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Modern *Priyayi* and The Failure of the Third Space in Kayam's Two Fictions

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Abstract

Umar Kayam's fictions, "Kimono Biru" (Blue Kimono) and Jalan Menikung (Turning Road) retell rampant corruption plaguing most postcolonial states. The priyayi figuration in both stories, supposed to transform the third space of postcolonial Indonesia into liberative force, fails miserably. Rather than re-visiting positivist view of third space as found in many literatures, this analysis shows a re-imagination of its failure. The replacement of colonial leaders by domestic leaders does not guarantee true independence since the new middle class replicate the corrupt system for their own benefits. While corrupt priyayi thrives, the protagonist priyayi figures upholding potential transformative power in both fictions are rendered powerless in this newly independent state. Suwandi in "Kimono Biru" is an epitome of postcolonial politicians who are both politician and oligarch guarding the status quo – a system supported by money politics to manipulate the mass. Mustari, his old friend in fighting for independence from colonial Dutch, has to live a meagre live as the cost for maintaining his integrity. Similarly, in the priyayi in Jalan Menikung are also divided along similar lines. Sastradarsono's posterity who chooses to be a corrupt military official (Nugroho) and a business tycoon (Tommi) live comfortably while those who side with the suffering mass have to live a difficult life because of their honourable idealism.

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Introduction

Umar Kayam's fictions provide a Javanese *priyayi*'s perspective on the issues that the *priyayi* class had to face from colonial times to the post-independence era. They portray the dilemma of this class in adjusting to the major historical phases challenging the *priyayi* legacy culturally and politically. Culturally, their traditional values are considered increasingly irrelevant and politically they have had to face a modern political system thwarting their traditional elite position. Imperilled by their possible failure to adjust to such social changes, they respond to the challenge in different ways

indicating their different and often ambivalent stances.

Throughout historical phases of colonialism and independence, *priyayi* class had to negotiate their traditional role and privilege with colonial power and the idea of a democratic nation. Their identity was hybridized in contact zones with colonization and democratization which has been viewed as a positive drive for decolonization:

> *Whilst assertions of national culture and of pre-colonial traditions have played an important role in creating anti-colonial discourse and in arguing for an active decolonizing project, theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority.* (Ashcroft et al., 2001, p. 118)

This positivist outlook on hybridity or the third space is also referred to by Bill Ashcroft (2001, p. 2019) as "a sign of constructive cultural evolution." In *priyayi* case, however, this third space is destructive for the nation. It is not a sign of constructive cultural evolution but replication of corruptive and exploitive colonial master. It is this often-neglected aspect of hybridity that this article seeks to elaborate through fictional representations of Umar Kayam's "Kimono Biru" (Blue Kimono) (1986) and *Jalan Menikung* (Turning Road) (1999).

The many studies on Kayam and his works, both in books, such as *Umar Kayam: Karya dan Dunianya* (2004) and quite a number of journal articles, indicate his popularity among Indonesians literary scholars. Various angles have been deployed in recent papers, such as the feminist aspect of Kayam's *priyayi* narrative (Mawaddah et al., 2021), politeness strategy in the novel's dialogues (Alviah, 2019), and the representation of identity and mobility in *priyayi* world (Fanani, 2017). Especially related with this article is the study on the concept of *priyayi-hood* by David Setiadi et al. (2013). Setiadi argues that Para Priyayi represents the development of *priyayi* in changing times and that the novel is an implicit criticism on *priyayi-hood*. He did not elaborate more of this important point and my paper fills the gap left by him and the previous researches in that it seeks not only to elaborate the metamorphoses of *priyayi-hood* but also the critique of Kayam's works, "Blue Kimono" and *Jalan Menikung*, the sequel of *Para Priyayi*, on the failure of hybridization of *priyayi* identity in the new state.

Methodology

The analysis of this paper uses postcolonial approach with a particular focus on the interpretation of hybridity. Postcolonial theory's trajectories might be traced back to the early movement of *négritude* in 1930s, in such works as Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le Colonialisme* (1952) (*Discourse on Colonialism*), and Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961) *(The Wretched of the Earth)*. However, this stream of thought did not become established and widely discussed until the 1970s after the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). In *Orientalism* and his subsequent book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said can be said to have laid down a more systematic foundation of postcolonial theory.

