

## Resistance of colonization in the novel *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh

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### Abstract

Mengalami penjajahan untuk waktu yang cukup lama dapat membuat kelompok yang tertindas melakukan cara untuk menormalkan ketidakadilan dan membenarkan tindakan penindasan atau penjajahan. Novel karya Amitav Ghosh yang berjudul *sea of Poppies* (2008) yang dipresentasikan oleh Deeti, adalah sebuah novel yang mempresentasikan tentang penjajahan yang terjadi di India dan masyarakat adat yang menerima banyak ketidakadilan. Penjajahan tersebut dilakukan bertujuan untuk mengambil hasil alam dan mengeksploitasi manusia secara besar-besaran, yang akan menguntungkan pihak Inggris dan akan menyebabkan kerugian yang banyak untuk masyarakat India. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang bagaimana kolonisasi terhadap masyarakat adat serta untuk mengetahui bagaimana efek kolonisasi yang mengakibatkan perlawanan sebagai cara untuk menemukan keadilan untuk manusia. Untuk membantu dalam menganalisis teks, penelitian ini menggunakan teori poskolonialisme dan teori resistance. Pertama menggunakan Teori Fanon dan kemudian menggunakan Teori dari Homi K. Babha tentang poskolonialisme. Hasil dari analisis menunjukkan bahwa Deeti dan masyarakat India mengalami penjajahan yang mengakibatkan berjuang untuk melawan ketidakadilan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa keadaan Deeti cocok dan memiliki relevansi akurat dengan teori tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** Kolonialisme, Postkolonialisme, Efek, Resistensi.

### Abstract

Experiencing colonization for a long enough time can make an oppressed group take steps to normalize injustice and justify acts of oppression or occupation. Amitav Ghosh's novel, *Sea of Poppies* (2008), presented by Deeti, is a novel that presents the colonialism that occurred in India and indigenous peoples who accept many injustices. The occupation was carried out aimed at extracting natural products and exploiting humans on a large scale, which would benefit the British and would cause great loss to the Indian people. This study aims to analyze how the colonization of indigenous people is as well as to find out how the effects of colonization lead to resistance as a way to find justice for humans. To assist in analyzing the text, this study uses the theory of postcolonialism and the theory of resistance. First using Fanon Theory and then using Homi K. Babha's Theory of postcolonialism. The results of the analysis show that Deeti and Indian society experienced colonialism which struggled to fight injustice. This shows that Deeti's circumstances are suitable and have accurate relevance to the theory.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Effects, Resistance.

### INTRODUCTION:

Colonization has destructive effects upon the colonial subject and his land. An identity crisis of the colonial subject is one of these destructive features shown within the indigenous person and society. As one of the objectives of the colonialist is to have the indigenous people believe in their inferiority, the colonial power insists on deforming and distorting the local culture. Under the physical and mental domination and constant negative portrayals of indigenous people and history, the indigenous person begins to question his own identity and becomes

caught between the historical concept and present day reality. Colonization has changed the lives of indigenous peoples, not only from their habits but also from the perspective that is forced to be the same as that of the colonizers. The impact of this occupation greatly influenced the natives in the novel *Sea of Poppies*. In the novel, people like Deeti and her family are fighting against the injustices perpetrated by colonial exploitation (Mondal, 2014). The colonies ordered the residents to cultivate poppies on a large scale which resulted in the low price of poppies. Whereas before the arrival of the British colonies to India, poppies were a luxury for people like Deeti, and were grown in small quantities only to meet household

needs and be used properly. The exploitation created enormous losses for the indigenous people as the oppression was abused by the colony to only grow poppies. To ensure the natives met the colony's high demand for opium production, farmers were forced not to plant the usual seasonal crops, but to plant large numbers of poppies. Indigenous peoples are struggling to deal with rapid changes as a result of colonialism which have an impact on their daily lives.

