

# Rats as a Symbol of Corruptors in the Conceptualization of Dark Art Paintings Utilizing Drawing Techniques

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the utilization of rats as symbolic representations of corruptors within the context of creating dark art paintings employing drawing techniques. Rats were selected due to their association with greed, cunning, and destructive nature, which effectively encapsulate corrupt behavior. The dark art movement serves as a visual approach to convey the moral and societal consequences of corruption, with a particular emphasis on evoking a somber and symbolic atmosphere. Drawing techniques that prioritize intricate line details and shadow play are employed to explore the emotional and narrative elements of the artwork. The media utilized include pencils, drawing pens, charcoal, and ink on watercolor paper. The outcomes of the artwork creation demonstrate that the incorporation of rat symbols within dark art compositions can effectively convey messages of social criticism regarding corruption. The amalgamation of dark elements, dramatic textures, and rat symbolism results in works that not only possess aesthetic value but also serve as a medium of reflection and education for the community. The drawing technique offers flexibility in conveying visual details, thereby enhancing the representation of the underlying messages conveyed in the painting.

## KEYWORDS

Rats, Symbol, Corruptors, Dark Art, Painting.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia possesses significant potential, yet it grapples with substantial social challenges, including injustice, social inequality, and corruption. These challenges impede the nation's progress. Governmental injustice often engenders public discontent, which, in the long term, poses a threat to national unity. As a manifestation of a political system that embodies the noble principles of Pancasila, government practices should strive to establish a just and prosperous society (Darma, 2022). However, the reality reveals that numerous moral and legal violations, such as corruption, persist, eroding public trust in the government and exacerbating social disparities. Corruption, as defined by Imansyah (2010), constitutes an abuse of power for personal gain, encompassing acts like bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and forgery. This phenomenon not only incurs economic losses but also profoundly affects society, resulting in the loss of public trust and the erosion of moral values. This issue inspired the author to express social criticism through dark art painting. Given its distinctive characteristics, this genre possesses the ability to convey profound messages about the darker aspects of human behavior, including corruption, through the utilization of dark and symbolic visual elements. As elucidated by Aan (2017), dark art serves as a medium that enables artists to express their imagination freely within a mysterious and often unsettling ambiance. It employs themes that are repulsive or challenge conventional norms. This approach is particularly effective in depicting the destructive consequences of corruption, such as greed and regret, which are visualized

through the symbolic representation of a rat as a metaphor for a corruptor. The drawing technique was selected as the primary medium for this study due to its advantages in highlighting intricate details, textures, and shadows. As expounded by Ika (2023), the drawing technique utilizes tools such as pencils, ink, and charcoal to create two-dimensional works with exceptional precision. The utilization of watercolor paper facilitates further exploration in achieving nuanced dark tones that align with the underlying theme. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how dark art employing the symbol of a rat and drawing techniques can serve as a medium for conveying social criticism, as well as a means of introspection on the detrimental effects of corruption within society.

## METHOD

The creation of artwork is a systematic and creative process that involves a series of distinct stages. The method of creating artwork typically consists of the following stages:

1) Preparation:

At this stage, the artist gathers ideas and concepts that will serve as the foundation of the work. This process entails exploring sources of inspiration through literary studies, observations, and discussions with colleagues. For instance, in a study conducted by Agustiani Sari Rahmawati (2018), the preparation stage involves collecting data from various sources, including books, journals, and the internet, to enhance the artist's understanding of the objects to be depicted in the painting.

2) Elaboration:

Following the collection of ideas, the artist meticulously processes these concepts through further reflection and exploration. This stage serves to strengthen the concept and refine the idea before it is translated into visual form. In the context of a painting, this stage may involve initial sketches and experimentation with various compositions and visual elements.

3) Contemplation:

This stage is a profound reflection on the ideas and concepts that have been developed. The artist delves into the underlying meaning, message, and purpose of the work to be created. This process ensures that the final product possesses depth of meaning and aligns with the intended purpose of its creation.

4) Realization of Work:

At this stage, the mature ideas and concepts are manifested in physical form through the application of selected techniques and media. This process entails the harmonious fusion of technical and artistic skills to produce works that faithfully reflect the artist's vision. For instance, in a study conducted by R. Sukma Toshir P (2013), the realization of a painting commences with the creation of a rudimentary sketch on the canvas, followed by the determination of color, light, and other details to achieve the desired outcome.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Furthermore, during the creative process, the author produced twelve drawing works. The titles of these works are as follows: "Corrupt Rats," "Power Thirsty," "Fighting," "Dirty Money," "Sweet Bribes," "Hypocritical Rats," "Collection of Rats," "Dirty Whispers," "People's Rebellion," "Plenary," "Trapped Rats," and "Rat Judges." These works were exhibited at the Baginda Sirait Gallery, Medan State University. The creation of these works adhered to the correct stages of the creative process. The following is a description of the works that were created:

## 1) Work 1



Figure 1.1 Painting “Corrupt Rodents”  
(Source Pinem, 2024)

Title of Work	: Corrupt Rodent
Painter	: Andreas Daniel Christ Pinem
Size	: 50 cm x 60 cm
Media	: Pen on Paper
Year	: 2024

This painting depicts government officials engaged in corrupt practices, taking and extorting money and the rights of the common people for personal gain. The rats in the artwork symbolize these officials, who cruelly exploit and deprive the common people of their rightful entitlements. The money depicted represents the rights of the people that are unjustly withheld from them.

## 2) Work 2



Figure 1.2 Painting “Thirst for Power”  
(Source Pinem, 2024)

Title : Power Thirst  
Painter : Andreas Daniel Christ Pinem  
Size : 50 cm x 60 cm  
Media : Pen on Paper  
Year : 2024

This image depicts the struggle for power and influence within a nation's government. The mice, representing corrupt officials, engage in a battle for dominance. The lamp symbolizes the ascent from the bottom to the top of positions. The money serves as a representation of the misuse of funds as bribes to achieve political goals.

### 3) Work 3



Figure 4.3 Painting "Bertakai"  
Source Andreas Daniel Christ Pinem, 2024

Title : Conflict  
Painter : Andreas Daniel Christ Pinem  
Size : 50 cm x 60 cm  
Media : Pen on Paper  
Year : 2024

This image depicts the struggle for public funds and influence among government officials, illustrating the dominance of a single individual. The rat, the most prominent figure, signifies the highest-ranking official or the one wielding complete control. The entangled tail symbolizes the intricate conflicts between other political figures. Conversely, the severed tail represents the defeat of one party in a conflict. The presence of money in the artwork suggests greedy officials who exacerbate conflicts among government officials.

## CONCLUSIONS

The author employs the drawing technique, which involves creating lines, shapes, and textures on two-dimensional media such as paper or canvas using tools like pens, markers, or ink. This technique enables the creation of images with varying levels of detail and expression. Drawing can serve as a basis for sketches, illustrations, or even as a comprehensive work of art that delves into intricate details, capturing the interplay of light, shadow, and perspective. The artwork, composed of



12 paper pieces, depicts the themes of corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Each piece, such as “Corrupt Rats,” “Power Thirsty,” “Fighting,” “Dirty Money,” “Sweet Bribes,” “Hypocritical Rats,” “Group of Rats,” “Dirty Whispers,” “People’s Rebellion,” “Plenary,” “Trapped Rats,” and “Rat Judges,” conveys a message rooted in these underlying concepts.

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