Critiquing Saidian concepts of colonial relation, Homi Bhabha (2002) argues for an analysis beyond binary opposition of colonizer/colonized and suggests cultural hybridity. This concept emphasizes intersectionality of colonial encounters and most postcolonial critics have interpreted this third space in a positivistic mode, i.e., that the hybrid space empowers both the colonizers and the colonized. While this claim is true for major postcolonial literature, such as Aimé Césaire's *The Tempest* (1969) and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), similar claim cannot be made of Umar Kayam's fictions depicting Javanese *priyayi.* Making use of Bhabha's concept, this paper analyses the negative aspect of hybridity in Kayam's two fictions in order to see how the third space has turned into a space of corruption and theft.

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Results and Discussion

The first section of this article discusses how the term '*priyayi*' has been defined and discussed by Western and Indonesian theorists. The second part elaborates changing role of *priyayi* in colonial time and the New Order, the periods with which Kayam's fictions are concerned. The last section analyses two of Kayam's fictions, "Kimono Biru" and *Jalan Menikung*, re-enact the transformation of corrupt *priyayi* in the New Order era. These fictions depict a further crisis in the *priyayi* identity. Faced with an authoritarian and corrupt state system, the only options that appear to be left to Kayam's characters are to join the corrupt system and thrive, or refuse the system and perish. These two fictions show in different ways how the 'third space' envisaged by Bhabha emerges in Indonesia not as a progressive reconstruction of the site of postcolonial politics, but as a failure to find a moral centre for the emergent nation.

Priyayi Defined

Priyayi is the Javanese term for Javanese nobility. Etymologically the term *priyayi* may have been derived from two Javanese words: *para* and *yayi,* meaning the younger brothers (of the king). This etymological speculation is in line with Geertz's statement saying that *priyayi* originally refers to "a man who could trace his ancestry back to the great semi-mythical kings of pre-colonial Java" (Geertz, 1964, p. 229). This concept of what constitutes *priyayi* develops as Java's political positioning also changes from the nineteenth century through to the New Order period. In this section I will focus on the much-debated triadic categorization of *priyayi-abangan-santri,* because discussing *priyayi* inevitably involves mentioning the other two categories.

The dominance of this tri-partite distinction is driven by Clifford Geertz's ground-breaking study of Javanese society in Mojokuto from 1953 to 1954, published as *Religion of Java* in 1960, which categorized the Javanese into three typologies: syncretistic *abangan,* Muslim *santri,* and *priyayi*. Geertz bases his grouping on people's occupations and religious systems of values. Based on their occupation, *abangan*, *santri* and *priyayi* are understood as Java's peasantry, traders, and gentry respectively (Geertz, 1964, pp. 228–229). Mapped onto religious structures, the *abangan* believe in a combination of animism and some imported values derived from Hinduism and Islam; the *santri* adhere to the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of Islam more rigorously; while the *priyayi*, by contrast, although adopting Hinduism like *abangan*, do so in a more subtle way. As I will explain in this section, this mixed categorization, i.e., using simultaneously occupational and religious criteria, is not tenable anymore because of the mixed categorization. A Javanese of a particular occupation, e.g., a teacher might by the 1970s, say, have religious beliefs that identified him as any of Geertz's types ranging from *abangan* to *santri,* while still identifying himself as having the status of *priyayi* .

It has to be kept in mind that the study Geertz conducted was in a specific area for a limited time in the 1950s. Considering the constraints of locus and time of the study it can be assumed that the research does not represent the reality of the whole Java prior and after that specified time. Studies of Javanese society covering a broader time frame have been conducted by several researchers ever since. Three names are worth mentioning here, namely Koentjaraningrat, Heather Sutherland, and M.C. Ricklefs. Koentjaraningrat (Koentjaraningrat, 1963, pp. 188–191) disagrees with the use of *abangan* and *santri* as social classes because they refer more to religious practices: *abangan* with its syncretism of animism, Hinduism and Islam whereas *santri* with its purer Islam. Putting *priyayi* in the same plate with *abangan* and *santri* becomes problematical for Koentjaraningrat because *priyayi*'s religious practices may be distributed across the spectrum from *abangan* to *santri* and the terms *priyayi abangan* and *priyayi santri* are therefore quite acceptable. Koentjaraningrat criticizes the mixed categorization that while *abangan-santri* embodies a vertical relation, i.e. two religious categories, *abangan-priyayi* is based on horizontal relations, i.e. social strata. Koentjaraningrat, as Cruikshank notes,