Postcolonialism in Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies*, colonization of peasants who are stigmatized as losers as people who must be under the control of the invaders in aspects of their lives (Mondal, 2014). And the people who were colonized had the perception that the colonizer was a very powerful, great and strong person. In the novel *Sea of Poppies* is the work of writer Amitav Ghosh, this is the third work he has written. What tells about British colonization to the indigenous people of India, and not only that, Amitav Ghosh also presents how the British controlled the people and land of India. The natives had no choice to fight back, because they were helpless with the invaders (Fanon 1963). Unlike Deeti, however, there was a desire to oppose growing opium on her land. Because for Deeti such injustice must be fought for. As a farmer, she knew that the number of poppy flowers in a normal garden was only about one or two poppy plants, and that his main crops were wheat, dal, or vegetables. And once the British colonies trapped and forced the local inhabitants to get full control over their crops and even their lives showed how British colonials had exploited their people and their land (Mondal, 2014). The lack of public access to talk is why they consider the silence of the community as a sign of helplessness. Due to the very bad effects of colonialism on the community, the indigenous people began to fight against the injustices they experienced to claim their rights. Deeti and other farmers opposed and protested the unfair treatment (Fanon, 1963). The phenomenon in which the people opposed or protested against British colonial domination was a form of resistance in society.

Many people have conducted a literary study in this particular field throughout the decades. Some of them are Shopia Kiki Arianti, *Subalternity in Poppy Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies: Representation of Indian Women's Struggle against Patriarchy, this study analyzed the subaltern represented by Deeti in the Sea of Amitav Ghosh Poppies* (2019). The subject is subaltern when Indian women struggle against patriarchy in society. This study uses postcolonialism theory and subaltern theory to analyze the representation of subaltern subjects fighting against patriarchy. The subject was represented by Indian women as a subaltern subject. The aim of the Subaltern is 'low life', a name adopted from Antonio Gramsci to denote people who are subject to the highest power in society. Other words, usually those people were

invaders making wrong rules for people outside their circle.

In this study different literary work is *Subaltern consciousness in Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies by Saumini.P* (2015), This article is proposed to examine and explore the transformation of novel discourse to tell indenture stories. This shows how Amitav Ghosh uses anthropological and historical perspective to renegotiate the discourse of subalternity from perspective Diaspora indenture. *Sea of Poppies* created a world made of some special and mass oppressed, exploited subjects. The lives of subjects who are marginalized in this novel are conditioned and dictated by the movement of people, commerce and empire. This novel illustrates how the present is shaped by Indian empire. This is a precise and concrete commentary on colonialism which is now corrupt and divided in India Public. This novel paints a sharp portrait of human destruction and decadence caused by imperialism.

And the last studies is *Posthumanist response to Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies by Shalini Jain* (2011), This essay discovers and develops various strands of the posthumanist approach to the nexus of colonialism, imperialism and humanism Enlightenment in Amitav Ghosh's novel, *Sea of Poppies*. Fictitiously describing the politics of conquest and resistance from previous eras, Ghosh drew attention to the history that had long reached the consequences of such relics in the former colony of the present, and subtly implies a parallel equation between the colonials and new colonial times.

The main focus of this study is the human consequences of control and exploitation of colonized the people and their lands. Yet the term continues to be used from time to time to mean simply 'anti-colonial' and to be synonymous with 'postindependence', as in references to the 'post-colonial state'. In actual postcolonialism has to be understood only about colonialism, myth and history, language and landscape, self and other are all very important ingredients of postcolonial studies. It means that the physical area of postcolonial study is wider than any other discipline in literature.

## **METHOD:**

The data collected from the novel *Sea of Poppies by Amitav Ghosh* are taken from dialogues, quotes, and novel descriptions. Then the data collection that has been collected is concluded well according to the characters in the novel. The characters in the novel are analyzed using the theory of experts. The first approach is taken from the resistance theory by Fanon

then for the second approach using the postcolony theory by Homi K. Bhabha. In order to explain the conditions of the main characters and others, this study discusses the theory of resistance and the theory of the postcolonial system. Furthermore, this research explains and describes how the life of the natives during the colonial period. In order for this research to be reliable and understandable, theories from postcolonialism are used to explain how to change the lives of the characters in it. Besides, the conclusion is the final step, the conclusion, of this research.

