

# The Indonesians' Peaceful Mind: A Gadamerian Hermeneutic Study of the *Markesot Bertutur*

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## ABSTRACT

The character of Markesot from the text *Markesot Bertutur* can be understood as a representation of Indonesians' character. It particularly represented Indonesian youths' peaceful state of mind. This study was a hermeneutic study using Gadamer's framework. It aimed to interpret the text of *Markesot Bertutur* in order to construe an understanding about Indonesian youths' peaceful state of mind according to it. This study analyzed the text in three stages: understanding whole; understanding part; and understanding the underlying meaning. The findings indicated that there were three patterns of striving for Indonesian youths' peaceful state of mind: if I have an idealism, I will be more humble to my idealism; if I agree with the opinion of others, I will control myself to impose my will so that others also follow my agreement; and if I disagree with others, I will bring tolerance to the differences.

**Keywords:** *Aggression behavior, Violence, Peaceful mind*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country of diverse culture [1]. Indonesia's national motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*," represents its cultural complexity. That motto means that although consisting of various elements, Indonesia is essentially one. It is used to represent the unity of Indonesia that consisted of various cultures, languages, races, ethnic groups, religions, and beliefs.

In one hand, cultural diversity became one of Indonesia's tourism enticements; but on the other hand, cultural diversity also led to a serious national problem. It often caused the widespread of stereotypes and stigmatizations between social groups that triggered inter-cultural violence. As an example was the ethnic conflict in Sampit, Central Kalimantan, in early 2000s. At the time the relationship between Dayak ethnic and Madura ethnic in there tended to be different compared to the relationship between the Dayaks and the other ethnics [2]. Between the two ethnics, Dayak and Madura, the ethnic-based cultural stereotype caused the loosening of their social relationship. Their inter-ethnic conflict resulted in many dead.

Some literatures show that violence is closely related to teenagers' aggressive behavior [3]. It becomes a problem that often occurs among teenagers [4].

Aggressive behavior among teenagers happens around the globe [5]–[7]. The forms of this aggressive behavior tend to be more and more diverse. In Yogyakarta, for an example, there was one form of aggressive behavior that has become a social uproar and even emerged as a national issue. The behavior in question was called *klithih* [8]–[10]—teens hurt others randomly with knives, gears, and other sharp objects.

According to some study, there were 76.16% of students who harmed others by physical violence, while 27.84% of students tended to harm others without involving physical violence [11]. Another study concluded that 72% students physically attacked their mother, 16% attacked or threatened their father, 5% attacked or threatened their brothers, and 5% attacked or threatened their siblings [12]. The findings of the study also revealed that 5% of these behaviors were categorized as very highly aggressive, 26% as highly aggressive, 40% as moderately aggressive, 21% as lowly aggressive, and 8% as very lowly aggressive [13]. Moreover, there was no difference in the level of aggressiveness between female and male students on Vocational High School of Yogyakarta city [14].

Aggressive behaviors showed by the students usually come in various forms. The behavior is characterized as aggressive if it is intentionally directed to harm others or others' properties both physically or verbally [15]. The findings of the study showed that 35.32% of aggressive

behaviors were intended to hurt others physically, 41.30% were intended to hurt verbally, and 30.42% were intended to damage or ruin others' properties [16].

Aggressive behavior of students also caused the perception of bad learning climate in school among students [6], [17]. Students' perception of not conducive school climate led to the decrease of students' achievement [18], [19]. The students' inconvenience towards their surroundings made them feel uncomfortable and unsafe during the learning hours and led to the decrease of their achievement.

One of the attempts to prevent aggressive behavior among students is by developing students' peaceful state of mind. An attempt to obtain students' peaceful state of mind can be seen in a text entitled *Markesot Bertutur*, written by Emha Ainun Najib. Markesot was a personification of Najib and his friend [20]. Markesot was an innocent, smart, and mysterious character. Markesot often talked about current social issues. Markesot's life has potential to encourage teenagers to cultivate peaceful state of minds which will keep them from aggressive behavior.