> *introduces the distinction between vertical and horizontal stratification in Javanese society, with Geertz's abangan-santri dichotomy representing the horizontal division, and a modified occupational framework the vertical. He argues that Geertz mistakenly considers the abangan-santri-prijaji divisions as both horizontal and vertical, whereas it should be seen as horizontal only.* (Cruikshank, 1972, p. 40)

A better description of Javanese social classes, according to Koentjaraningrat, would consist of *wong cilik* (peasants), *wong dagang* (traders), *priyayi* (government officials) and *ndara* (nobility). Just like *priyayi*, the other three social classes may practice a range of religious affiliations, from *abangan* to *santri*.

Ricklefs' research clarifies this confusion by putting the *abangan-santri-priyayi* distinction in a historical perspective. He points out that the triadic distinction is not wrong but 'historically contigent' (Ricklefs, 2006, p. 35).

Modernized *Priyayi* in Colonial System and the New Order

In the nineteenth century, Java witnessed the modernisation of the Javanese *priyayi*. Under Dutch colonial power, the ranks of the *priyayi* became modernized structurally and were called *pangreh praja* or *ambtenaar* (government officials). The *bupati* (regent) received a salary from the colonial government and had to answer to it instead of managing independently the province under their rule. During this time the system of the *pangreh praj*a, stretching downwards from *bupati* to the lowest village headman, became the extended hand of colonialism. But the introduction of the concept of a functional and powerful bureaucracy threatened many of the assumptions on which the concept of *priyayi* had existed. Merit, ability and ambition were becoming alternative pathways to influential roles in society. The position of *pangreh pradja* that used to be consequent on one's heredity started to shift; non-*priyayi* might become *pangreh praja* as well, if they had the right talents or supporters. As long as they could perform successfully in an important position and adapted to the ways of *priyayi*, they might be accepted as having achieved *priyayi* status by other *priyayi* even though they were often underestimated by those *priyayi* whose status was the result of noble birth (Ricklefs, 2001, p. 168 and H. A. Sutherland, 1973, p. 110).

Under the Dutch modernized bureaucracy, becoming a *pangreh praja* was not the only means to gain *priyayi* status. Education and new occupations generated by industrialization also provided new paths through which to gain *priyayi* status. Amongst such new occupations were those of teachers, technicians and chauffeurs. Indeed, notes Sutherland, the structural role of being a *pangreh praja* is no longer the only means of social mobility:

> *By their jobs, skills and sometimes by life-style and attitudes these "new prijaji' demonstrated that the native administrative corps was no longer the only means of upward mobility, that the traditional prijaji way was not the only form of the good life. They formed a new local elite and sometimes linked the rural population to the urban intelligentsia*. (H. A. Sutherland, 1973, pp. 209–210)

Colonialism opened a new path of social mobility for the Javanese peasants. With some basic education, a peasant could become a teacher and hence hope to be considered a new *priyayi*.

The New Order began in March 1966 when president Soekarno transferred executive responsibility to (then) General Soeharto. When finally installed as acting President in March 1967, Soeharto started to take the state in a different direction from his predecessor. Indonesia stopped its offensive war against Malaysia, perceived as a symbol of neo-colonialism, and became friendlier to the West in exchange for financial aid. The early economic achievement of this regime by contrast with the chaotic financial situation during the years of the previous government was extraordinary; Soeharto was said to have successfully built "the most powerful state in Indonesia since Dutch colonial times" (Lipsky & Pura, 1978, p. 489).