### **Resistance theory:**

Fanon's (1963) theory on the formation of resistance literature consists of three stages, namely assimilation, rediscovering and fighting. The first stage, which is assimilation to the dominant culture, describes the first response of the native intellectual towards the colonial. Fanon (1963) explains this stage in *The Wretched of the Earth*: His the native intellectual- writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country. His inspiration is European and we can easily link up these works with definite trends in the literature of the mother country (1963, page. 222).

The second stage is the native intellectual's rediscovery of his heritage. Fanon explains the second stage stating that: This period of creative work approximately corresponds to that immersion which we have just described. But since the native is not a part of his people, since he only has exterior relations with his people, he is content to recall their life only (1963, page. 222). Finally, the third stage is the fighting stage where the native intellectual tries to awaken the people to struggle. At the last stage, the native intellectual undergoes the turning phase and of according the people's lethargy an honoured place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature (Fanon, 1963, page. 222-223).

### **Postcolonialism theory:**

The true meaning of postcolonialism is about colonialism, which contains legends in society, language and landscape. So other things are also important to describe the study of postcolonialism. This means that the physical area of postcolonial studies is broader than that of other literary disciplines. In addition, Spivak's mention in the critical theory of postcolonialism in *Another World: Essays in Political Culture* (1987) deserves a special mention including the essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Spivak extensively mentions the range of subalterns in literature for agglomerating women). Meanwhile Bhabha argues that colonialism is a set of logical assumptions about other lands and indigenous peoples.

In his book "The Location of Culture" (1994), Bhabha writes, 'The aim of colonial discourse is to portray colonized peoples into degenerate groups according to their race and culture, in order to provide a rationale for defining the system in colonialism'. (Mondal, 2014: 2967).

This theory leads to orientalist who are 'subjects of colonization' who have eccentric and natural behavior. Then the West was the subject of colonization, basically outside of Western culture and civilization. However, the discourse of colonialism attempted to reduce their radical differences, bringing Western understanding inward through the Orientalist project of building knowledge about them. Difference.' the system is to cut the colonized situation into a deeper meaning of Western knowledge. In Bhabha's perspective, 'colonialism created colonized people who were categorized as a phenomenon unknown before others outside the categorization' (Mondal, 2014: 2967).

So, people who are categorized as colonized are classified based on social stereotypes, which are social forms to see the quality of someone's poverty. "Stereotyping does not simply establish a false image that is the scapegoat for discriminatory practices. These are far more ambivalent projection and introjection texts, metaphorical and metonymic strategies, displacement, guilt, aggression; the disguise and separation of 'official knowledge' and fantastic knowledge "[Bhabha, 1986: 169] (Mondal, 2014: 2967).

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Representation of British colonialism in India**

The novel sea of poppies, the author amitav ghosh, presents how the British controlled the people and land of India. The natives do not choice to fight, because they were helpless with the invaders. But unlike Deeti, there is a desire to oppose growing poppy on her land. Because for Deeti such injustice must be fought for. As a farmer, she knew that the number of poppy flowers in a normal garden was only about one or two poppy plants, and that her main crops were wheat, dal, or vegetables.

*"...Such a penalty can be borne when you have one or two field of poppies-but what same person would want to multiply these labor when there are better and more usefil plats for growing,such as wheat,dal,vegetable?" (Ghosh,2008:28)*

When the British colonies trapped and forced the local inhabitants to gain full control over their crops and even their lives showed how colonial British had exploited their people and their land. The lack of public access to talk is why they consider the silence of the community as a sign of helplessness. Another fact is that the crops of the farmers are valued cheaply by the British from the community. For the peasants, British actions were very unfair because they were forced to grow crops to support their daily life while their crops were priced cheaply. Not only the peasants were disappointed but Deeti was also disappointed because her crop during the season was of little value, because she only depended on her livelihood from selling raw opium. Deeti as a representative of the farmers protested against the small money they received (Fanon, 1963).

