



Fakulti Seni Gunaan Dan Kreatif

**THE VISUALIZATION OF SEVEN DEADLY SINS USING SYMBOLS
IN PAINTING**

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**Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian
(Seni Halus)
2017**

**THE VISUALIZATION OF SEVEN DEADLY SINS
USING SYMBOLS IN PAINTING**

GOH YUAN YUAN

Projek ini merupakan salah satu keperluan untuk
Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian
(Seni Halus)

Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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
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ABSTRACT

In the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great introduced seven deadly sins which comprised of pride, greed, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth. Animal symbols will be used to visualize each of the seven deadly sins. The meaning of the seven deadly sins will be further emphasized by colours and lines.

In this research, collection and analysis of data concerning seven deadly sins and animal symbols will be carried out through qualitative method. Seven paintings will be produced based on the result of this research.

Seven deadly sins serve as a warning to others because each of the sins can lead to another sins or crimes. Seven deadly sins are related to every single human being regardless their ethnicity, religion, and culture.

ABSTRAK

Pada abad ke-6, Santo Gregorius Agung telah memperkenalkan *seven deadly sins*, iaitu kesombongan, ketamakan, kecemburuan, kemarahan, hawa nafsu, kerakusan, dan kemalasan. Simbol haiwan yang berlainan telah digunakan untuk memberi gambaran kepada setiap *seven deadly sins*. Isi dalam *seven deadly sins* dapat ditekankan lagi dengan warna and garisan.

Dalam kajian ini, data-data mengenai *seven deadly sins*, symbol haiwan akan diperolehi melalui cara *qualitative*. Tujuh catan akan dihasilkan berdasarkan pendapat kajian ini,

Seven deadly sins diwujudkan sebagai sesuatu amaran kerana setiap satu daripada *seven deadly sins boleh* menimbulkan dosa dan jenayah yang lain. *Seven deadly sins* berkait dengan setiap individu tanpa mengira kaum, agama, dan budaya.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Sins are mentioned frequently in the Bible, starting with the original sin committed by Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit which the God had commanded them not to do. Sins are any action, feeling, or thought that violates the divine law.

Roman Catholic Church divided sins into two categories; one is the venial sins which are seen as relatively minor, and the other one is the mortal sins which are considered severe (Seaman, n.d.). Mortal sins are known as capital, cardinal and deadly sins as well. The deadly sins are introduced in order to control the behaviour of the believer. Pride, greed, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth are the commonly accepted seven deadly sins. On the contrary, humility, kindness, abstinence, chastity, patience, liberality and diligent are the seven heavenly virtues to cure the seven deadly sins. The seven deadly sins are considered deadly because they destroy one's state of grace and chance to be saved (Samples, 2014).

Semiotic is related to meaning and involved anything which stands for other thing (Chandler, 2002). The origin of the word semiotic originated from a Greek word of *semeion* which means sign. Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sandres Peirce are the two founders of semiotics.

According to Peirce (2001), the most basic categories of sign are icons, indices, and symbols. An icon has similarity to its semiotic object while an index has physical or imagined connection with its semiotic object, yet symbols do not necessarily possess these links to its semiotic object. The term symbol is derived from the Greek word of *ballein* which means to throw and *syn* which means together (Deacon, 2011). Symbol is mostly applied on spoken word, written word, visual images and cultural representations.

1.1 Problem Statement

Petocz (1999) suggests that anything with a meaning is a symbol and symbol is everywhere. Anything with or without a physical can be expressed by symbols because symbols do not necessarily have physical link and logical meaning with the object. Smithsonian (n.d.) supports that symbols are often representing something abstract such as condition or an idea. As sins exist in thought as well, sins are more subjective and without a physical form. Symbols are able to act as the bridge between abstract ideas such as seven deadly sins or realistic subject.

There are no unifiers in symbols and some symbols may have multiple meanings, for example, chain signifies union as well as imprisonment. As a result, there is a necessity to study and learn about symbols. To determine the symbols for a desired meaning or object, previous symbols for the certain subject served as the references. Seven deadly sins had been served as the subject matter for various fields such as literature, art, music, comic or animation. In 1496, Nicolas le Rouge produces seven images regarding the infernal punishment for every seven deadly sins.

Other than that, seven deadly sins are personified into the characters in Japanese comic of Fullmetal Alchemist and Nanatsu no Taizai. Besides that, Georg Pencz used animals as the symbols to depict seven deadly sins. Thus, references are sufficient in order to determine the symbols for each sins.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are seven deadly sins?
2. What are the symbols that able to represent each seven deadly sins?
3. How to visualize seven deadly sins in painting?

