

**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF POST-COLONIAL CONDITION AS  
PORTRAYED BY THE CHARACTERS IN LAIRD'S *A LITTLE PIECE OF  
GROUND***

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Gaining the Bachelor

Degree in English Literature



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Atas perhatiannya, kami ucapkan terima kasih.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF POST-COLONIAL CONDITION AS  
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**ABSTRACT**

Post-colonialism has become an inherent issue in everyday life, especially related to the culture and perspective of the people affected by colonization. The concept of post-colonialism is also related to the psychological impact experienced by the victims. It leads the researcher to analyze the psychological impacts experienced by the characters in the novel *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird, which presents the story of the struggle of Palestinians who were occupied and colonized by Israel. The researcher aims to discover how the concept of post colonialism and its practice cause psychological impacts on the characters of the novel. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze and define the data. The researcher also uses Hook (2008)'s theory of post-colonial psychoanalysis, which is divided into neurosis, melancholia, and paranoia. The results indicate that the three psychological effects of post-colonialism are found on the characters, such as : 1) neurosis related to colonialism structures caused by the Israel invasion of Palestine, which also result in bearing isolation, robbery, violence, humiliation by the Israeli; 2) Melancholia represented through Karim who is experiencing depression and deep sadness which makes him feel worthless and hopeless; and 3) Paranoia represented by Karim and his family in Ramallah who experience severe intimidation that provokes them to feel worried, fear, and cause several symptoms, such as sweating and body trembling.

**Keywords** : *A Little Piece of Ground*, Post-colonial, Psychoanalysis, Neurosis, Melancholia, Paranoia

**DAMPAK PSIKOLOGIS DARI KONDISI PASCA-KOLONIAL YANG  
DIGAMBARAKAN OLEH KARAKTER DALAM NOVEL *A LITTLE PIECE  
OF GROUND* KARYA LAIRD**

Oleh : Augustika Nilla Choreawaty

**ABSTRAK**

Post-kolonialisme telah menjadi isu yang melekat dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, terutama terkait dengan budaya dan cara pandang masyarakat yang terkena dampak penjajahan. Konsep pascakolonialisme juga terkait dengan dampak psikologis yang dialami para korban. Hal tersebut mengarahkan peneliti untuk menganalisis dampak psikologis yang dialami oleh para tokoh dalam novel *A Little Piece of Ground* karya Elizabeth Laird, yang menyajikan kisah perjuangan rakyat Palestina yang diduduki dan dijajah oleh Israel. Peneliti bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana konsep pascakolonialisme dan praktiknya menimbulkan dampak psikologis terhadap karakter novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis dan mendefinisikan data. Peneliti juga menggunakan teori psikoanalisis pascakolonial Hook (2008) yang terbagi menjadi neurosis, melancholia, dan paranoia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga efek psikologis pascakolonialisme pada tokoh, seperti : 1) neurosis terkait struktur kolonialisme akibat invasi Israel ke Palestina, yang juga mengakibatkan pengucilan, perampokan, kekerasan, penghinaan oleh Israel; 2) Melancholia direpresentasikan melalui Karim yang mengalami depresi dan kesedihan mendalam yang membuatnya merasa tidak berharga dan putus asa; dan 3) Paranoia yang diwakili oleh Karim dan keluarganya di Ramallah yang mengalami intimidasi berat yang membuat mereka merasa khawatir, takut, dan menimbulkan beberapa gejala seperti berkeringat dan tubuh gemetar.

**Kata Kunci : *A Little Piece of Ground*, Pascakolonial, Psikoanalisis, Neurosis, Melancholia, Paranoia**

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**MOTTO**

Just because you took longer than others, doesn't mean you failed.

-Anonymous



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this graduating paper to myself who is not giving up.  
Also, to my family and friends, who always help and support me.





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*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*

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This graduating paper is still not perfect, therefore criticism and suggestions from the readers are needed to improve this graduating paper. Finally, the researcher hopes that this research can be useful for education and can inspire the readers.

Yogyakarta, 23 Juni 2022

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

The issue of post-colonialism still persists to the current society as it carries the after-effects and influences caused by the concept of colonialism. The term post-colonialism refers to the cultures and societies that are affected from colonization. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2013:168) the state of post-colonialism has chronological meaning and period and in the year of 1970s, the term has been used to address by literary critics in describing the representation of cultural effects from colonization and land invasion. It means that the topic of post-colonialism is often discussed within literary criticism scopes that highlights how people who are affected by the colonization and the shift of the cultures described in literary works. Moreover, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2013:168) also explained that post-colonialism includes the basic concept of homogeneity which maintains the colonizers' dominations over the colonized. This is reflected through the issues of discrimination, alienation on of the minority, racism, marginalization, and so forth that persist to the nowadays' society.