This economic success story, however, was tainted by widening gap between the rich and the poor as well as with a culture of cronyism and corruption. These negative symptoms were manifest in:

> *monopoly power and economic privilege for a few favoured cronies in or close to the presidential circle of family and friends. It is reflected above all in the widening gap between the very rich and ordinary Indonesians, the middle class, urban poor and peasantry, in terms of their income levels, assets and control over crucial resources*. (Hill, 1994, p. 3)

The importance of *priyayi* class in state affairs in this period was fading. Military careers became an important avenue for anyone, regardless of their social background, wishing to advance themselves in a political career. Soeharto's background as a peasant's son from Kemusuk village testifies this new condition. The dominant role of the military proved social classes irrelevant. The social dominance of the military was made possible by the doctrine of *dwifungsi*, or the dual function of the armed forces. The doctrine stipulated that the function of the armed forces was not limited to national defence. Military personnel were also to be deployed ministerial and ambassadorial positions and in other crucial executive offices up to the regency level and were granted substantial representation in the Parliament. The New Order lasted for about 33 years until May 1998 when president Soeharto was forced to resign amid the staggering financial recession and nation-wide student protests. Kayam personally witnessed many of these massive changes in the social and political world of Indonesia from colonial time to the end of the New Order. Born to a *priyayi* family, he also saw through an insider's perspective the changes and dilemmas that the *priyayi* were facing in those historical phases. Firsthand experience and an insider's perspective have shaped Kayam's works to reflect on the social and political issues worth looking postcolonially.

Corrupt *Priyayi* in "Kimono Biru" and *Jalan Menikung*

The two fictions depict how the new political system created a state bureaucracy that deflected *priyayi* principles to serve its own ends. If the ambivalent combination of paternalism and mastery shaped the *priyayi* interaction with Dutch colonial policy so that their paternalism could be seen as no more than the corrupt exploitation of the peasantry supported by colonial force, in the New Order, the meaning of priyayi as "a man of integrity and honor" (H. Sutherland, 1975, p. 58) is open to abuse because once the customary practices within which the *priyayi* had definable obligations were replaced by bureaucratic procedures, the *priyayi* needed to be able to re-identify themselves in relation to the emerging modern concepts of duty to the state or nation rather than in terms of their duty to a ruler or a group of the ruled. Kayam in particular shows how it is easier for many of his examples of *priyayi* to just look for another 'ruler', since it appears to them that it is only through retaining the hierarchy they are comfortable with that they can maintain their status as an elite although it means that they compromise the ideal of *priyayi* principles as reflected in the following two stories.

"Kimono Biru"

"Kimono Biru" tells a story of two friends who have been through the revolution, *Gestapu*, and the New Order years. The main characters in "Kimono Biru" ,Mustari and Suwandi, are two ex-freedom fighters who part ways in post-Independence Indonesia. Mustari, who becomes a civil servant working for the Ministry of Labour and Public Works, a part-time university lecturer at the University of Indonesia, and a consultant to the National Planning Board, lives modestly. Although he has had some opportunities to go overseas with government funding, such as in his present journey to Tokyo, he cannot afford to buy a blue kimono for his wife. The price of 2,500 yen is way too much for his budget. Suwandi, on the other hand, becomes a very prosperous businessman cum politician. Their accidental meeting in Tokyo not only brings

back a lot of good old memories but also conflicting ideas and life trajectories.

The roots of the postcolonial trouble in the New Order are described as the unholy alliance of politician and businessman. Pondering on how the New Order came to power, Suwandi and Masturi argue on whether or not money politics is justified in power struggle. They have different principles of how a nation shall be built as reflected in this quotation:

> *"Ya, Cuma waktu itu jauh lebih gampang, nDi. Pilihan Cuma ada daging babi. Maka yang haram pun diperkenankan menjadi halal. Sekarang lebih sulit. Menunya lebih banyak. Nggak ada lagi alasan untuk mau haram terus."*
> *"Aah, prek! Tahi! Munafik! Filsafat picisan!"* (Kayam, 1986, p. 314)
>
> *"Yes. But it was easier then, 'Ndi. We only had pork. Under those circumstances, it was possible to eat what was normally forbidden. But it's harder now. The menu is more extensive. The same excuses no longer hold."*
> *"Oh, you bastard! Swine! What crap!"* (Kayam, 1980, p. 184)

The context of the above dialogue is an argument about how far money politics should be tolerated in order to win power in the young republic. Both Mustari and Suwandhi are supporters of the New Order regime and they agree that in times of political emergency, such as around *Gestapu* in 1965 and the downfall of president Soekarno, money politics can be tolerated.

