



An Anthropomorphic Analysis of Iwan Fals' Tikus-Tikus Kantor and Pink Floyd's Dogs

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Abstract: Animal-based imagery, including anthropomorphism and zoomorphism, has been a common literary device since ancient times. Contemporary writers of popular song, such as The Beatles, have been particularly frequent exponents of animal-based imagery. This imagery has several uses: it enables subtle or oblique representations of challenging or controversial issues, as well as creating potent, often surreal, imagery which enhances the lyrical quality of the song. Anthropomorphism may take several different forms: comparison (in which animals are compared to humans in instinct and behaviour), cognition (in which animals express human-like thoughts or language), and material conduct (in which animals engage in humanoid actions, including the use of human accessories and technologies). Iwan Fals is a Javanese singer/songwriter renowned for writing songs that address socio-political issues in Indonesia, including topics such as corruption and inequality. Pink Floyd were an English rock band whose songs often explored similar socio-political issues. Both artists have used animal-based imagery in their socio-political songs. Fals' Tikus-Tikus Kantor may be described as anthropomorphic, whilst Pink Floyd's Dogs may be interpreted as zoomorphic.

Keywords: anthropomorphism; zoomorphism; popular music; Beatles; Iwan Fals; Pink Floyd

Abstrak: Analisis Antropomorfik terhadap Lagu 'Tikus-Tikus Kantor' Karya Iwan Fals dan 'Dogs' Karya Pink Floyd. Citraan berbasis hewan, termasuk antropomorfisme dan zoomorfisme, telah menjadi perangkat sastra umum sejak zaman kuno. Penulis lagu populer kontemporer, seperti The Beatles, telah menjadi eksponen citraan berbasis hewan yang sangat sering. Citraan ini memiliki beberapa kegunaan: memungkinkan representasi halus atau tidak langsung dari isu-isu yang menantang atau kontroversial, serta menciptakan citraan yang kuat, sering kali surealis, yang meningkatkan kualitas lirik lagu. Antropomorfisme dapat mengambil beberapa bentuk yang berbeda: perbandingan (di mana hewan dibandingkan dengan manusia dalam naluri dan perilaku), kognisi (di mana hewan mengekspresikan pikiran atau bahasa seperti manusia), dan perilaku material (di mana hewan terlibat dalam tindakan humanoid, termasuk penggunaan aksesoris dan teknologi manusia). Iwan Fals adalah penyanyi/penulis lagu Jawa yang terkenal karena menulis lagu-lagu yang membahas isu-isu sosial-politik di Indonesia, termasuk topik-topik seperti korupsi dan ketidaksetaraan. Pink Floyd adalah band rock Inggris yang lagu-lagunya sering mengeksplorasi isu-isu sosial-politik yang serupa. Kedua artis tersebut telah menggunakan citraan berbasis hewan dalam lagu-lagu sosial-politik mereka. Tikus-Tikus Kantor karya Fals dapat dideskripsikan sebagai antropomorfik, sedangkan Dogs karya Pink Floyd dapat diinterpretasikan sebagai zoomorfik.

Kata kunci: antropomorfisme; zoomorfisme; musik populer; Beatles; Iwan Fals; Pink Floyd



1. Introduction

In this article I will consider the role which anthropomorphism, zoomorphism and other variants of animal-based imagery have played in western pop songwriting and examine the use of these techniques by several Indonesian musicians and writers. The focus of my Discussion shall be a case study analysis and comparison of two songs: *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* (1986) by Indonesian protest singer Iwan Fals, and *Dogs* (1977) by the English progressive rock band Pink Floyd. These, along with other musical and literary texts, will be examined using descriptive qualitative methods. To begin with, I should attempt to define and explain the concept of anthropomorphism. I'm always somewhat wary of relying heavily on dictionary definitions as a reference point for academic concepts, but in this case it may be a useful starting-point. The Oxford English Dictionary describes anthropomorphism as the 'attribution of human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities'. Kelen adds a physical dimension to this definition, describing anthropomorphism as the attribution of human form or traits to other-than-humans; this interpretation is supported by its etymology from the Greek *anthropos* meaning 'human being', plus *morphe* meaning 'form' (Kelen p20). One of the earliest forms of anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics, whether physical, cognitive or behavioural, to deities. Ancient Greek gods had human bodies and features, spoke in human language, waged battle with human weapons, dined at human-like feasts, fell in love (often with humans), and acted at various times with a range of human emotions, from kindness and compassion to jealous rage and hatred. The Jewish and Christian Bible, in its first book, introduces a similar concept: "So God created humankind in his image" (Genesis 1:27). Gods were in the shape of men; men were in the shape of gods. In these cultures, underscoring much of Western tradition and values, the amalgam of god and man is deeply embedded.