The example of postcolonial psychoanalysis or post-colonialism in general that still persists and becomes the concerns of various fields is the conflict between Israel and Palestine. According to Moore-Gilbert (2016:1), the conflict between Israel and Palestine is considered to belong in postcolonial studies as it reflects the binational representation which is only explainable within the

understanding of postcolonial politics and identity. This means that the binational representation in Palestine as a country is considered as post-colonial discourse from how Israel invades Palestine and proceeds to control over the members of the country as well as claiming their land as theirs which is related to the basic concept of colonialization in term of land invasion. Kelleci (2012:2) explained that the conflict between Israel and Palestine as well as the structural problems in Palestine need to be analyzed under postcolonial discourse to determine how the concept of colonialism maintains the conflict for over 100 years. It means that the conflict between the two opposing countries has been going for so long with the persisting practice of colonialism within the society. Moreover, Home (2003:291) explained that the colonial context in the conflict of Israel and Palestine laid on how Israel assert ethnocratic control over Palestine in which they claim the land of Palestine as their own using the steps of settlement, transfer, partition, absenteeism which reflect the concept of colonization is post-colonialism field. Thus, based on the several studies, the invasion of Israel in Palestine and their domination over the Palestinian belong to the discourse of post-colonialism where domination, discrimination, invasion, and so forth are addressed.

The particular representation of the relation between post-colonialism and its effects in the conflict between Israel and Palestine is often portrayed through literary works. One of the well-known novels with this particular issue is entitled *A Little Piece of Ground* (2006) by Elizabeth Laird. The story in the novel focuses on the portrayal of the oppressed colonized which is described from the life of a twelve-year-old boy named Karim Aboudi. Karim and his family are Palestinians

who live under the cruel domination of the Israelis. The psychological impacts of post-colonialism are seen through Karim, his family, and the other Palestinian in the novel while they are enduring Israel's rules during their settlement. The characters are showing several psychological reactions, such as neurosis which is represented through their anger and frustration from Israel's curfew and domination, melancholia or sadness for their robbed freedom, and paranoia for the shadows of Israel's violence and aggression that can occur to them anytime.

The impacts of colonialism that are mainly addressed through the term of post-colonialism obviously affect the colonized or the minority's psychological state as colonialism involves discrimination and limited aspirations of the colonized. Bhabha (1994:122) determined three main aspects including mimicry (the act of mimicking the colonizer), ambivalence (blending with the colonizer), and hybridity (turning into the colonizer) which are considered as psychological and behavioral reactions to the concept of colonialism itself. The mentioned aspects demonstrate how post-colonialism has the basic impacts that closely influence the psychological states of the colonized. The similar perception of psychological impact of post-colonialism is explained by Hook (2008). Hook (2008:271) explained that the psychological characteristics of post-colonialism involve diagnostic speculation with certain colonial figures, types, power dynamics, and subjugation. This means that psychoanalysis within the scope of post-colonialism links to the relationships and personalities influenced by the concept of colonialism in which it is heavily harmful for the colonized rather than the colonizers. Hook (2008:273) also defined the operations and concept of

psychological aspects of the colonized in terms of postcolonial psychoanalysis consisting neurosis, melancholia, and paranoia. Thus, the psychological effects caused by colonialism are defined through neurosis or the mental struggles of the victims, melancholia or sadness, and paranoia or also addressed as immense fear.

Based on this phenomenon and theoretical perception, the researcher aims to conduct a qualitative study to determine the portrayal of post-colonialism and its psychological impacts portrayed by the characters in *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird. The guiding theory of postcolonial psychoanalysis is used in this study to analyze the psychological effects endured by the Palestinian as the colonized under Israel invasion and domination reflected in the novel. The depiction of post-colonialism and its psychological, thus, becomes the main focus of this study with the title, “Psychological Impact of Post-Colonial Condition as Portrayed by the Characters in Laird’s *A Little Piece of Ground*”.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates a research question : What are the psychological impacts caused by post-colonial condition portrayed through the characters in the novel *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird?

## **1.3 Objectives of Study**

Based on the formulated research question, the objective of this study is to determine how post-colonial concept and practice give psychological impacts, especially towards the conquered who experience various mistreatments,



such as discrimination and abuse during the conqueror settlement that is portrayed in *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird.