In the past, they supported and financed a students' movement while always monitoring carefully any possible future political turns in order to defeat the Communist Party that was getting stronger in the early 1960s. They collected money for this political purpose from a government trading office that they turned into a *markas catut* (centre for corruption). Armed with money that they referred to as *politik nasi bungkus* (bundles of rice politics), they successfully calculated every step taken by the Communist Party of Indonesia, the army and the political parties, such as PNI and NU (Kayam, 1986, p. 303). This small memory in the story symbolizes a bigger reality -- that financing political movements by corrupting state's money is the foundation on which the political system after *Gestapu* was built. There is no mention of *Orde Baru* (the New Order) in the story but the setting of the time reveals that Kayam must have the New Order in mind when depicting the argument. The justification of corruption to finance a political movement is at the centre of the story's strong criticism of how misguided the New Order has been on the idea of national liberation.

Now at the time of the story, although the New Order has supposedly passed that phase of crisis, the regime is still supported by figures like Suwandi and has not been able to find a more accountable way of sustaining its power. Suwandi believes that although they are in a new state, with the Communist Party and President Soekarno gone, the system still needs the same old machinery. For Suwandi, the status quo is always in an emergency situation that needs funding – no matter where it is from - for its continuance. His view on this issue is vividly expressed:

> *Lantas! Lantas aku tahu kalau mau politik harus cari uang. Yang banyak, Bung, yang banyak. Jangan seperak dua perak. Jangan Cuma bisa tahan bantu nasi bungkus satu-dua minggu. Jalan masih panjang. Nasi-nasi bungkus masih harus terus dibeli.* (Kayam, 1986a, p. 313)
>
> *Go on! To remain active in politics, I need money. A lot of money. Not just a few dimes. Not just for a few weeks. It's a long road. I have to keep on buying bundles of rice.* (Kayam, 1980, p. 183)

Nasi bungkus (bundles of rice – money politics) remains as instrumental as it had been, not only in politics but also in relation to trading. It is a multipurpose tool for rallying the masses, gaining political favour, and smoothing Suwandi's business dealings:

> *"Ah, ya. Nasi bungkus itu akan selalu mesti dibeli dan dibagi kapan saja, Mus. Bentuknya bisa lain-lain ukurannya bisa lain-lain. Tapi politik, ah, apa saja, juga dagang, juga perang semua ada urusannya*

dengan nasi bungkus itu." (Kayam, 1986, p. 314)

Oh, yes. A man has to buy rice and be always ready to share it, Mus. The bundles may take on different shapes and sizes. But in politics, as in everything else – business, war, you name it – everything depends on rice. (Kayam, 1980, pp. 183–184)

Armed with money politics and his feet set on the two crucial worlds of politics and business (in the story his interests range from beverages to airline and forestry businesses), Suwandi has become prosperous, with powerful connections both domestic and abroad.

Kayam appears to be suggesting that when thinking that every aspect of modern life is based on money politics, Suwandi is actually trapped in a false consciousness - the idea that he is working for the betterment of his nation when actually he is not. Suwandi may be said to be manipulating the idea of an imagined postcolonial nation, exploiting the idea that, in Benedict Anderson's phrase "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [community], the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 2000, p. 7). If in the past they had similar ideas of building an independent state by fighting the colonial regime and then around 1965 fighting against the Communist Party for a better modern country independent of a dominating foreign ideology, now after winning those two battles, Suwandi has expanded his *nasi bungkus* politics for his own interest. A tactic initially developed and maintained for the betterment of the emerging nation is now changed into an individual enterprise for personal benefits.

