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## **Allegory Images with Text in Painting Toward The Political Context and Human Consciousness**

*Imej Alegoris dengan Teks dalam Karya Catan ke Arah Konteks Politik dan Kesedaran Manusia*

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### **Abstract**

This paper addresses the visual interpretation of human consciousness through the political culture. This paper analyzes the combined text and allegorical image in the painting is the easiest for viewer's understanding and plays an effective role to increase human consciousness on the political context. This research points out the allegorical symbolic image and text gets complementary advantages, reason and sensibility bring out the best in each other, which improves the effect of the information transmission and can inspire people to take the initiative to accept information of interest. Though from ancient time to contemporary periods, text and image combination have been creatively pursued and explored in many ways by visual artists. The combined process of allegorical symbolic image and text focuses on artistic practices in my artworks different way, such as "Strategic composition format" and "Two in one format" which expands new approach to contemporary art and appropriate to express political issues.

**Keywords:** Allegory, text, image, human consciousness and politics

### **Abstrak**

*Kajian ini membincangkan pentafsiran visual kesedaran manusia melalui budaya politik. Kertas kerja ini menganalisis teks gabungan dan imej alegoris dalam karya catan untuk kefahaman khalayak dan memainkan peranan yang berkesan bagi meningkatkan kesedaran manusia terhadap konteks politik. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah gambaran simbolik alegoris dan teks untuk mendapatkan kelebihan, alasan dan kepekaan yang saling melengkapi antara satu sama lain. Ini dapat meningkatkan kesan penghantaran maklumat dan dapat memberikan inspirasi kepada khalayak untuk menerima maklumat yang lebih berkesan. Sejak dari zaman purba hingga zaman kontemporari, gabungan teks dan imej telah dikekalkan secara kreatif dan diterokai dalam pelbagai cara oleh artis-artis visual. Hasil dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan proses gabungan imej dan teks simbolik alegoris berfokus kepada amalan artistic. Karya seni yang dihasilkan melalui "format komposisi strategik" dan "format dua dalam satu" telah menjelaskan pendekatan baru kepada seni kontemporari dan sesuai untuk menyatakan persoalan mengenai sesuatu isu politik.*

**Kata Kunci:** Alogori, teks, imej, kesedaran manusia dan politik

## **INTRODUCTION**

Allegory is an ordinary non-strict portrayal where is shown a certain something, yet this one thing carries on another significance, another story and another message or in short, allegory is a little thing, yet it's portrayed is immense. Thus, the artist uses it to clarify a sensitive topic since the beginning of time and allegory in the painting is an extremely valuable media to build awareness

among individuals about politics (Barney 1979). But the success of allegorical work, or symbolic work, mainly depends on the viewers or audience's ability to recognize the identities corresponding symbolic meaning of each of the elements within the artwork (Park, 2014). Allegory image with text in painting can remove the meaning difficulties of allegory. In this research, the different combination method of the text and image enrich human consciousness and expand a new approach contemporary art through the investigation of text and image blending art in political and social context.