1.3 Objectives

1. To identify the seven deadly sins.
2. To explore the representation of seven deadly sins using symbols.
3. To produce a series of painting regarding seven deadly sins.

1.4 Significance of Research

- Sins are not only related to spiritual life, sins are related to every single human being.
- There is a possibility where these sinful desires and emotions will lead to crimes.
- Not only that majority of crimes are sins, sins also able to affect people mentality and even physical condition by filling one's heart with guilt, depression, discouragement or despair.
- Seven deadly sins give insight to understanding one's weakness, faults and actions.

1.5 Scoop of Research

The main focus of this research will be the symbols which represent each seven deadly sins. Seven deadly sins, will be used as the subject matter because these sins are the well-known sins in Christian religion. After that, the theory of semiotic will be studied. Then, symbols and the relationship between symbols and seven deadly sins will be investigated. Lastly, a series of painting will be produced based on the research conducted.

1.6 Expected Result

Seven deadly sins, semiotic and symbols will be studied. Besides that, the symbols which represent each seven deadly sins will be identified. Last but not least, seven painting with each of the seven deadly sins as the subject matter will be depicted.

1.7 Conclusion

A problem was found by researcher. There are three questions to be answer to solve the problem. In order to answer these questions, three objectives were determined. The significance of the research and the scoop of research were identified. After achieving the objectives, the questions will be answered and a series of painting will be produced.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Review of selected literature will provide deeper understanding towards seven deadly sins and symbols. Every sins of seven deadly sins will be studied. Other than that, symbols which able to represent each seven deadly sins will be identified and analyzed. Last but not least, the possibility of the art forms to depict seven deadly sins will be explored through artwork references.

2.1 Seven Deadly Sins

According to Peels (2001), sins suggest two situations which are connected to one another. On the one hand, sins refer to specific sins including sinful words, desires, emotions and action that were done openly or hidden from sight. On the other hand, there is sin as condition where a particular individual has a high tendency to perform sinful act. Sins are existed in one's life as long as that person's heart or mind is directed towards evil even without continuously commit sinful deeds.

The sources of sins are a group of disposition or tendencies which known as the deadly sins (Olyott, n.d.). The deadly sins are formally called as capital sins. Seven deadly sins are comprised of pride, greed, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth. Seven deadly sins were not stated directly in the Bible but identified by several saint since early Christian times. As stated in the Bible;

“There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community” (Proverbs 6:16-19, New International Version).

In the fourth century, a Greek theologian, Evagrius of Pontus, introduced eight generic evil thoughts that must be recognized in the daily life: gluttony, fornication, avarice, sadness, anger, acedia, vainglory, and pride (Sinkewicz, 2003). Two centuries later, Pope Gregory the Great established seven sins by merging acedia with sadness and vainglory with pride, and adding envy into the list. He measured the severity of each sin based on the degree to which they offend against love and came to a conclusion that pride is the most wicked sin (Kastenbaum, n.d.). Besides that, Aquinas (1981) acknowledges the ranking of seven vices listed by Pope Gregory and confirms that pride is the origin of every sins. After that, sadness was replaced by sloth on the seventh century (Shannon, n.d.).

2.1.1 Pride

Pride, also called as arrogance, is the root of all sins (Newshauser, 2005). As mentioned by Wilhelmsson (n.d.), pride is to take pleasure in being above the rest. Pride makes one to hide one's weakness, overly competitive, and try to impress the others all the time. Besides that, the feeling of superiority over another also caused one to think that every achievement accomplished was only due to own effort, furthermore, unwilling to listen to others teaching or suggestion (Sinkewicz, 2003). Thus, pride makes a person to become selfish, self-seeking, and self-centered.

When one considers oneself to be more important than others, they tend to neglect other peoples and God (Seaman, n.d.).

2.1.2 Greed

Greed, or avarice, was also known as covetousness in the past (Iyer, 1985). Greed is an excessive desire toward material possessions and it is a desire which can never be satisfied. Aquinas (1981) corroborates that when a person's desire for external possessions gone beyond the necessary to support that person's condition of life, greed exists in that person's life. Apart from that, greed is a type of idolatry where material possessions became an object of worship (Seaman, n.d.). Moreover, Newshauser (2005) pointed out that greed is considered the most severe deadly sin in the later Middle Ages.