#### **1.4 Significances of Study**

The significance of this study is to contribute within literary analysis field especially in the discussion of post-colonial condition and its psychological impacts toward the groups involved in it. This study aims to further enrich general readers' knowledge on literary work that depicts the issue of psychological impacts of post-colonial condition. Moreover, this study also aims to become a reliable reference for the future researchers in the similar field.

#### **1.5 Literature Review**

The issue of post-colonialism and its impacts has been taken into the main concern of various scientific studies. This section provides several related discussions to this study. The first study by Neimneh (2017) entitled "Postcolonial Arabic Fiction Revisited: Naturalism and Existentialism in Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*" aims to determine the portrayal of postcolonialism through Kanafani's narrative through the relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian. This study also focuses on the naturalism and existentialism reflected through the object. The qualitative research method is used in presenting the data analysis. Moreover, the main perception of post-colonialism along with naturalism and existentialism are used to provide a comprehensive analysis in the study. The result shows that the issues of post-colonialism portrayed in the fiction involve the physical and psychological sufferings of Palestinian as the oppressed. Palestinian are colonized under Israeli's control and alienated in their own land.

The perception of naturalism and existentialism further shows how postcolonial literature reflects both realistic and unrealistic representation of oppression.

The second previous study by Martin (2018) entitled “Of Holes and Wounds: Postcolonial Trauma and the Gothic in Catherine Jinks’ *The Road*” aims to determine the relationship between personal and historical trauma caused by postcolonial regulations in Australia portrayed through the film “*The Road*” (2004). This study uses qualitative research method along the perceptions of post-colonialism, trauma, and gothic to guide the analysis. The result shows that through the analysis towards the characters in the film, it is known that classic realism through the gothic and trauma tropes reveal the lasting old wounds caused by post-colonialism which are reflected through their behaviors and tendencies as individuals.

The last previous study by Lubis (2022) entitled “The Effects of Racism Toward American Society in Angie Thomas’ “*The Hate U Give*” Novel: Post-Colonial Approach” aims to determine the psychological impacts caused by the issues of discrimination and unfair treatment within post-colonialism discourse represented in the novel. This study applies qualitative research method to present the data analysis. Moreover, this study also uses the guiding theory by Bhui (2002) and post-colonialism approach to provide comprehensive analysis. The result shows that the psychological impacts caused by the discriminative behaviors the characters receive from the issue of colonialism and racism manifested in the forms of bad mental health, such as trauma, re-occurring nightmares, and shock.

Based on the reviewed previous studies, the research gaps lie on how the three studies have not yet discovered the impacts of post-colonialism towards the conquered who endure and face direct actions taken by the conqueror during their settlement. The psychological impacts caused by discriminative actions and abuse further develop into neurotic conditions. Thus, this study specifically takes the proposition into the main focus which is to determine the psychological impacts caused by post-colonialism portrayed by Israeli as the conqueror and Palestinian as the conquered in the novel *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird.

## **1.6 Theoretical Approach**

### **1.6.1 Postcolonial Psychoanalysis Theory**

Postcolonial psychoanalysis refers to the term used as a basic perception in the psychological aspects of post-colonialism. According to Hook (2008:272), the relation between the colonized and the colonizer in post-colonialism field includes the mediated desire between the two parties that can only be understood by using third term of colonial situation. This means that post-colonialism as a field of study and discussion has the major role to address the condition of being the colonized or colonizer based on the dynamic of the two opposing groups. Hook (2008:272) also explained that the main emphasis in postcolonial psychoanalysis that involves the relationship where the colonizer is the main and the only dominating power over the colonized. In other words, postcolonial psychoanalysis further explains the aspects that follow the condition where the colonizer is fully controlling the colonized which result in full dominance of the colonizer and the full submission of the colonized.

The psychological characterization of post-colonialism refers to a diagnostic aspect. Hook (2008:271) explained that the psychological characterization of post-colonialism is seen through several aspects consisting of power and subjugation, racism, and objectification. It means that the psychological aspect of post-colonialism in characterization after the basic concept of colonialism itself where the issues of power domination, discrimination over races, and the objectification of the oppressed are the main issues discussed within the field of the study which are taken from the real conditions found in real cases. Hook (2008:271) also explained that the postcolonial diagnostic characterization becomes a variation to Freudian's psychoanalysis from the aspects of subjugation, racism, and objectification that further determine the psychological relation to the individuals. In this sense, the psychological assessment of certain individuals is being correlated with the socio-historical aspect within the postcolonial context. The psychological aspects of post-colonialism are defined through several aspects that are determined based on the psychological reactions of the colonized during the colonization. Each of the aspect is provided in the following:

1. Neurosis

Neurosis is the psychological term to describe a mental struggle experienced by an individual as the reaction towards particular situation or condition. According to Hook (2008:271), neurosis in postcolonial psychoanalysis is not only explained by its general definition but also related to the wider system of colonization, such as their identity, subject effects, and colonial situation itself.