## **BACKGROUND**

To demonstrate that allegory in painting is an extremely helpful medium to expand awareness among individuals about politics, artists have used allegory and symbolism since the beginning of time (Barney 1979). This has been chiefly in light of the fact that symbols are ordinarily used to embody or allude to a scholarly idea, rather than a literal meaning, promoting a far reaching understanding of the implied thoughts. As noted by Sigmund Freud, "symbols are not the creations of mind, but rather are distinct capacities within the mind to hold a distinct piece of information" (Papanier 2009, p. 41). As the human mind decodes allegories in painting, it discovers intends to relate the human's own particular thoughts with the painting that are used—this is where the issue of consciousness sets in. People's initial reaction comes from the basic information of the painting, as well as if people take time to experience and understand the entire story an allegory painting, which awakens those people's imaginations, or consciousness. This brings about the physical feeling of emotion while appreciating the allegory painting. It is people's imagination that allows them to relate with objects in the painting, lading to people's emotional response and aroused consciousness. Allegory is extremely helpful and intelligent tools to clarify sensitive subjects and it is the paramount associating devices to show past and future. For sure, even similarly a feasible medium to give clues for legitimizing and recommending that is the best among them. Meanwhile, it pushes a story ahead on a reason never touched base at (Pollock, 2013). Allegory can produce symbolic narrative, fable, parable within literature, drama, music and any visual artwork. Its significant characteristic it cannot say directly, consequently it is very common and popular to Artist and writer to express sensitive or political topic (Cross, 2002). For example- the Irish artist Sean Keating's artistic creation ", Night's Candles are Burnt Out" is a realistic style, yet mixing numerous metaphorical materials to say, on past, present and future state of Irish society around them. Indeed, even present time his profound direction by allegorical in painting is administering to the future direction of Irish (Flannery, 2009). Picasso's Guernica was an intense typical representation of hostility to the war and expecting peace. It is being utilized as a symbol of the universal Peace development. Most as of late, it has been an image of the counter Iraq War development. The symbol of this painting is a universal allegory about the butchery of innocents (Rutledge, 2008). As noted by Wilms & Rasch "allegory is an indication not only what once was but of what will be" (2006. P. 27). It is conceivable to say in regards to hidden political truth helping with allegory painting since it says one thing and importance another (Mundik, 2015). But the success of allegorical work basically relies upon the viewers or audience's capacity to perceive the characters comparing the symbolic meaning of every one of the components within the artwork (Park, 2014). Thus, this research has pointed out the bland text with allegory is easy for viewer's understanding. After reading the text and watching an allegorical image, viewers will have the capacity to comprehend this importance effectively and this painting will make their awareness. Image and text get complementary advantages, reason and sensibility bring out the best in each other, which improves the effect of the information transmission and can inspire people to take the initiative to accept information of interest (Liu. & Yao, 2014). Although writing form of language is transformed from a pictorial or hieroglyphic image into a modern alphabet, artists have added a new dimension to the art form through the easy presentation by using it in various art forms (Wyse, 2017). Since word and image can fill each other's gap. Both word and image can be evocative in their own ways and independent of each other" (Wyse, 2017). Comic art, newspaper, political cartoon art, poster art popular for people and easy to understand because its context is presented by some writing text and it is illustrated by the picture (Antona & Stephanidis, 2017). This research

sort out why and how the blending theory of text and image of a cartoon, poster and illustration plays an important role in social and political context in contemporary art but writing text on these art never turn into an image. My using text on the painting turns into an image due to its applying process and strategic composition. As a result, viewers can read it and count it as a part of the image which is the mentionable practice in this studied area. Success of practice makes the meaning of the painting easy for viewer's understanding. The main target of this study is to enrich human consciousness and expand a new approach contemporary art through the investigation of text and image blending art in political and social context.

## METHODOLOGY

This section point out image and text are not separate from each other. Applying the process of text in painting turned into a part of the image that is the new approach in contemporary art. This section was divided into two stages: Phase 1 “Strategic Composition Format” and Phase 2 “Two in One Format” by drawing



**Figure 1:** “Strategic Composition Format” and “Two in One Format” primarily established through the sketchbook work

### Phase 1: Strategic Composition Format

In the visual arts, composition is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or 'ingredients' in a work of art, as distinct from the subject. It can also be thought of as the organization of the elements of art according to the principles of art. The term composition means 'putting together' that is arranged using conscious thought. In this step, considering the main subject, the supporting visual elements are placed in such a way where the text is settled, it is converted to a part of the image. At the beginning of this step, the things that are commonly used for writing are highlighted as a supporting visual element. Such as paper, signboard, blackboard. In the second step, background, body of principle subject and its used ingredients and environmental element are utilized as a supporting element.

