



## Ideological Representation in the Short Story Collection *Corat-corek di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan: Gramsci's Hegemony Analysis

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**Abstract** This article explores ideological representation in Eka Kurniawan's short story collection *Corat-corek di Toilet* using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The study aims to examine how dominant and subaltern ideologies are contested and negotiated within the selected stories. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the research focuses on four short stories that exhibit significant ideological formations: "Doodling in the Toilet," "The Beauty Who Can't Go Out at Night," "Peter Pan," and "The Capture of the Little Bread Thief." The findings reveal the presence of dominant ideologies such as idealism, feudalism, and capitalism, while the subaltern ideologies attempting negotiation include democracy, humanism, liberalism, and nationalism. Each story presents ideological resistance, yet the talks ultimately fail due to the persistence of dominant power. In Gramscian terms, the hegemony depicted in these narratives aligns with minimal hegemony, where consensus between rulers and the ruled is absent. The study also concludes that Eka Kurniawan, as an organic intellectual, fails to create a transformative ideological shift. Instead, the stories illustrate ongoing struggles without resolution. This research contributes to the understanding of literature as a site of ideological conflict and suggests that future studies examine other dimensions of Gramsci's hegemony within Indonesian literary texts.

**Keywords:** dominant ideology, eka kurniawan, Gramscian hegemony, ideological representation, indonesian short stories, subaltern ideology

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### 1. Introduction

Social conditions in society are closely tied to the country's political conditions at the time. People exhibit specific social reactions in response to the circumstances they encounter. In the late '90s, Indonesian politics were turbulent. At that time, people demanded security, freedom, and stability from the state against the Soeharto regime because this regime had dominated power. This power restricted many people's movements, leading to resistance.

Authors are organic intellectuals who strive to create a new view or a new culture. Gramsci (via Harjito, 2014: 18) states that art or literature forms a new superstructure, establishing a new hegemony. Literary works are also sites of ideological battles between interested groups in society. Eka Kurniawan, an author and student from 1999 to 2000, attempted to voice the voice of society during the New Order era. In that year, Eka Kurniawan wrote a collection of short stories, published under the title *Corat-corek di Toilet*. Through the short story collection, Eka Kurniawan

tried to show the social views of society. Starting from feudal ideology, gender, and reformism. Eka made his work a forum for the battle of opinions in society in the '90s.

This book contains 12 short stories that primarily address social and political issues. Although it addresses social and political problems, Eka presents them in simple language and with a light touch of humor. For example, the short story with the same title tells the story of a campus toilet filled with messages from various people. Eka presents multiple perspectives on society within a single story. The opinions expressed by Eka represent the community's efforts to challenge the dominant social forces. For example, the short story "The Beauty Who Can't Go Out at Night" presents the domination of men who still adhere to patriarchal culture and the girl's efforts to break away from this domination.

Based on the various domination efforts represented by Eka, this short story collection is worth studying in terms of ideological formation in Gramsci's hegemony. Therefore, this paper will discuss the way ideology formation is contested in Eka Kurniawan's short story collection *Corat-corek di Toilet*.

The short story collection *Corat-corek di Toilet* has been studied from various perspectives, including Wellek and Warren's literary sociology, pragmatics, language style, and social criticism. Unfortunately, there has been no study of ideological formation, despite this collection of short stories revealing a great deal about society's perspective. To address this issue, Gramsci's theory of hegemony is necessary.

Gramsci introduced the concept of hegemony to illustrate the existence of oppressive structures through cultural means. This theory is used to understand the political, cultural, and ideological forms that are considered capable of transforming society. In state affairs, society is aligned with the hegemonic, and the state is aligned with hegemony, or "moral and intellectual leadership."

Hegemony can be divided into three levels: integral hegemony, degenerate hegemony, and minimum hegemony (Harjito, 2014: 15). Integral hegemony represents an idealized form of hegemony, characterized by the absence of significant problems between the masses and the leadership. The relationship that exists in this hegemony is a strong one, characterized by agreement without contradiction due to moral and intellectual unity. Degenerate hegemony occurs when people are not in line with the existing leadership. Under these conditions, people may find other agreements that are not in line with the existing leadership. For some reason, these other agreements appear to support the existing leadership. Minimum hegemony is a problematic hegemony, where the existing leadership contradicts the consensus of the society.