Anthropomorphism is thus an ancient technique for image-construction. As a corollary device, the process of image-making by a mixture of human and animal elements is likewise scarcely new, and may also have its origins in religious and mythical story culture. Animal characteristics are fused with humanoid figures in many ancient religions and mythologies. Egypt has its jackal-headed Anubis, the Aztecs their dog-headed Xolotl, ancient Greece has the bull-headed Minotaur and the half-horse half-man centaur - just to name a few. Hinduism, which provided much of Indonesia's traditional culture, is especially fond of Frankenstein-like fabrications of man and beast: the elephant-trunked Ganesha (who also manifested sometimes as lion-headed Narasimha), the birdman Garuda, the monkey warrior Hanuman, Kamadhenu with his human head and cow body, are some notable examples. These mythical examples in Hindu tradition may account for the willingness of Indonesian artists and writers to employ animal motifs and anthropomorphic concepts in their work, some of which I shall discuss later. Anthropomorphism as applied to religion results in deities being attributed with humanoid forms, thus the presence of animal features on such deities cannot strictly be considered as purely anthropomorphic; rather it includes a component of animalism or theriolatry, being the religious worship of animals. Nevertheless, the process of applying human form to deities, and then adding animal elements to the resultant human form is clearly some type of secondary anthropomorphism; it may even be viewed as a criss-crossed intermeshing of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism. Zoomorphism is the attribution of animal characteristics to humans. As such it is apposite to anthropomorphism, although the two concepts may clearly overlap - should we describe Garuda as a human-like bird, or a bird-like human? It's difficult to say, and it may depend on the specific visual representation (anthro-zoomorphism perhaps?).

Whilst Hindu religion was populated with animalistic deities and heroes, Jewish and Christian lore intimates that it is a heresy to make confluence of animals and deities (Fox). By extension, the doctrine of Genesis that God created humankind in his own image is deterrent to the use of animalistic figures similar in other cultures. The snake from Genesis, who thinks and speaks in human language, is a rare example of animal anthropomorphism in the Bible, and one which clearly represents negative and destructive traits.

Although Judaeo-Christian biblical texts were reluctant to conflate the animalistic and the humanoid, this has not proved a significant deterrent to the wider tradition of western writers and artists, who have frequently used animal-based anthropomorphic imagery in their stories and songs. Ancient Greek storytellers such as Homer and Aesop assigned human characteristics to animals and natural forces such as the wind. Animism (not to be confused with animalism) is the belief that animals and inanimate objects contain spirits, with will and intelligence comparable to that of humans (Rankin). Anthropomorphism and its variants became popular literary devices in the centuries that followed Homer and Aesop. In the late 16th century Shakespeare turned the weaver Nick Bottom into a donkey by magic spell in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Act 3 Scene 1); in the early 19th century, the Brothers Grimm wrote *Town Musicians of Bremen* about German farm animals who were skilled at playing musical instruments (Grimm); in 1945 George Orwell published *Animal Farm*, a famous example of anthropomorphism which I shall discuss later.

In modern times, poets and writers still enjoy this technique, including the use of anthropomorphism in songs. Popular music has long been a fertile playground for lyrical abstraction and expressionism. In the 1960s, American and English songwriters broke away from the teenage romance and rebellious adolescent energy which had filled 1950s rock 'n roll. No artist exemplifies this better than the Beatles, who evolved rapidly from straightforward love songs - such as *P.S. I Love You* and *I Want To Hold Your Hand* in 1962-63 - to psychedelic lyrics with complex, highly metaphorical imagery - including *Tomorrow Never Knows* and *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* in 1966-67.

Songs are very suited to animal personification; the poetic lyrical form, interleaved with music, creates great potential for abstraction and impressionism. As a lyrical metaphorical device, the Beatles were especially fond of animal imagery, and it occurs within their later period catalogue in a variety of forms. There are 11 Beatles songs between 1965-69 which include animals in their title: *Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)*, *And Your Bird Can Sing*, *Hey Bulldog*, *I Am The Walrus*, *Blue Jay Way*, *Rocky Raccoon*, *Piggies*, *Blackbird*, *Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me and My Monkey*,



Figure 1: Line drawing of a Garuda bird, a 'bird-like human' (Déchen: https://www.aroencyclopaedia.org/shared/text/t/tsogyel_garuda_dr_01_01_eng.php)