This study tried to interpret *Markesot Bertutur* in order to decipher the peaceful state of mind it delivered. It argued that the interpretation of the peaceful state of mind resulted from the analysis of *Markesot Bertutur* can be developed into a guideline that can be used by teenagers as a kind of self-help to train their mind to be in a peaceful state.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed qualitative approach with hermeneutics as its method. Hermeneutics played a role in interpreting and discovering the hidden meaning of the text. This study intended to identify the representation of teenagers' peaceful state of mind by establishing hermeneutic circle to obtain an optimal understanding. Specifically, this study applied Gadamerian hermeneutics to reveal the meaning behind *Markesot Bertutur*.

The principle idea of Gadamerian hermeneutics is on the pattern of the hermeneutic circle. The circle consists of rising and falling pattern between part and whole to understand the meanings of a text. Part will change our understanding of the whole, and conversely, the change of our understanding on the whole will change our understanding of the part.

The primary data of this study was *Markesot Bertutur*, a book consisted of eight chapters. That text contained many life stories of the personification of Emha Ainun Najib and his friends. Based on the content of *Markesot Bertutur*, a study on peaceful state of mind was conducted. The source of the data was the content of the text.

The data were collected through text interpretation documentation—a technique aimed to gain the data related to the focus of the study by reading the text repeatedly and carefully. Based on *Markesot Bertutur*, this study tried to interpret the peaceful state of mind through three phases of understanding: (1) whole understanding; (2) partial understanding; and (3) understanding of the underlying meaning. In analyzing

the data, this study employed the formulation of Miles & Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and inferring conclusion [21].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that teenagers' peaceful state of mind adapted from *Markesot Bertutur* can be expressed in three propositions: (1) if I am an idealist, I shall be more humble on my idealism; (2) If I agree with others' opinion, I need to keep myself from forcing other people to follow my assent; and (3) If I disagree with others, I need to be tolerant of diversity. These findings were tabulated in the following table:

**Table 1.**

No	Data Text	Code
1	Idealist – Humble	I-RD 40; I-RD 42; I-RD 86; I-RD 87; I-RD 92; I-RD 105; I-RD 109; I-RD 120; I-RD 172; I-RD 202; I-RD 207; I-RD 204; I-RD 220; I-RD 312; I-RD 330; I-RD 362; I-RD 397; I-RD 398; I-RD 412; I-RD 439; I-RD 453
2	Agree – Self Control	S-KD 37; S-KD 102; S-KD 108; S-KD 119; S-KD 135; S-KD 154; S-KD 174; S-KD 190; S-KD 263; S-KD 275; S-KD 359; S-KD 368; S-KD 370; S-KD 372
3	Not Agree – Tolerant	TS-T 29; TS-T 41; TS-T 97; TS-T 104; TS-T 124; TS-T 136; TS-T 171; TS-T 174; TS-T 201; TS-T 231; TS-T 247; TS-T 335; TS-T 341; TS-T 362; TS-T 367; TS-T 419

The first typology of the peaceful state of mind is the humble idealist. Teenagers usually possess an idealism. To compensate the idealistic tendency, they need to develop humility [22] and modesty. Humility should not be limited only on their thinking, but also on their behavior [23].

Humility is one of the constructs that is frequently ignored in the psychology of teenager. A reason for the ignorant is the assumption that humility is regarded as a bad quality of an individual. However, the true humility is constructed as the human ability to be able to objectively assess themselves and identify their own weaknesses [24], [25]. This self-recognition is important because people need to understand the advantages of having deficiencies.

Humility has several dimensions, namely (1) recognizing one's own abilities; (2) acknowledge their own mistakes and imperfections; (3) open to new ideas, contradictory information, and suggestions from others; (4) recognizing the abilities and achievements of others; (5) not focus only on oneself; and (6) appreciation of the

value of things [24]. These dimensions can encourage people to be wiser in promoting their ideals.