*"But a rude surprise was waiting at Carcanna: after the opium ghar was weighed, counted and tested, Deeti was shown an account book for a plot of Hukam Singh's land." (Ghosh, 2008: 152)*

Deeti and other farmers opposed and protested the unfair treatment. The phenomenon in which the people opposed or protested against British colonial domination was a form of resistance in society (Scott, 2010). The farmers' protests could be heard all over the poppy factory as the crops were weighed. Most of the farmers were angry that their opium crop was under-appreciated and felt that their hard work had not been appreciated so far. Quarrels and grievances were inevitable, but there was no room for the peasants to express their objections to the injustice. There was no way out of the problem because the protests meant they had to be beaten up by the landlords. In addition, farmers must also accept the consequence that the next opium growing season they bear a bigger debt burden.

*"...Nearby, held back by a line of lathi carrying peons, stood the farmers whose vessels were being weighed; the alternatively tense and angry, cringing and resigned, there waiting to find out whether their harvest for this year has fulfilled their contract - if not, they have to start the following year with a still greater debt burden." (Ghosh, 2008: 92)*

There have been many attempts by farmers such as protesting against their landlords or factories, but this is in vain because the protests made by the peasants did not affect the system that had been implemented by the British. That means, no matter how hard the peasants struggle to fight for their rights, it will not affect or stop Britain's steps to exploit nature and the indigenous people of India. And because of this problem some farmers chose to sell their land to avoid starvation. Farmers have made efforts such as

protesting against their landlords or factories. Unfortunately, that did not affect the system that had been imposed by the British. In other words, the protests did not stop the British from exploiting nature and the indigenous people of India. Some farmers choose to sell their land to avoid starvation. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that there was little possibility that was achieved for people to fight for rights or to act against the colony. In some cases, protesting against injustice is not always good for the community, even though justice must be upheld and fought for for their homeland.

*And now, with the harvest over and little grain at home, they would have to plunge still deeper into debt to feed their families. It was as if the poppy had become the carrier of Karamnasa's malign taint. (Ghosh, 2008: 189)*

The wages that the colony gave to farmers were very meager, and Deeti was one of those farmers who had no other choice but to plant poppies on her farm. Not only that the peasants and Deeti had been bound by contracts imposed by the colonies. As shown in the above kuitipan, that they could not survive with the small amount of grain they had, because their right to plant the traditional crops they needed was denied by the colonists. Apart from the fact that traditional crops were rejected by the colonies, there was a reason why farmers only planted large numbers of poppies compared to traditional crops, because the cultivation of poppy flowers required extra attention. With so many obstacles and obstacles that the farmers went through which resulted in them being wrapped up in a very large number of forests, even the farmers were in debt just to feed their families everyday, in the past the poppies were considered very valuable by them, but now they are not considered valuable again.

*"The landscape on the rivers' shores had changed a great deal since Deeti's childhood and looking around now, it seemed to her that the Karamnasa's influence had spilled over its banks." (Ghosh, 2008: 118).*

It can be seen from the quote that the landscape is now filled with remnants of the opium harvest. And of course Deeti really annoyed her because the environment he had been protecting was slowly getting damaged, the green plants he used to see were nowhere to be seen. Because for him seeing green scenery can make his own happiness. And this winter, she couldn't grow and harvest vegetables and seeds because of the British rule he had to obey which was to grow poppies in large numbers, and of course those regulations created problems. Since regulations mandating large-scale opium cultivation were enacted, it has created many environmental problems. Nature that was once full of biodiversity is now disappearing as green land is being taken over for planting poppies.