Figure 2: Painting of a Garuda bird, a 'human-like bird' (unattributed: <https://mythicalencyclopedia.com/garuda/>)

Dig A Pony, Octopus' Garden. It is interesting to consider the different type of animal imagery (or 'animalia') used in these songs, and we can even use this analysis to begin to construct a tiered hierarchy of anthropomorphic imagery. Three of the Beatles' songs describe the existence or behaviour of realistic specified animals:

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
...Blackbird fly into the light of the dark black night (Blackbird);
You tell me that you've got everything you want
And your bird can sing, but you don't get me (And Your Bird Can Sing);

A bird singing may be interpreted as anthropomorphic behaviour, although I prefer to regard it simply as a poetic description of a bird making tunefully naturalistic bird noises. There is also the eponymous lyric of 'Everybody's got something to hide except me and my monkey'.

Martha My Dear, while not using any specific animal imagery, is evidently a type of non-specific anthropomorphism. The song was written by Paul McCartney about his pet English Sheepdog (Miles), and obliquely draws parallels between canine and human behaviour.

Hold your head up, you silly girl / Look what you've done
...Hold your hand out, you silly girl / See what you've done

Octopus' Garden (1969) locates human characters in an underwater animal milieu; indeed, this is almost an exotic relocation of the Beatles earlier simple boy-meets-girl songs.

I'd like to be under the sea
In an octopus' garden with you

Rocky Raccoon (1968) appears to be a purely human character who happens to have an animal name:

Now somewhere in the Black Mountain Hills of Dakota
There lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon
And one day his woman ran off with another guy

In Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown), (1965) the bird is used as a simple metaphor for the behaviour of a human character. John Lennon has admitted he used metaphorical imagery to disguise the true subject-matter of the song, which was an extra-marital affair he had conducted.

And when I awoke I was alone
This bird had flown

Hey Bulldog (1967), I Am The Walrus (1967) and Dig A Pony (1969) - all John Lennon songs - contain cryptic, impressionistic references to animals without any tangible attempt at intelligible anthropomorphism.

I am the egg man
They are the egg men
I am the walrus

Despite this menagerie of creatures in the Beatles songbook, it is only in George Harrison's Piggies (1968) that animals exhibit explicitly depicted human behaviour, and I shall discuss this song in more detail later. The pigs in the lyrics wear "white shirts, use "forks and knives" and have "piggy wives".

As well as The Beatles, many other western musical artists have imagined animals into their songs. It was Bob Dylan who largely inspired the Beatles to widen their lyrical palette (Gilmore). Dylan himself was not a heavy exponent of anthropomorphism. He frequently deployed historical and literary characters into his songs (Napoleon in rags, Ophelia, Queen Mary, Cain and Abel) and regularly employed

frequent metaphors and expressionist imagery e.g. 'Ruthie said come see her in her honky-tonk lagoon', Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again (1966); 'Dr. Filth, he keeps his world inside of a leather cup', Desolation Row (1965). However it is rare to find animal imagery in his songs until the creation myth of God Gave Names To All The Animals (1979). It might even be concluded that animalia and anthropomorphism was more popular with English songwriters of the period, compared to their American counterparts. The Who offered Boris the Spider in 1966, which tries to penetrate the thoughts of an arachnid.

Now he's dropped on to the floor
Heading for the bedroom door
Maybe he's as scared as me

The Kinks released Apeman in 1970, which presented a satirical reversion of Darwinian evolution.

compared to the flowers and the birds and the trees
I am an apeman
...the only time that I feel at ease
Is swinging up and down in the coconut trees

The Rolling Stones used a common hyperbole in Wild Horses (1971); the phrase 'wild horses couldn't drag me away' is thought to have connotations of medieval European torture in which victims were tied by each limb to four horses pulling in contrary directions (Ammer), while their cover version of the blues standard Little Red Rooster may have inadvertently started the animalia trend in 1964.

At this point I shall attempt to categorise and tier the different types of anthropomorphism which emerge from these and other songs, as well as a few examples in literature. Perhaps we could say that the simplest type anthropomorphism, one which requires little or no surrealism, is that which merely observes similarities between the behaviour of animals and humans. Maroon 5 are not my favourite band, but they provide a good example in the appropriately titled Animals (2014).

Baby, I'm preying on you tonight
Hunt you down, eat you alive
Just like animals
Maybe you think that you can hide
I can smell your scent for miles
Just like animals

Hungry Like The Wolf (1984) by English New-Romantic pop stars Duran Duran employs a similar lyrical technique.