2.1.3 Envy

Ozaki (2014) asked a question in a song, "Why is it, I wonder, that the things I don't have look so much more beautiful" (track 1). The word envy is related to a French word *envie*, meaning desire. Envy, or jealousy, is begrudging the possession or enjoyment of the others and desire to obtain them without restraint, even if it is done faithlessly (Olyott, n.d.). Besides that, Wilhelmsson (n.d.) comments that envy is a feeling of dissatisfaction or hatred towards other's success and superiority. Similarly, Buechner (1817) says that envy is a strong desire to make other peoples to be mutually unsuccessful. As the feeling of bitterness grows, envy can lead to the other deadly sins such as lust, greed, or wrath (Seaman, n.d.).

2.1.4 Wrath

Wrath or anger is the root of violence (Seaman, n.d.). Wrath is given pain and giving back the pain. Loss, frustration, injustice, and humiliation are the sources of wrath. Wilhelmsson (n.d.) believes that there are five phases in anger. Firstly, mild irritation in which one's being upset. Then, mild irritation turn into indignation when one desire for an answer or avenge, and indignation can lead to insulting words or unreasonable exaggerations. After that, unexpressed irritation and indignation leads to wrath. The next phase is fury where temporary loss of control in emotion takes place. Lastly, fury turns into rage which gives rise to loss of control and involves acts of violence. Therefore, wrath resulted in pain, suffering, and violence.

2.1.5 Lust

Lust is to treat others as an object of sexual gratification rather than a human being. Wilhelmsson (n.d.) claims that the original meanings of lust are any strong desire and craving, yet the word lust has become a negative connotation when this word is translated as evil desires or sinful passions. Lust comprises all forms of sexual impurity, unchastity, and inappropriate desire for sexual pleasure such as fornication, adultery, incest, seduction, rape, or prostitution (Olyott, n.d.).

2.1.6 Gluttony

The struggle with gluttony begins at the foundation of actual life. Gluttony is connected with lack of self-control. Aquinas (1981) defines gluttony as an attraction to pleasures and an immoderate appetite for food, drink, and sleep. However, Olyott (n.d.) justifies that gluttony is not associated with addiction to a substance such as cocaine, alcohol, or nicotine.

2.1.7 Sloth

Sloth or acedia is a sickness of soul. Aquinas (1981) recognizes sloth as a relaxation or loss of the emotional strain. Besides that, Wihelmsson (n.d.) says that sloth is a sin of neglecting and a failure to feel, think, speak, and do. Not only that sloth strips away the ability of one to love another because love requires commitment and work, but sloth also silence one when one is watching sins and evil. Greeson (2005) pointed out that when good men do nothing, they get nothing and evil triumphs, and they are no longer good.

2.2 Symbol

Semiotic is anything related to sign. It is a study of sign. Peirce (2001) classified sign into three classes: icons, indices, and symbols. Among the three classes of sign, symbols are the most complicated class because there is no necessary link or similarity between the signifier and signified. Signifier is the form of a sign whereas signified is a concept expressed by a signifier, for Saussure, a sign must consists both a signifier and a signified (David, 1991).

Radcliffe-Brown (1976) mentions that anything with meaning is a symbol and symbol able to express any meaning of anything the symbol represent. Cirlot (1999) verifies that nothing is neutral or meaningless and everything is related to other things. Therefore, Petocz (1999) indicates there is no unity in the meaning of symbol and one symbol can represents several meaning. However, Deacon (2011) argues that the arbitrary and conventional nature of symbol can be overcome by studying symbolic references. Kintsch (2008) conveys that symbol is described through its relationship with other symbols, but not through its representation.

2.2.1 Symbol and Art

According to Uyovwirume (2013), human is the only creature among the living things who possess the power to artificially produce symbols and express their experience with symbols. Coomaraswamy (1980) specifies that symbolism is the art of thinking in images. Other than that, symbols are a mediator between identifiable reality and the magic, mystical, invisible sphere of religion, and philosophy, reach out from the consciously understandable into the region of the unconscious. In the same manner, Petocz (1999) portrays that symbolism is a substitute produced unconsciously. Therefore, experience, memory, and imagination are the symbolizing functions of the human mind.

On one hand, an artwork functioned as a sign that depict feeling, belief or experience. On the other hand, the expression of an artwork is the function of symbol when it refers to the articulation, main purpose of language, or the presentation of ideas solely. Thus, symbols are understood when the viewer receive the idea an artwork presents (Langer, 1953). Moreover, Frutiger (1989) substantiates that the ability of symbols to make a statement is indicated as symbolic content.

2.2.2 Symbol and Christianity

As Uyovwirume (2013) mentions, symbols and religion are connected by two essential elements of the origin of religion, which are experience and expression. Otto (1973) defines experience of religion as spiritual emotion which is inexpressible or ineffable to be described in words. Then, Whitehead (1974) embodies that the expression of religious experience is a visible sign of