflection, representation of the world and human life, and the primary criterion applied to a work is that the truth of its representation to the objects it represents, or should represent.

There are three popular genre of literature, one of which is fiction. The fiction, according to Sumardjo and Saini (1986: 32), is the most written and read especially the novels and short stories. A short story is a piece of prose fiction marked by relative shortness and density, organized into a plot and with some kind of denouement at the end. The plot may be comic, tragic, romantic, or satiric. It may be written in the mode of fantasy, realism or naturalism. Because of the

shorter length, a short story usually focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters), and one central theme.

Postcolonialism is a literary criticism used to identify what inheritance the colonials give to the literary works of the colonized country. Somehow the traces are there in the works and are studied to show the interrelation between the colonials and the colonized. Faruk (2007: 11) states that this criticism is to study the culture (literatures, politics, history, etc) of the European colonized country and these countries relation with the other world. The effects of colonialization are ,the experience given by colonialist to the countries such as migration, slavery, oppression, resistency, representation, difference, trade, gender, place/space, and respons to the European imperialism such as history, philosophy, linguistics, and etc. All these creates cultures interdependency of the colonized countries to its colony.

One among notions to the postcolonialism criticism is the space and journey. The space refers to the place (nation) meanwhile the journey represents the possibility of escaping the boundaries of national space. Upstone (2009: 57) states that the representation of larger-than-national spaces can be seen to be embodied in the journey: a motif that is taken up by postcolonial authors as a representation of transactional and unbordered engagement with space. Further Upstone (2009: 57) mentions that the passage of the journey offers an example of chaotic space, presenting engagement with 'heterogeneous' and 'in-between places. She added that this 'nation' is the metaphor for a world in which movement, facilitated by air journey and global communication networks, undercuts national belonging with an international perspective.

Reviewing short story through the lens of postcolonialism approach is triggering particular interpretation of the works itself such as whether the work implies the connection between the colonials and the colonized; whether the culture, beliefs, and actions in the story reflects the interrelated connection of the colonials and the colonized or else. It gives the works another perspective for readers to take the message particularly the trace of colonialization in literary works. This study focuses on identifying the place, space and journey (chaotic

space) experienced by the main character Molly. Upstone theory is used to help analyzing the short story.

Literary Review

Postcolonials theory is one among literary criticism eager to find out the relation between the colonials and colonialized countries in the works of literature. It is believed that there must be trace of colonials cultures, beliefs, politics, etc on the works written by poscolonials author. Faruk (2007: 14) is the term for the theoretical and critical strategies to dig out the culture such as history, literature, politics, etc) from colonialized country and these countries relation with the other world. This critics focus on the negative impact of what stated as the imperial power such as the civilization gift, English literature heritage, and else. It also talks about the racism and exploitation as well as questioning the position of colonials and post colonials subjects.

Postcolonials theory usually emphasizes on the colonialized countries. It tries to dive into the impact of colonializations to the countries by European colonies. Faruk (2007: 15) states that one of the interests of the poscolonials is in the culture of the European colonialized countries i.e. the impact of colonialization both progessive or post-colonial times or its possible transformation to neo-colonialism (internal or global). The impact of the imperialism to the mind, feeling, attitude of the colonialized countries last longer than its geographic invasion even when the colonies have left the countries. The ambiguity of mind, feeling, attitute often occurs in the colonialized countries to the colony itself because of both intertwined relation. This ambiguity can be seen from the idea of space and journey.

Upstone (2009: 3) states that the term 'place' refers to the physical territory, meanwhile 'space' refers to the philosophycal concept. Place is the manifestation of space in which physic and boundaries situation representing and creating place identity or the place itself. She further said that (Upstone, 2009: 3) one manifestation of space is its representation in intensely physical forms which create sites of identification. The space with its boundaries means to be automatically identify the inhabitant.

In postcolonialism, the journey and space concept are intertwined in which the 'places' give continuous and inevitable change medium of the journey itself. Further, the notion of journey provides an example of chaotic spactic space. Casey in Upstone (2009: 57) states that the journey and the concept of place are intimately entwined, where 'places provide the changing but indispensable medium of journeys. Moreover Casey in Upstone (2009: 57) continues that the passage of the journey offers an example of chaotic space, presenting engagement with 'heterogeneous' and 'in-between places that many challenge stable construction of place.