Faruk (2021:134) states that the state is the "moral leadership" that subtly dictates society. Thus, the hierarchical concept of societal structure persists. Gramsci attempted to reformulate social groups within the framework of Marxism. If Marxism uses the idea of domination, Gramsci prefers the concept of "violence and consent". Violence is the way the upper class instills power over the lower class through the apparatus of violence. As for consent, it is a means by which the upper class can instill power in the lower class, while achieving agreement from the controlled class, and the latter accepts what is instilled (Faruk, 2021: 135).

What is inculcated by the upper class, which hegemonizes, can be called hegemony when it has become a popular belief. These beliefs are united by the

"leaders" and the "led". Among popular beliefs, there is a group that opposes these beliefs. Gramsci viewed literature as one of the tools for forming a new ideology (Anggraeni, 2019: 160).

According to KBBI, ideology is a collection of systematic concepts used as the basis of opinion and providing direction and goals for survival. Ideology can also be interpreted as a way of thinking of a person or group of people. Intellectuals disseminate ideologies or ideas through social institutions that serve as the center (Faruk, 2021: 150). The intellectuals themselves have various layers. The lowest layer of intellectuals is the subaltern group, which is the group closest to the masses. The uppermost layer is the dominant group. Intellectuals are classified into two parts, namely organic and traditional intellectual groups. Organic intellectual groups are intellectual groups whose ideologies are all ideologies of capitalism. The traditional intellectual group is the intellectual group whose ideology adheres to the old ideology. The two groups are generally separate, but in a society, there can be an overlap of intellectual groups.

Because society is complex, there is a plurality of ideologies. For example, ideologies that develop in the general public include feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and humanism. However, this study not only discusses these four ideologies but also examines other ideologies found in this short story collection. The plurality of ideologies is attempted to be described through ideological formations, as formations address ideological relationships that are oppositional, correlative, and subordinative. Based on these ideological relationships, we can identify the dominant ideology in society. Thus, Eka, as an author who is part of society, reflects the dominant ideology of the late '90s.

Some previous studies include the journal article "Analysis of Figurative Language Style in a Collection of Short Stories *Corat-corei di Toilet* Karya Eka Kurniawan" by Nepa Perawati, Martono, and A. Totok Priyadi, published in 2018. This research reveals the presence of 14 simile quotations, 9 metaphor quotations, 16 personification quotations, 9 irony quotations, 10 cynicism quotations, and 12 sarcasm quotations.

Then, the journal article "Symbols in the Short Story *Corat-corei di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan: A Study of Charles Sanders Peirce Semiotics" by Nasaruddin et al. in 2019. This study concluded that there are icons signifying social environment, events, campus environment, social class, group or class, character identity, situation, and identity, as well as soldiers. In addition, there are indices of behavior, activists, social change, social class of characters, suffering, chaos, and colonization or occupation. Symbols of lifestyle, language, background association, economy, injustice, chaos, and power were also found.

Finally, the journal article "Story Facts in the Collection of Short Stories *Corat-corei di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan and its Implication in Literature Learning in High School" by Siti Nur Aisah, et al, in 2021. This study describes the story facts contained in the short story collection *Corat-corei di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan. Based on the results of the analysis, it is concluded that the five short stories contain various characters, the plot is divided into three parts (the beginning, the middle, and the end), and the setting (place setting and time setting).

Based on previous studies of the short story collection *Corat-coreit di Toilet*, this research focuses on ideological formation in Gramsci's analysis of hegemony. Because prior studies have only analyzed these short stories in terms of language style, story facts, and semiotics, despite the collection's various ideological elements that can be examined in depth, this research can help readers of the novel recognize the ideology depicted in the short stories.