This means that the state of neurosis experienced by individuals within the postcolonial psychoanalysis also involves the discussion on how the colonialization concept affects them and how it influences their psychological conditions.

## 2. Melancholia

The second aspect of psychological aspects of post-colonialism is melancholia. Melancholia refers to the state of sadness and hopelessness experienced by human beings. Within the discussion of postcolonial psychoanalysis, this term refers to the one of the coherence notion in physical and psychological functions under colonial power (Hook, 2008:273). The discussion of melancholia is often discussed within post-colonialism psychology as it demonstrates the different dynamics in colonial literature and environment where the colonizer fully controls over the colonized. Based on this dynamics, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is gaped extremely where the colonizer one-sidedly determines the colonized's destiny and rights.

## 2. Paranoia

Paranoia refers to the psychological and physical reactions in the forms of intense and excessive fear, worries, and anxiety. Hook (2008:273) explained that paranoia is one of the reactions that demonstrates how psychological conditions of a person influence their physical reactions which in the case of post-colonialism, is closely related to the concept of colonization. This refers to the terror, fear, and anxiety that the colonized have to endure during the invasion and settlement of the colonizer. As the colonizer is the only one with power and

control, the colonized are forced into submission and deal with the intimidation from the colonizer as the plan to maintain their dominance over the others.

From the three aspects of postcolonial psychoanalysis consisting of neurosis, melancholia, and paranoia, it is known that psychoanalysis in post-colonialism discourse helps the analysis to deepen from the perception of how personal and interpersonal desires build the basic concept of colonization. Hook (2008:273) explained that psychoanalysis highlights the points of racism, discrimination, mistreatment within colonization through elucidating the private desires and psychology with social relation. In other words, psychoanalysis in post-colonialism discourse determines how private desires and the psychological aspects of human beings influence the structures of colonization itself. This means that psychological reasoning and impacts cannot be separated when it comes to analyzing the topic of post-colonialism whether it is in the form of literature or real cases taken from the social environment. Hook (2008:273) also explained that psychoanalytical discussion within postcolonial discourse represents the mutual supportive system in intra-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. This means that postcolonial psychoanalysis does not only focus on the colonization dynamics but also through the relation and interaction between the involved parties of the case.

## **1.7 Method of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

This research applies qualitative descriptive method in order to gather and present the data analysis in this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018:41) explained

that qualitative descriptive method is used in the studies that aims to determine an answer based on the rising question by collecting data in the forms of text and to present it in the form of coherent paragraphs instead of in the numerical form. Thus, this method is considered appropriate to be applied in this study as the main focus is to determine the psychological impacts of post-colonial condition portrayed in the novel *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The main data source of this study is the novel entitled *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird. The data are in the forms of narration and dialogues taken from the novel that reflect the representation post-colonial condition and its psychological impacts. Meanwhile, the secondary data or the supporting data of this research are taken from journals, books, and internet sources related to the novel analysis.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

There are several steps done to collect the data. The first step involved the researcher to read the novel. The second step was the researcher reading the novel again and marking the narration and dialogues relating to the main concern of postcolonial and its psychological impacts reflected by the conquered. The last step was the researcher analyzing the data by referring to the theory of post-colonialism psychoanalysis before concluding it into coherent conclusion.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The data analysis technique consists of several steps. The first step was to categorize the gathered data based on the formulated research problem. In the second step, the researcher analyzed the psychological impacts of post-colonial condition portrayed by Palestinians as the conquered. Lastly, the researcher drew coherent conclusion from the analysis.

#### **1.8 Paper Organization**

This research consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study and issues taken as the main concern. It reveals the background of the study, research question, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter consists of intrinsic elements contained in the novel such as theme, plot, character and characterization, and setting. The third chapter is discussion. This chapter reveals an analysis of research using postcolonialism psychoanalysis theory. The last chapter consists of conclusions and suggestions. This chapter provides the research conclusions from the object of study.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusions

After analyzing the gathered data, there is the main conclusion drawn from the investigation of the psychological impacts of post-colonialism reflected in *A Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird. The analysis applies the postcolonial psychoanalysis theory by Hook (2008). The psychological impacts of post-colonialism in the novel are found in three aspects as reflected from the characters. The psychological impacts are neurosis, melancholia, and paranoia. The neurosis is shown through Karim, his family, and the other Palestinian especially those who reside in Ramallah. Neurosis refers to the one's mental struggle caused by inner and outer stimulants. The neurosis portrayed in the novel is related to the structure of colonialism from Israel's invasion in Palestine which causes Palestinian to endure neurotic conditions, such as anger, hopelessness, frustration, and desperation. The mentioned neurotic impacts on Palestinian are caused by enduring isolation, robbery, violence, humiliation, done by the Israeli.