This means that when we do a journey, we are excluded from place boundaries; we are excluded from past identity. Journey is said to be freed from the space, identity, and boundaries. It is mentioned that there are two kinds of journey i.e. the journey to legitimate the existed boundaries and as chaotic space or movement. Upstone (2009: 57) states that the journeys represents the possibility to escape the boundaries of national space. Further she said that the journey is a metaphor for a world in which movement, which is acilitated by air journey and global communication networks, undercuts national belonging with an international perspective.

A literary works written by the postcolonial author usually grounded on the paradigm of journey, an identity produced disjunctively, out of fragments, in journey. The journey itself is beyond the confines of boundaries and mapping, it is approaching something far more fluid, indefinable and chaotic; the journey is a fitting beginning for exploring the concept of post-space (Upstone, 2009: 58).

The movement is said not only about the colonised escaping the confines of the nation through migration; it is also by its nature as a transferral bodies and resources from one space to the other. Upstone (2009:58) gives example of the journey of indentured labour or slavery who do a migration. Journey is also often undercut by the stark difference between the hopes and ideals embodied in such movement, and the reality, which is often cast in terms of dissapointment, poverty, and prejudice. However, in many ways the act of movement can be read as a metaphor for the entire colonial practice.

Research Methodology

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The data source of this study is a short story entitled “Kisah Kota Kwon” written by Indra Tranggoro. The techniques used in collecting the data are reading the short story repeatedly and identifying the lines and quotation in the novel. After collecting the data, the writers analyze the short story by doing several steps based on Miles and Huberman (1994: 10). Firstly, the writers classified the data based on its classification and selected the data by rejecting the irrelevant information. Secondly, the writers display and interpret the findings, and the last is drawing a conclusion.

Discussion and Finding

The analysis emphasizes the in the use of term “space’ -rather than “place”- and chaotic space. This is to help understanding how the text reflects opposition as the heritage of the colonials. Though there is no direct relation to the colonialism story, yet this short story shows the colonialism trace of nation vividly. The nation itself is the space or colonial space, though abstract and absolute, it can be measured, mapped and rigidly limited. The nation of this short story is represented by the little town Kwon, a town from the Endozians. This town is well known for its high respect of history. Kwon has its boundaries in each sides giving identity to main character Molly.

Molly is one of the citizens of the town. The identity of the town from the outer world as the poorest town identifies its citizens. Inevitably Molly as a young good looking girl is also identified as the town itself. Here she had to marry with a drunker in her young age. Her life story was full of sadness and sorrow. She was served badly as a wife. That ironical situation made her thinking of an escape. She dreamt of escaping from the town, at least moving to the next town Dorezu for a better life as a prostitute. Until finally on the trial of escaping, she was caught by a patrol car then jailed. The worst situation came out; she was placed in a jail with special room. Then, she was treated as a slut badly. Until finally she was able to escape by hitting the man’s head. Yet, the guards shot her

dead on the chest. The call of the Kwon city moaned in her head when she was about to end. From that plot, the analysis can be done as follows:

1. Place and Space

In this case, the Kwon as part of Endozia refers to the place. This town has the boundaries and is geographically mapped. It is next to Dorezu town, but Kwon is not an significant city; it only relates the big cities in Endozia. As a city, Kwon is well-known as poor and sad place. It is can be seen from the physical condition of the buildings. They are all old, abandoned, damaged, and ruined. The condition of the citizens is also the same. They have dirty clothes, pale faces, brown teethed, and skinny bodies.

Actually, this city is called as the history heritage; as the historical conservation for its poorness. The country wants to conserve the poorness as part of the country for the sake of history. This historical artefact is then attached to this city. What an ironical point of view by letting one city to live under poverty meanwhile the other cities get the most improvement of culture and technology.

The situation of Kwon itself then defines the people living in there. Molly had lost her right to live in proper, obtaining good job and husband, also to feel safe. Her life was merely an artefact of historical heritage of poverty in the country then she had to live within it. This city was the place she needed to get rid off so that she could go through the boundaries of the poverty itself. She needed new place to live, a place with new identity.

She always hated every visitor coming to capture the reflection of the poverty –as the picture of conserved history.