Although involved in money politics with Suwandi around the *Gestapu* time, Masturi chooses to take a different turn. He prefers to work within the established system as a civil servant and lecturer, leaving the world of *nasi bungkus* intrigue behind. He decides to have a different role and be just an ordinary member of society who continues working in the big machine without entering into a false national consciousness which will enable him to manipulate others for his own benefit. Mustari's figuration reflects Kayam's general characterization of the protagonists in his *priyayi* stories. These protagonists usually refuse to support a corrupt system but keep working in it. Consequently, it is people like Suwandi who have more power to determine the direction of the state while person like Mustari remain as just a small part of the big machine: *"Kau hebat. Kau sekarang jadi manager mesin yang besar. Aku sekrup saja. Sekrup biasa saja"* (Kayam, 1986, p. 320) ("You're fantastic. You're the manager of a great, enormous machine. I'm only a cog. A very ordinary cog." (Kayam, 1980, pp. 187–188).

After gaining national independence from the colonial power and winning the battle for power over their domestic enemies, leaders like Suwandi fail to establish a healthy state and he soon, in Fanon's words, "reveal[s] his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns" (2006, p. 122) rather than a politician working sincerely for the good of the state. A transformative third space cannot be accomplished because these new domestic leaders stop short of realizing that liberation from colonialism is a means to achieve social justice for the people not an end in anti-colonial movements.

Jalan Menikung

Twenty-five years after writing "Kimono Biru", Kayam revisited the New Order setting in *Jalan Menikung* (1999). Published after the downfall of the New Order, the novel presents thematic material suggesting that in a country whose system is built on money politics and cronyism, personal achievement is almost impossible without collusion and bribery. The result is that the state is rampant with fishy practices. In the novel almost all characters get the positions that they want by means of cronyism and bribery. Even Harimurti, a character with a strong sense of integrity, gets his job because of Tommi's business partner whose uncle is a retired Brigadier General. Kayam depicts Tommi as the first *priyayi*

businessman, a paradigmatic figure of social transition.

In Kayam's stories, *priyayi* values are described as having turned in a new direction now that high status is mainly associated with material prosperity. Following this new trajectory, traditional *priyayi-hood* is not considered important; what constitute an important citizen in the present state are not cultural values such as heredity, being refined, service for the peasants, education or technical capabilities, but rather financial power. This condition is reflected in Tommi's speech:

> *Memang kelas priyayi sudah dianggap ketinggalan jaman. Tetapi menjadi orang terdidik dan terpandang dalam masyarakat, bukankah tetap merupakan cita-cita kita semua?* (Kayam, 1999, p. 155)
>
> It's true that the *priyayi* social rank has been considered out of date. But becoming an educated person and a respected figure in the community remains our goal, doesn't it?

The idea of being 'respected' is now an ambiguous goal. Someone who has respect is interpreted by Tommi as someone whose material prosperity creates fear and admiration. In other words, being *priyayi* is identical with being financially powerful. In previous stories, *priyayi* figures are described as respected members of society because of their moral standing as well as their inherited rank. In the present setting there is no moral issue which is considered important. In such a context the references to *wayang* figures and their associated Javanese wisdom, references which are very strong ingredient in *Para Priyayi* (1992), Kayam's previous novel, have almost have no echo in *Jalan Menikung*. There is no *wayang* reflection because there is no moral consideration of the kind that tradition might exemplify, endorse or even critique.

In the modern setting, Kayam's paradigmatic representation of the path a character might take to achieve *kamukten*, prosperity, has moved from that of becoming a government official (Sastrodarsono), to becoming a soldier (Noegroho), and now finally to becoming a businessman (Tommi). If becoming a government official was a means of social mobility for the *priyayi* class during colonialism, and being a soldier matched with the traditional ideal of a *priyayi* figure who masters the art of war, then the turn to becoming businessman might be seen as an ironic commentary on the trajectory of the *priyayi*. The depiction of Sastrodarsono's third generation descendant as a trading *priyayi* indicates a radical change in *priyayi-hood* since *priyayi* until the early twentieth century were antagonistic towards trading as a profession. Being a merchant had been seen as a profession only for those who were culturally marginalized. Kayam's figuration of trading *priyayi* therefore engages with the modern *priyayi*'s world view on what is and what is not a proper occupation for their families to be involved in. Tommi becoming a businessman with his suspect dealing therefore could be seen as treason against traditional *priyayi* values in the post-independence context.