The second typology of the peaceful state of mind is gaining self-control when agree with someone's opinion. It is done to keep them from hurting others. Difference in opinion is one of the sources of problem to teenagers' social life. Accordingly, if they agree with other's opinion, they need to possess self-control. Individuals with high self-control tend to have a low level of crime, mischief, and drug abuse. They tend to possess a high level of success in school and work; they also possess a lasting interpersonal relationship [26].

Being able to control yourself is not an easy thing. Various obstacles experienced by teenagers to be able to control themselves. Teenagers tend to carry out aggressive behaviors as a result of their failure in maintaining self-control in their interactions with others. A study found that various aggressive behaviors were observed among vocational and junior high students in Yogyakarta [13], [27]. Other studies found that there were insignificant difference concerning aggressiveness between adolescent boys and girls [14].

The third typology of the peaceful state of mind is showing tolerance whenever disagree with others. Teenagers tend to refuse others' opinion different to theirs. In order to achieve a peaceful state of mind, they need to value the differences in opinion. In other words, they need to be tolerant. A tolerant mind is essential for nurturing the sense of belonging in school [28] so it will improve students' motivation. Developing tolerance on teenagers can be done through peer modeling [29].

Teenagers need to possess constructive mindset to avoid aggressive behavior. Peacefulness needs to be developed in mind [30]. Possessing a peaceful state of mind can be marked by relax and harmonious feeling [31]. Peacefulness will stimulate teenagers to live by their choice and will and to be judged by themselves, so their life will better develop and be more constructive [32]. The peaceful state of mind itself seeks to be nurtured on students through the process of education. It is well-known as the concept of "peace education." It is potential to be implemented in Indonesia [33], [34].

The peace education emerged to respond to the rising acts of violence and aggression committed by teenagers. Peace education is a process by which individuals can change their attitudes and behaviors related to violent conflict, gain values and knowledge, as well as develop skills to live in harmony with others [30]. Other explains that peace education is a philosophy and a process in acquiring knowledge and skills of peace-building [35]. The main goal of peace education is to provide learners with nonviolent ways of dealing with conflict. This is in accordance with the basic view of Mahatma Gandhi's "non-violence" movement [36].

Du Bois characterizes peace as a responsibility without the power of ridicule and jokes. Paolo Freire defines peace as the dimension of generosity that aims to erode the cause of battle. Both concepts suggest that peace is expected to slowly erode conflicts and lead to a peaceful heart, both in intrapersonal and interpersonal state, through educational efforts [37]. Peace itself is basically in the mind of every human being and needs to be developed [30].

Peace can be divided into two types: negative and positive peace [38]. Negative peace is the absence of violence, while the positive peace is a state when there is no violence done in a structured manner. Positive peace approaches values and morals and emphasizes more to the prevention aspects. So in their implementation, positive peace offers more help and conflict resolution to the cessation of conflict in the past and at the same time offering hope for a future with no violent conflict.

The peaceful state of mind keeps teenagers from aggressive behavior. A study conducted in Turkey concluded that peace education was effective in improving students' empathy level [38]. Empathy encourages the students to not showing aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior and violence at school needs to be overcome, including by developing students' peaceful state of mind [40]. Experts and counselors have developed guidelines for peaceful mind training that met the criteria of exactness, usefulness, worthiness, and appropriateness [41]. Accordingly, a peace counseling can be one of the attempts to avoid aggressive behavior [42].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there were three typologies of the peaceful state of mind based on the *Markesot Bertutur*. They were expressed in the following propositions: (1) if I am an idealist, I shall be more humble on my idealism; (2) if I agree with others' opinion, I need to control myself not to forcing others to follow my assent; and (3) if I do not agree with others, I need to be tolerant. These three peaceful states of mind were needed by teenagers to reduce their aggressive behavior.

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