"Ayo pulang, Moly," ajak perempuan tua, ibunya.

Moly diam. Tetap mematung.

"Ayo. Kereta lewat masih satu jam lagi."

"Aku tidak menunggu kereta"

"Lalu?"

"Aku ingin menghancurkan kereta para jahanam itu. Mereka anggap kita ini binatang langka. Aku tak bisa terima kita dijadikan tontonan!"

[“let’s go home Moly,” said the old woman, her mother]

[Moly remained silent.]

[“Let’s go. The train will pass by in an hour later”]

[“I’m not waiting for the train.”]

[“What’s then?”]

[“I want to destroy that hell train. They think that we are extinct animals. I can’t bear no longer for us to be the object of a show]

Molly needed a freedom for the town had grabbed her human right. She needed new space (place) better than this city. A place which would give her new identity; not being an animal like. She wanted to destroy the city to have new self identity. She thought of new town with brighter future, full of lights, entertainment, and luxuries. The town next to Kwon. Her imagination brought her to go beyond the place boundaries, identifying herself as the new one in the new city. She needed to travel to be able to go beyond the space, beyond the established identity, and all boundaries attached to her as the citizen of sad Kwon. Her escaping to Dozeru is the act of journey to the other space or place. The journey will help her creating new identity; though she worked in the new town as a prostitute.

“Datang ke Kota Dorezu niat Moly hanya satu: menjadi pelacur. Ia merasa beruntung punya mata tajam, hidung mancung, bibir tipis, dan tubuh sintal, sebuah kecantikan khas orang Kwon. Ia merasa sanggup menaklukkan banyak laki-laki dalam satu malam, sambil membayangkan uang para pelancong mengalir di dompetnya. Ia capek menjadi pelamun yang setiap hari melakukan upacara bersama warga: melihat kereta lewat sambil melambai-lambaikan tangan. Kegiatan yang begitu membosankan dan sangat menyakitkan: jadi tontonan turis kota.”

[Coming to Dorezu, Moly had only one intention: to become a prostitute. She felt lucky to have sharp eyes, pointed nose, thin lips, good body shape – a typical Kwon beauty. She believed that this will make her easy to get men in one night and get money from them. She is so tired of becoming a dreamer and merely joining a ceremony with the citizen, waving hands when the train passed by. That is a boring and hurting activity, becoming the spectacles of the visitors]

Her big dream of a better life experience triggers her to do a physical journey to Dorezu. For her, the journey will be able to help her escaping from the space Kwon.

2. Chaotic Space

There are two kinds of journey; the journey to legitimate the existed boundaries and the journey as chaotic space or movement. Molly's journey is a result of movement or chaotic space, where she experienced inner conflict with what she experienced in Kwon City. Endozia President Gudoz's treatment of himself or his city was so inhumane that he experienced great conflict inside. The drunken man who becomes her husband is a tragic story in itself. Even though her mother only laughed when Molly became angry with the journeyers and the Gudoz government, in the end, Molly still ran away for another space she dreamed of, Dozeru.

Unfortunately, her attempt to journey to another town plunged her into another kind of sadness. She was arrested by city guards in the Kwon - Dozeru border area and experienced inhumane treatment from a number of philandering men. Chaotic space ensued again, where Molly experienced a great conflict between her new space and the history of her original space, Kwon.

“Moly mengedarkan pandangan di langit-langit sel, dengan tatapan mata kosong. Ia sama sekali tak membayangkan niatnya untuk sedikit hidup nyaman di Kota Dorezu harus dibayar mahal dengan kehormatannya. Cerita mengenaskan yang selama ini hanya ia dengar dalam dongeng menjelang tidur dari bapak-ibunya, ternyata benar-benar dialaminya. Ia menjadi sangat paham, kenapa banyak warga Kwon sangat takut untuk mengadu nasib di Dorezu, dan lebih memilih duduk-duduk di stasiun menunggu kereta pelancong lewat, sambil melambai-lambaikan tangannya dan rela menjadi tontonan para turis dari berbagai kota dan negara.”