## 2. Method

The population of this study is twelve short stories in the short story collection book *Corat-coreit di Toilet*, namely "Peter Pan", "Fairy Tales Before Making Love", "*Corat-coreit di Toilet*", "*Teman Kencan*", "Seduction of Lies for Marietje", "*Hikayat Si Orang Gila*", "*Si Cantik yang Tak Boleh Keluar Malam*", "*Siapa Kirim Aku Bunga*", "*Tertangkap Si Bandit Kecil Pencuri Roti*", "*Kisah dari Seorang Kawan*", "*Dewi Amor*", and "*Kandang Babi*". The samples used in this study consisted of four short stories: "Doodling in the *Toilet*", "The Beauty Who Can't Go Out at Night", "Peter Pan", and "The Capture of the Little Bread Thief". This is because the four short stories have prominent ideological formations, such as the ideology of feudalism, as exemplified by the father character in the short story "*Si Cantik yang Tak Boleh Keluar Malam*".

This research employs Gramsci's hegemony approach to expose the issue of ideological formation that arises in this short story collection. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The descriptive method is used because this research aims to describe the ideologies in the short story collection *Corat-coreit di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan. The descriptive method is employed in the short story collection *Corat Kort di Toilet* by Eka Kurniawan, where the data is presented in the form of quotations in an objective manner. The data collection method utilizes the Simak note technique from the data source, which is given in the form of short stories. The process is carried out by intensively reading the short stories in the short story collection *Corat-coreit di Toilet*, then recording the quotations that have the potential to become data on the data card. The data collected is then analyzed to obtain a description of the ideological formation in the short story collection *Corat-coreit di Toilet* and the form of negotiation carried out.

### 3. Result & Discussion

#### Formation and Negotiation of Ideology in the Short Story Collection *Corat-corek di Toilet*.

No.	Short Story Title	Figure	Group	Category	Ideology
1.	Doodling in the Restroom	Student	subaltern	Intellectuals	democracy humanism
		Dean	dominant	Intellectuals	idealism
		Student alim	subaltern	Intellectuals	idealism
2.	The Beauty Who Can't Go Out at Night	Father	dominant	family	feudalism
		The Beauty	subaltern	child	liberalism
3.	Peter Pan	Peter Pan	subaltern	intellectual	nationalism
		Dictator	dominant	The bourgeoisie	feudalism
4.	Capture of the Little Bandit Bread Thief	The Little Bandit	subaltern	folk	humanism
		Bakery owner	dominant	business owner	capitalism

#### Short story "Doodling in the Toilet"

The ideology of the dominant group in the short story "Doodling in the Toilet" is idealism. Idealism emphasizes the superiority of human reason and thought. As a result, an idealistic person will maintain the principle of moral action, even under urgent conditions (Henle et al., 2005). In this short story, idealism is found in the dominant and subaltern groups. This is due to the Dean's character, who tries hard to maintain his morality as a lecturer by repainting a toilet full of graffiti. The alim student character represents the idealism of the subaltern group. Implicitly, the idealism appears in the following quote.

"Comrades, please don't scribble on the toilet walls. Keep it clean. Toilets are not a place to accommodate *unek unek*. Just channel your aspirations to the members of the board." (Kurniawan, 2019:29)



Through this quote, the pious student character attempts to defend the view he believes is right. What the pious student thinks is right is to maintain the cleanliness of the toilet and to convey aspirations directly to the council members. Throughout the story, this character maintains his ideology to the end. His subaltern position also makes him squeezed between other ideologies in the story. Another ideology that pinches the idealism in this story is the ideology of democracy-humanism. This ideology is represented by most students on campus. The element of humanism that marks this ideology is the pursuit of human perfection and salvation (Harjito, 2014: 58).

"You must be an army stooge! New order lackeys! feudal, bourgeois, stupid reactionaries! Reform nonsense, prepare for revolution!" (Kurniawan, 2019:24)

Through this quote, we can see one of the many subalterns pinning down the idealistic character to revolutionize. The tomboy girl character attempts to reconcile her humanist ideology with the dominant idealism in the story. This tomboy girl considers human safety in a particular region. The region in question here is Indonesia, where at that time, the opposition was often kidnapped by the army. Besides humanism, democracy is also used as an ideology to fight for people's rights. Democracy and humanism are two interrelated ideologies. Some essential elements in democracy include people being involved in state decisions; people's rights being equalized as citizens; and freedom and independence for citizens (Harjito, 2014: 59). The tomboy girl represents the unrest of the citizens, who cannot have free speech, by opposing the dominant ideology at the time.