The next psychological impact of post-colonialism portrayed in the novel is melancholia. Melancholia refers to the state of deep sadness and hopelessness caused by a great loss. Referring to the relationship between the Israeli as conqueror and the Palestinian as the conquered, it impacts deeply on the conquered as they have to endure continuous mistreatment as in discrimination and oppression. Melancholia in the novel is represented by mostly Karim. The melancholia is seen through the depression or deep sadness that leads him into

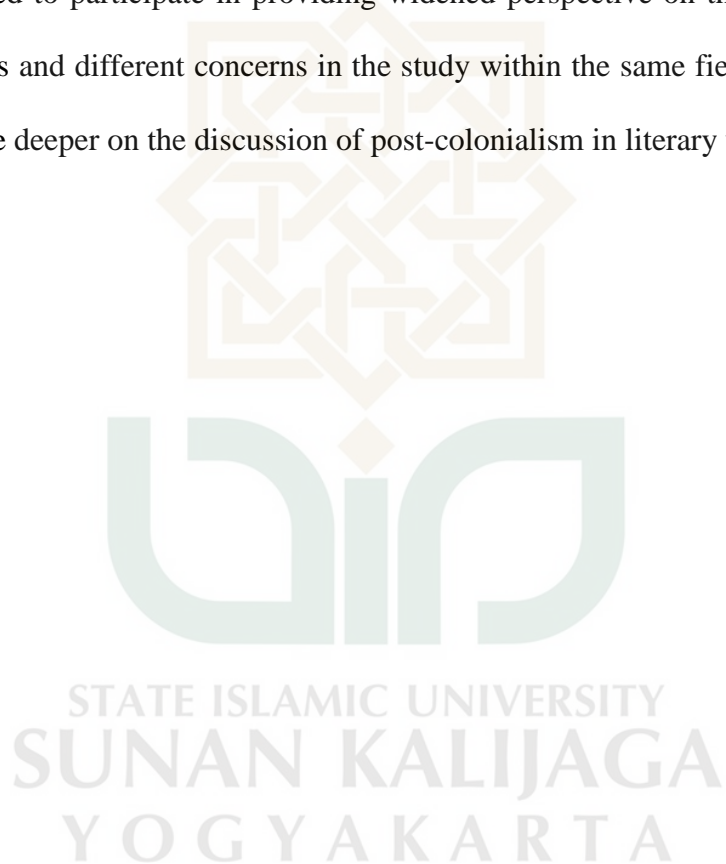
feeling worthless and hopeless from the loss of his friends and the freedom of Palestinian in their own land. Karim has to witness the violence, becomes the victim of the violence itself, endure the isolation, and deal with melancholia that comes following the feeling of loss.

The last psychological impact of post-colonialism represented in the novel is paranoia. Paranoia refers to the excessive fear that one experiences after being exposed to unpleasant and continuous bad experience. This is portrayed by Karim and his family in the novel. As Palestinian in Ramallah, they have to deal with the intense intimidation from Israeli as they always march around with their tank and always carry guns. They will shoot on anyone that intentionally or accidentally pass the curfew or go against their rule. The state of paranoia portrayed by Karim and his family is shown from how they keep feeling in danger even though they are staying at their house. Paranoia captured by Karim and his family is in the forms of both psychological and physical symptoms. For example, Karim and his family will feel excessive worries and fear even when the Israeli soldiers are not targeting on them. Meanwhile, the physical symptoms are seen through bodily reaction, such as sweats and trembling body.

#### **4.2 Suggestions**

This study focuses on determining the psychological impacts of post-colonialism portrayed by the Palestinian as the conquered. The theory of postcolonial psychoanalysis is used in analyzing how post-colonialism relationship influences the psychological aspects on the individuals that experience it. The researcher suggests future researchers to apply other

perception on the same issue of post-colonialism and widen the focus of study in order to provide more elaborated analysis in the future. For example, the research is encouraged to adjust the main focus of the study into determining the psychological aspects of post-colonialism of the conqueror and analyze the motives behind their treatment against the conquered portrayed in literature. This is expected to participate in providing widened perspective on the issue. Further researches and different concerns in the study within the same field are hoped to contribute deeper on the discussion of post-colonialism in literary works.



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