### Phase 2: Two in One Format by drawing

Depend on paintings theme, sometimes suitable element is not found in this type of painting as supporting visual element where the text is set to be considered as a part of the image. In this case, the main image or other elements of the painting can turn into a dual character which expresses

itself as an image and text through the statistic drawing skill. Drawing is a form of visual art which representing objects or forms on a surface chiefly by means of lines. As noted by Angie Taylor “drawing will help you to improve your skills and change the way you think about form, composition and structure” (Taylor, 2013). According to Taylor, in this phase, drawing highlighted two separate forms in the same form that is call two in one format.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

As my own art practice is one of the methods employed in carrying out this research, it is vital to elaborate the relation between the examination of contemporary art and human consciousness about political culture together with my artwork through the process of text and image combination. In order to achieve the goal of this research through my own practice based on the exhibitions to develop findings on constructed. The findings are obtained on an ongoing reflection upon the process of text and image combination with the political and social context as well as the investigation on increasing human consciousness. All interviews were recorded and these reflections have been aided by the ongoing engagements with the audience and these were planned as follows:

1. To choose the gallery with an appropriate space to install the artworks in Tanjong Malim and outside Tanjong Malim.
2. Setting up an actual private view with an invitation to artists and art practitioners.
3. Discussion of the artwork in art, conversation, seminar and workshop.
4. Discussion with colleague, tutors and other PhD students from Pendidikan Sultan Idries University and other universities.
5. Conversation via telephone and electronic mail with artists and academicians Malaysia

Through the exhibitions, I have exhibited artwork that portrays the social and political context which can be easily presented to the viewer by removing the complexity of the meaning of the symbol, because I focused on the text and allegorical image supplementation of each other and text became readable, but it never gets deviated from the image, rather it is a significant part of the image due to “strategic composition format” and two in one format” which reveals a complete difference from another text and image combination art of contemporary art. In my first exhibition, Message I had the opportunity to discuss my ideas, techniques and the relation of my artwork with globalization to the audiences, which came from different groups of people such as students, academicians and artist. During the “Message” exhibition at Sarang Art Hub gallery, my works were viewed and discussed by Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris PhD group discussion. In the discussion, Badrolhisham, an artist and curator from the Petronas Gallery pointed out that the allegory symbol and text combination is the perfect tool to express political issues and viewers understanding level. He added the indirect indication of the allegorical symbol is presented simply through the text to search for the truth. Another artist and film director, Mamat Khalid from Sarang Art Hub commented on the importance of the allegorical fable with text in terms of the new transformation related to the modern approaches to construct a new form of artwork. In this discussion, Md Fahmid, an artist and PhD student in fine art describes that the process of converting text to image through the composition is the new format in studying this area. Interviews were used in this study in order to explore audiences thought my text and image combination idea and process through my exhibition.

## **THE RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

After the development stage of art work, the artworks were installed in the Sarang Art Hub Gallery, for two months to be evaluated. The audience found that the text and allegorical symbolic image combination method were more attractive and manage to hold their attention. Besides that, respondents agree the text and image combination art was easier to understand, presented clear and

consistent information. The visitor also perceived text and image supplement each other and it helped them to know hidden truth of political context. Artist, art critics and PhD student group of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris agreed that this combination was the appropriate for political purpose and it was the new approaches to the contemporary art. This positive experience of the respondents indicated that this combination method is more effective for viewers to build their consciousness about political context.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion is an attempt to look at the allegory in painting within the larger context of its power and indirect indication which is the appropriate to present the political issues. If though it is a powerful medium to coordinate and to explore diverse political and sensitive issues, but its indirect indication often becomes difficult to understand for viewers. Text and allegorical symbol combination artworks are easily presented to the viewer by expelling this problem. Because the text and allegorical symbol work through each other's supplement. In this research, text never gets deviated from the image; rather it is a significant part of the image due to "Strategic Composition" and "Two in One format" which reveals a complete difference from another text and image combination art of contemporary art.

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