### **Short story "The Beauty Who Can't Go Out at Night"**

In this short story, the dominant ideology is feudalism, with the subaltern ideology being liberalism. The feudalistic ideology in this story is represented through the father character, who tries to maintain his role as head of the family and forces his wife and children to obey his every command. This is evident in the following quote.

On her seventeenth birthday, Beauty again asked to be allowed a night out, as she believed it was the most beautiful gift she deserved.

"All right," said the father. "Let's go out with Mom." (Kurniawan, 2014:57)

In the quote, it is evident that the father imposes his words through unilateral decision making. This unilateral decision, shaped by the family hierarchy pyramid, reinforces the father's power over his daughter, *Si Cantik*. *Si Cantik* is not given the freedom to determine her own life. In the end, the father's attitude led to a negotiation between *Si Cantik* character and that of the father. Here is the quote.

"Listen, Father," she said. "I'm a big girl now. Why can't I go out at night too? I... well, I like to chat with my friends sometimes."

"You can chat at school, right?"

"The teacher told us not to talk in class, Dad," said Beauty.

"Or afternoon. You can meet your friends."

"In this exciting city?" asked Beauty as she sat gracefully in front of her father.

"Think about it, Father: Nita goes to piano lessons, Yuri goes to dance lessons, and Adinda, and Arina, and I... language lessons from Monday to Saturday."

"You're free on Sunday."

"Sometimes I like to chat on Wednesday nights or Friday nights," said Beauty with a frown. (Kurniawan, 2014:57)

The ideological basis of the *Si Cantik* negotiation is liberalism. *Si Cantik* school life and friendships, which the family does not constrain, can freely go out at night and date, which influences *Si Cantik* to do so. *Si Cantik* tries to get the individual freedom that her friends get. However, the negotiation is unsuccessful because the father character still maintains his decision, despite the talks.

### **The short story "Peter Pan"**

The ideology of the dominant group in the short story is feudalism. This ideology is characterized by the superior and inferior relationship between the government (the Dictator) and Peter Pan. The dictator does not accept the demonstration led by Peter Pan. According to Harjito (2014:31), feudalism is characterized by the power of the nobles. This is evidenced in the following quote.

But around the same time, Peter Pan received the most tragic fate. After he found out that he was one of the most wanted people by the dictator's bloody hands, he started hiding from one place to another. Until one day, three men full of horror caught him in the Princess's house, right in front of his beloved. .... His mouth was gagged, his head covered with a black cloth, and he was dragged before the princess, who could only howl silently. (Kurniawan, 2019:8)

The above quote explains that the dictator asked three people to kidnap Peter Pan. This also shows that the dictator did not want his power to be disrupted by the protest. The dictator offered his ideology with inviolable power to anyone, including the citizens. This caused fear in the ordinary people at the time. However, the power of feudalism was countered by Peter Pan as an intellectual with the ideology of democracy. This ideology is evidenced in the following quote.

"Against such a rotten government," she said one day, a day the princess would never forget, because it was a strange opening line before he told her he was in love with her and wanted to be her lover, continuing, "We should declare guerrilla warfare." They were not idle words, but they would have been true had the most subversive acts of the most heated year never happened. (Kurniawan, 2019:2)

Through the quote above, Peter Pan presents his ideology by organizing a guerrilla war to free himself from the dominant group's ideology. He fought against

the government, which at that time trivialized theft in any form. In addition, another rottenness of the government was silencing people's opinions. This ideology upholds equal rights among citizens (Harjito, 2014:59). These rights are also what Peter Pan fights for, especially equality before the law and equality of opportunity. Peter Pan offered this to several people, from students to merchants. The guerrilla warfare referred to by Peter Pan has become a common sense in society, namely, demonstrations.