The most prominent effect is soil damage and of course it creates long term damage. As a result of the damage to the soil, important soil nutrients for plants will gradually be depleted along with the massive planting of poppy. Meanwhile, natural balance is needed to maintain soil nutrients in order to remain fertile. And the authors explained that since the existence of regulations from British, farmers were prohibited from planting crops other than opium so that there was no crop rotation to restore nutrients to remain fertile. And because of these regulations, farmers' crops experience delays in harvesting caused by a lack of soil nutrients.

As explained in the novel, if the British colonies in India were supported by a monopoly on opium production. The monopoly only benefited British traders but not the low-caste indigenous peoples (Mondal,2014). The British had succeeded in making the most of opium, because they knew that opium was the only source of wealth that India had. The opium exclusive monopoly only benefited Britain. And opium is also a source of British wealth which has caused widespread poverty and hunger in the indigenous population. Cultivation that sells like opium makes it impossible for people to survive, because many farmers are forced to leave their villages in search of better jobs, but it's all useless because they still live in poverty and hunger.

### **The effect of colonization**

After presenting how the British fully controlled the people and land in India. The author also describes how the British colonization had many negative effects on indigenous peoples. Deeti is the main character who is described as an indigenous woman living in Ghazipur, India. As an opium farmer, Deeti really felt the bad effects obtained from this colonization, because when the East India Company took over India to cultivate opium in her country many people were in debt, could not eat, even owed to pay large debts they had to sell their land. to pay off debts(Mondal,2014). The continuing bad effects caused misery to the people because not only exploited the land but the colonies also squeezed their labor to work hard but they were paid very little wages. In addition, growing poppies requires tremendous effort from farmers, starting from ensuring manure and water, to extra care during harvest (Mondal,2014). That is why in the past, farmers only planted poppies on small plots of land for use only when sick, harvested or when there was a wedding.

*"...The timing had to be exactly right because the priceless sap flowed only for a brief period in the plant's span of life: a day or two this way of that, and the pods were of no more value than the blossoms of a weed."*  
(Ghosh,2008:5)

For farmers, growing poppies requires tremendous effort, because they have to make sure from the availability of manure and water, to require extra care from planting to harvesting. This is why in the old days before the invaders came farmers only planted poppies on a patch of land. In harvesting poppy sap must be at the right time. Because if the harvest time comes but it is too late to harvest the poppies, then only the extra care that has been done will be wasted. Because if it is too late for the harvest then the leftover poppies will no longer be valuable in the opium factory. Taking into account all the efforts that have been put into growing and harvesting poppies, the indigenous farmers grow only a small amount of poppy and prefer to grow other crops that are easy to care for in large quantities. But with the entry of British colonies forcing farmers to grow poppies in large numbers, which automatically required a lot of effort and effort. This is a form of oppression for the natives. In other words planting poppies is a torment for them. The exploitation of the indigenous population does not stop with paying extra attention to poppy cultivation, but also in how they are forced to sell their crops to factories at low prices. For the British colonists opium was an exclusive monopoly under the East India Company. This meant that people like Deeti were not entitled to the wealth that was made from the crop growing poppies. Their crops are brought directly to the factory in Gharas where every detail of opium production has been specially planned by the director of India Company in London.

*"Only as she was leaving did it occur to her to ask how much she owed and what the interest was. The seth's answers took her breath away: his rates were such that her debt would double every six months."*  
(Ghosh,2008:152)

To grow poppies the farmers required a lot of money and the British colonies did not finance the farmers, so that many farmers had to be forced into debt with high interest rates (Fanon,1963). With interest rates so high that their debts will double every six months and if in the next few years they can't pay them, their land will be forfeited. If they knew their debt would double then they would prefer to eat weed rather than take out such a loan. Trying to return the debt was useless because it was too late and they could only accept it by resigning. Due to limited costs, the farmers ended up not cultivating the land they used to make a living and many farmers lost their land and chose to leave the countryside.