The damage to *priyayi* values committed by Tommi can be seen as treason because although he respects and glorifies his *priyayi* ancestors' merits, his life principles are against the ideals of *priyayi-hood* that they stood for. Kayam portrays him as a greedy businessman without any commitment to justice. Tommi has no issue with false consciousness; he runs his business empire without deluding himself that he is supporting the national government or the idea of an independent Indonesia as does Suwandi. He is a true businessman with only one purpose in mind: profit. That is why the first question Tommi asks Eko upon Eko's return from the U.S. is so *un-priyayi*: "*Omong-omong,* by the way*, Ko, kamu sekarang dagang apa Ko?*" (By the way, Ko, what are you trading now, Ko?") (Kayam, 1999, p. 123).

Kayam depicts Tommi's modus operandi in his fishy business as similar to that of Noegroho during the revolution in the 1940s. Just as Noegroho manipulated the army supply system to exceed real needs so that he could have his share, Tommi works together with the government officials to mark up the state budget for the projects he is undertaking so that they too can have their share. This is what Tommi means by '*main*' (to play) in the following dialogue:

> *"Ah, kamu sudah terlalu lama dan jauh dari Indonesia. Kalau kamu tinggal lama sedikit saja di sini, kau akan tahu sendiri. Kalau kamu mau ikut-ikutan 'main', nanti saya ajari. He, he, he."* (Kayam, 1999, p. 131)
>
> "Oh, you've been away from Indonesia for too long. If you stay here a little bit more, you will understand what it means. If you want to 'play along', I will teach you, He, he, he."

Tommi certainly learns from his father very well. The only difference is that if Noegroho thought that what he did was not treason against the republic, Tommi does not even bother if this is treason or not.

The other postcolonial issue suggested by this novel is the role of the military once it goes beyond its proper sphere of duty, and the corruption of officials running the state. This is portrayed, for instance, in Tommi's sister, Anna, who is doing business with *Inkopad* (*Induk Koperasi Angkatan Darat* – the Army's Central Coop) in her trading business. This indicates a more serious problem in a republic in which a military institution also deals in trading. Although military business helps to finance the military needs from the extra state budgets, the combination of military and business can be potentially abusive, especially because during the New Order, the military were assigned under the so-called *dwi fungsi* or double functions doctrine. Under this doctrine, the military are not only responsible for defending the integrity of the state from foreign and domestic threats but also played a role in in running the state by becoming Governors, Regents, and taking on other strategic positions that are actually beyond the realm of military duties.

The prevalence of the military's dominant role in the republic is represented indirectly by Kayam in the pictures hung on the Wanagalih regency hall:

> *Hanya di dinding pinggir-pinggir pendopo kabupaten sekarang terpancang foto-foto besar mereka yang pernah menjabat bupati Wanagalih. Kebanyakan mantan-mantan letkol, bahkan kolonel juga ada. Nyata benar dari potret itu mana yang mantan bupati sipil, mana yang mantan bupati militer. Biasanya yang mantan bupati, mantan pamen militer nampak lebih gagah, seram karena kumisnya dan sinar matanya yang lebih percaya diri. Yang mantan bupati sipil Nampak lebih nrimo semuanya.* (Kayam, 1999, pp. 141–142)
>
> Large pictures of the former regents of Wanagalih were hung on the wall of the regency's living room. Most of them were ex Lieutenant Colonels or even Colonels. We could easily differentiate the pictures of the civil regents from the military ones. Military regents usually looked more well-built and scary because of their moustache and confident look. The civil regents look more passive.

The descriptions comparing the civil and military Regents are an allegory for the domination of the military figures in the state bureaucracy. The military Regents are more confident but at the same time scarier (*lebih seram*) for the people. Purely *civil* servants are seen as less aggressive and perhaps less effective.