### **Short story "The Capture of the Little Bread Thief"**

In this short story, the dominant ideology is capitalism, with the subaltern ideology being humanism. The ideology of capitalism in this story is represented through the characters of the bakery owners, who feel aggrieved by the actions of the Little Bandit who stole their bread and forced the police to arrest the Little Bandit (Eagleton, 2020; Morton, 2007).

Thus, he became known in our town as the Little Bandit Bread Thief. There wasn't a day when he wasn't told that he had stolen from one of the shops in town. The shopkeepers were so angry that they went to the police station and urged the policemen to arrest him.

"If not," the shopkeepers said, "We'll report it to the top, or announce it in the newspaper. You could be fired for that." (Kurniawan, 2019, pp. 81-82; Althusser, 2006; Foulcher, 2018). The above quote indicates that the bakery owners compelled the town's policemen to arrest the Little Bandit. Although the policemen refused, they threatened to report them for dismissal if they did not obey their orders. This indicates that the bakery owners did not want to suffer any losses due to the Little Bandit. The bakery owners present their ideology with such conviction that no one can deny; for them, money is the most important thing. This is evident in the following quote.

Against such threats, the policemen tried to calm them down. "Think about it," said one of the policemen. "You came to our town, opened a shop and made a lot of money. That's nothing compared to the bread that boy steals every day." (Kurniawan, 2019:82)

In this excerpt, the bakery owners continue to force the police to arrest the Little Bandit. This power made the police feel afraid, and inevitably, they had to obey the orders of the bakery owners. In the end, there was negotiation from the Little Bandit character towards the police character. Here is the excerpt.

Then the boy began to kneel with his hands clasped to his chest. He wept bitterly. In between his pitiful sobs, he said: "Mr. policeman, take me to my mother. I want to have my mother who will take me to the night market. I want to have my mother, who will give me a home. I also want a mother who will give me money to buy bread so I don't have to steal it..."



She was still crying, and her cries grew louder when the two policemen caught her by the arm, handcuffed her, and dragged her to the police station on the spot. With the arrest of our favorite bread thief, the police were relieved that they no longer had to deal with such a trivial matter, and the shopkeepers were pleased that no one was stealing their profits (Kurniawan, 2019, pp. 83–84; Gramsci, 1971; Žižek, 2008).

The ideological basis of the Little Bandit character is humanism. The Little Bandit's life as a child without a home or even a family made him feel envious of the city people who lived with their families and children. If only he had a mother who would take care of him, he would not steal bread in the town, nor would he disturb the townspeople. These things influenced the Little Bandit character to do so. The lonely Little Bandit in the forest tries to get attention like other children who have families, who can have fun watching movies, and who have houses. However, the negotiations were unsuccessful because the police character eventually arrested him on orders from the bakery owners, who maintained their decision, despite the talks.

Through the analysis above, the overall hegemony present in the short stories is minimal. This is because the hegemony that occurs has surpassed the previous two levels of hegemony. In these short stories, the narrated hegemony has shown resistance to the dominant *subaltern*. Eka Kurniawan, as an intellectual, also failed to create a new view.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the four short stories, it is found that the dominant ideological formations are idealism, feudalism, and capitalism. The dominance of these three ideologies led to the negotiation of the subaltern's ideology. The emerging ideologies among subaltern groups include democracy, humanism, liberalism, and nationalism. Of the four short stories, not all negotiations went smoothly. This is because the dominant group successfully maintained its power.

Based on this analysis, it is evident that Eka Kurniawan has not become an organic intellectual capable of creating new perspectives. The author should be able to shift the views of the dominant group and or help negotiate between ideologies until an agreement is reached. However, these short stories only show the process of negotiating these ideologies.

The suggestion for future researchers is that the research be conducted with other categories of Gramsci's hegemony, as there are still other aspects of Gramsci's hegemony theory to explore. There are still many aspects that can be analyzed in these short stories, as they explore various problems, power dynamics, and hegemony.

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