[“Moly looked around at the ceiling of the cell, with empty eyes. She never imagined that her intention to live a little comfortably in Dorezu City would have to be paid dearly for her honor. The tragic story that she had only heard in bedtime stories from his father and mother, turned out to be something she had actually experienced. She really understood why many Kwon residents were very afraid to try their luck at Dorezu, and preferred to sit at the station waiting for the tourist train to pass, waving their hands and willing to be a spectacle for tourists from various cities and countries.”]

This chaotic space then pushed Molly to make a second escape, and this time her escape was very surprising, back to Kwon. With all strength, she hit the man he had been waiting for in the room, she deliberately hid so

she could beat the man with a stick. As soon as the man passed out, Molly ran as hard as she could, hoping to get back to Kwon. But unfortunately, the hot lead penetrated his legs and chest and covered her in darkness. She was shot dead in an attempt to escape to another space which was much more comfortable than Dozeru, namely Kwon.

“Sirine meraung-raung. Pengejaran dan pengepungan berlangsung. Senapan-senapan menyalak. Timah-timah panas melesat memburu tubuh Moly. Moly merasakan perih di kakinya. Tapi ia terus berlari. Senapan-senapan terus menyalak. Moly merasakan adanya terasa nyeri, sebuah timas panas telah menembus. Tapi ia terus melesat, sekuat-kuatnya. Tubuh Moly dipeluk kegelapan. Kota Kwon terus memanggil namanya.”

[Sirens wailed. The chase and siege took place. The guns fired. Hot leads shot after Moly's body. Moly felt a pain in her leg. But she kept running. The guns continued firing. Moly felt her chest ache, a hot lead had penetrated. But she kept going, as hard as she could. Moly's body was embraced by darkness. Kwon City kept calling her name.”]

It turns out that she had to pay for Molly's attempt to journey to another space to leave her identity with her life. In the end, she did not leave that identity at all, because the chaotic space she faced in the 3 x 4 meters room at that time succeeded in referring her back to not being separated from his original identity, she felt like returning to the city of Kwon, the safest city for her, which was created for her even though gloom is in every corner.

Even though this short story does not directly discuss the life of colonialism, the discourse of place, space, chaotic space and journey in it is quite representative of the colonial legacy that marked almost every colonial area. Kwon as a city experienced colonialism in terms of space, where it was limited by a bad identity that was gloomier than other cities. Kwon and in this case its residents, experienced prolonged, inhumane injustice. On historical grounds, Kwon is used as an artifact of poverty which can be visited at any time to simply remember the history of poverty as the basis for progress or development of the nation. An artifact creation that has to be paid dearly with the deprivation of human rights and humanity.

The journey effort contained in Indra Tranggono's short story is enough to mark the condition of nations or nations as a colonial legacy that must be satisfied with the boundaries created. A space built on the basis of violence of control and supervision, such as the city of Kwon which received strict control and supervision from the Gudoz government. Basically, the city of Kwon itself is only a product of the elite Gudoz government, which uses the Kwon population as a tool of internal oppression.

Indra offers Dozeru as another space for Molly as a form of liberation, so there is a need to journey there. However, it turned out that the journey had to end with the death of Molly, who at the end of her life wanted to return to Kwon, a space she had wanted to leave.

Conclusion

Even though this short story does not contain a story of colonialism, the discourse of place, space, chaotic space and journey is quite capable of marking the existence of colonialism towards a population. Kwon and its residents experienced injustice that was far from humane. Kwon is used as a historical artifact for which her sacrifice for humanity are simply ignored. The Endozia government led by Gudoz built a space in the form of Kwon City based on violence and strict supervisory control. Kwon's existence seemed to violate human rights in general so it was felt that there should be acquittal. One of them, Indra offered the city of Dozaru as another place for Molly to go. Dozaru is considered another space that can provide comfort, so Molly needs to journey.

However, in the end, is the journey in the short story meant to legitimize existing boundaries or is it instead a movement or chaotic space in order to find another space that is much more established and comfortable? It seems that at the end of the journey, Molly, whose legs and body were penetrated by hot lead, actually wanted to return to Kwon, her hometown, where she belonged. Thus, in the end, Molly legitimizes the boundaries that have existed so far that she can never get out of her identity, even though death is at stake. This is what Indra wants to describe, that to remove oneself from the identity of a nation or place and

even space as a colonial legacy, one needs to journey with more sacrifices, even if it is one's life.

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