*"These seated men had more the look of ghouls than any living thing she had ever seen: their eyes glowed red in the dark and they appeared completely naked, their loincloths—if indeed they had any—being so steeped in the*

*drug as to be indistinguishable from their skin.”*  
(Ghosh,2008:92)

The Ghazipur Opium Factory, which was founded and managed exclusively by the British, featured not only exploitation of nature but also exploitation of humans. And the supervisor of the factory was a senior official of the East India Company, and other important positions such as accountant, shopkeeper, and chemist at the factory were also occupied by the British. And these important people ordered several hundred Indian workers for the benefit of the Company. When Deeti wanted to visit her sick husband to an opium factory, she not only found the conditions around the factory apprehensive, but she also saw how the workers in the factory worked in inhuman conditions. The conditions of the workers in the factory are very poor, the factory is polluted by opium, and in some rooms the temperature is cool, almost cold, while in some other places the temperature is too hot according to what parts the workers are doing. In the factory there are not enough lights to illuminate the workers, many workers are in poor health. When Deeti saw the conditions and conditions of these workers, there was pity for them. The workers who work in this opium factory happen to be very affected by the drugs they use, and some of them become sick because they are forced to do work such as drowning themselves in tanks filled with opium. After seeing all these incidents Deeti felt that the workers looked like undead.

*“...Hukam Singh had told Deeti that the measure of every ingredient was precisely laid down by the Company’s directors in faraway London”.*(Ghosh,2008:95)

Each package of opium was to consist of exactly one seer and seven-and a half chittacks of the drug, the ball being wrapped in five chittacks of poppy-leaf rotis, half of fine grade and half coarse, the whole being moistened with no more and no less than five chittacks of lewah. Previous quotes show how people like Deeti and her husband Hukam Singh, who are farmers and opium factory workers respectively, have no control over opium and its production. This was because everything had been arranged by the people at the East Indian Company. Farmers like Deeti, in particular, are only obliged to submit their crops to the factory each month and they must be weighed and graded as chandee (fine) or ganta (coarse). (Ghosh,2008:90)

So many workers were oppressed, they not only worked in inhuman conditions, but they were also tortured by the British supervisors who watched their every move (Mondal,2014). White overseers patrolled every place and they were armed with tools such as glass spoons, metal spoons and long handled rakes, and if they made a mistake, even if it was a small mistake

the supervisors would not hesitate to punish the workers. So for the workers in the opium factory there is no room for even minor mistakes, all the work has to be done perfectly and carefully. Deeti also demonstrated how the workers were careful when treating the opium balls as if their lives depended on them. And the horror broke out when one of the workers dropped bla opium, and he received a whip from the supervisor for making a mistake. The landlord of India lived an inversely proportional to the lower caste peasants, because he made a large profit from growing poppy. Landlords who were from the higher castes of Indian society benefited greatly from their association with the British Colony. The British occupation of India was the exploitation of people and nature going on simultaneously. Indigenous peoples who are victims of injustice are clear evidence of how anthropocentrism in the colonial frame transcends human relations. And resistance may be the best available way to fight the injustice caused by the exploitative attitude of the colonizers.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

This study analyzes how colonization affects indigenous peoples. What made a lot of noise because according to them the British occupation had a bad impact and resulted in injustice in the form of exploitation of humans. To restore human balance, they fight for the injustice they feel. This resistance began when the colonizers came and brought their land experts, not only that they also built factories to process opium which had many bad effects such as polluted air, water which could automatically disrupt the survival of humans and animals. The community suffers not only because they also get very low wages, even though most of the people are farmers and depend on their livelihoods by growing poppies, with small wages they cannot meet family needs. So because they could not stand the injustice of British occupation, the natives fought the invaders to restore the rights that the British colonialists had forcibly taken away. Even though their resistance was in vain because the British still didn't care.

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