Kayam describes Wanagalih's Regent (who has a military background) as a corrupt official. He abuses his power by using the money designated for the town development for his personal use:

> *"Yaa, kok cuma seratus juta. Kok pelit juga konglomerat muda ini. Ah, nggak apa. Sumbangan untuk perindahan kota saya jadikan proyek pribadi saja. Lumayan, dua kali seratus juta..."* (Kayam, 1999, p. 145)
>
> "Oh, only one hundred million. What a stingy young conglomerate he is. It doesn't matter. I will use this money for my personal project instead of the development of the town's park. Not bad, two times one hundred million..."

This corrupt attitude is anticipated by Tommi; he is the one who provides the money so that the cemetery renovation project in the regency can be completed smoothly. He is very

certain that the Regent will never really use the money for the town development. This plot element is there to indicate corruption is a common practice that almost everyone knows about; some kind of social permissiveness has taken root.

Kayam uses the novel to show that the same corrupt attitude also plagues state officials in the centre of the state, Jakarta. In the story, corrupt practices in the central government are testified to by Endang, secretary to some Directorate General whom she describes as *"baik, tetapi juga egois, egosentrik, dan korup"* (kind, but selfish, egocentric, and corrupt) (Kayam, 1999, p. 53):

> *Misalnya pada salah satu pertemuan itu Endang menyaksikan bagaimana bossnya membuat persetujuan untuk membuat mark-up atau menaikkan angka-angka sebenarnya dari biaya proyek-proyek mereka. Endang diminta mencatat itu semua dalam kode-kode khusus yang telah ditentukan, kemudian memasukkannya dalam file khusus.* (Kayam, 1999, p. 54)
>
> For instance, in one of the meetings Endang saw how her boss agrees to mark up their project budgets. Endang was told to write them all in special codes and then put them in a special file.

The prevalence of corrupt state officials, from those in the central government to those in the the rural regency of Wanagalih, has to be seen as Kayam's depiction of the failure of the postcolonial state to build a just society. Living in such corrupt state, the *priyayi* figures who prosper are the ones that compromise their ideals of *priyayi-hood* for the pursuit of material prosperity.

Conclusion

The *priyayi* in these two fictions represent two contradictory attitudes to the opportunities offered by the new state. Suwandi and Tommi represent the corrupt *priyayi* who play a prominent role in the New Order regime with their fishy business and close alliance with high government officials. Although the corrupt *priyayi* have lost the traditional respect that their predecessors had as a result of their corrupt morality, they become influential in national politics because of their financial power. On the other side, the idealised *priyayi* figures, such as Mustari, Harimurti and Eko, are marginalized by the political system. The dominant role held by figures like Suwandi and Tommi on the one hand, and the powerlessness of the idealised *priyayi* like Mustari, Harimurti and Eko on the other, has paralysed the new state. This literary portrayal of the corrupt new independent state is analogous to what Fanon (Fanon, 1971, p. 133) describes happening in African postcolonial countries as the consequence of what he calls the 'pitfall of the national consciousness'.

The corrupt *priyayi* figures in the New Order as represented by Kayam occupy a third space where they become trading *priyayi* who ally with politicians. The compassionate *priyayi* also occupy a third space where they still retain their traditional respect from the masses, but have lost their political power. The juxtaposition of these contradictory *priyayi* figures also portrays the failure of the third space to be a transformative power in Indonesian experience. Ashcroft (Ashcroft, 2001) argues the third space is where the negotiation between the colonized and the colonizer generates transformative cultural production. The domination of the corrupt figures and the marginalization of the idealised characters in these stories indicate that this transformative energy is paralysed.

Kayam seems to argue that third space is a means of salvation for the peasants from an exploitive colonial system, but at the same time he also indicates how *priyayi* traditional values fail to empower the new *priyayi* to become a liberating agent from domestic colonialism. Kayam re-constructs the majority of colonial *priyayi*'s third space as a space coopted by corruption; thus, the figuration of the free will of the main *priyayi*, Sastrodarsono, is depicted as confined within the ideology of colonialism and therefore indirectly supporting that ideology. The ideal resistance to colonialism that Kayam proposes is clandestine resistance prioritizing *priyayi* principles of harmony and respect. The transformation that he envisages is therefore also a very limited one. Such *priyayi* principles

fail to develop the third space of the colonial *priyayi* into a transforming power which might free them from oppression.

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