I'm on the hunt, I'm after you
Mouth is alive, with juices like wine
And I'm hungry like the wolf

These songs observe that humans and animals share basic instincts, such as an urge for hunting, survival and procreation. Similarly, Rats by Pearl Jam (1993) compares the motivations and behaviours of humans to rats - and concludes in favour of the rats! ('They don't scam, don't fight/Don't oppress an equal's given rights'). In these songs there is no attempt to literally morph or conflate humans and animals in a physical or cognitive manner, it is simply observing commonalities in the instinctual behaviour patterns of both species. Martha My Dear, Apeman, Norwegian Wood, even Boris the Spider, might be bracketed in this category. We should again observe that this type of analogy should be considered as a manifestation of not only anthropomorphism, but also its inverse counterpart zoomorphism (as described earlier, anthropomorphism identifies human attributes in animals, zoomorphism provides the

opposite, locating animal attributes in humans). Indeed, many of these songs tend to the zoomorphic, their primary intention being that beneath a civilised veneer, human beings are propelled by animal-like instincts. Kelen argues that anthropomorphism and zoomorphism are essentially a single rhetorical strategy (Kelen p5), although the comparative song lyrics quoted above could perhaps be more accurately described as examples of zoomorphism.

Another, more developed type of anthropomorphism involves animals communicating in human language, either by thought or speech. In the Tintin comic books by Belgian cartoonist Herge, the dog Snowy is often presented as a 'speaking' character, although it is strongly implied that Snowy's 'words' are indeed merely soliloquy thoughts, as no human ever responds to or cogently interacts with the dog's pronouncements.

In the English novel *Watership Down* (1972), rabbits are frequently quoted speaking to each other, discussing various topics.

"No, it's safe enough" he [a rabbit named Fiver] answered. "If I start feeling there's anything dangerous I'll tell you. But it's not exactly danger that I feel about the place. It's - oh I don't know - something oppressive, like thunder I can't tell what" (Adams p18).

In *Talking Heads' Animals* (1979), the titular creatures are attributed with specific opinions, and it is implied that these are directly communicated to the human narrator.



Figure 3: Snowy the dog from Tintin (Herge p53)

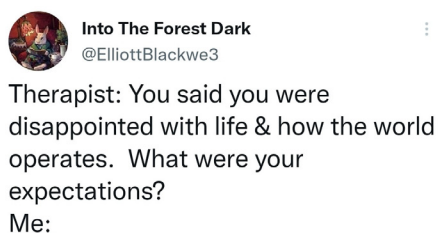


Figure 4: Social media comment using Richard Scarry illustration (Into The Forest Dark, Scarry <https://twitter.com/ElliottBlackwe3/status/1524725087962025985?lang=en>)



Animals want to change my life
I will ignore animals' advice
...They're living on nuts and berries, they say they don't need money
...They think they know what's best, they're making a fool of us

In these examples, animals communicate with human cognition and language, however they still retain a strict physical animality. Their physical appearance and behaviour is entirely consistent with that of the animals they represent, such behaviour is simply augmented with human language. Another possible example is the musical *Cats* by Andrew Lloyd Webber (1980). Although the stage and film versions present the characters as bipedal human-cat hybrids, the song cycle as a composition is more consistent with the concept of realistic actual cats who happen to communicate with the listener in an unrealistic human manner.

The most heightened form of anthropomorphism involves animals behaving in a distinctly human physical manner. The most conspicuous feature of this is bipedal movement; as soon as an animal stands and walks solely on two hind legs then it has crossed into a clear realm of humanoid behaviour. Such anthropomorphism can also manifest itself by animals wearing human clothing, utilising human accessories, appliances and technologies (e.g. computers or cooking equipment) or engaging with humanoid institutions (e.g. schools, workplaces, marriage). In Wes Anderson's film adaptation of Roald Dahl's story *Fantastic Mr Fox* (2009), the foxes (and other animals such as badgers and rats) stand upright, wear clothes, play on trampolines, ride motorbikes, write newspaper articles and sundry other human activities in what is clearly a parallel fantasy humanoid world. The Netflix animated comedy series *Bojack Horseman* uses similar device, with the titular character an affluent and hedonistic horse that lives and works as a TV actor in Hollywood.

Children's author Richard Scarry used similar technique to present a utopian society, one which has drawn ironical critique on social media that demonstrates the transformative and imaginative power of anthropomorphism (*Into the Forest Dark*).

The Beatles song *Piggies* is a good illustration of heightened anthropomorphism. The pigs wear 'starched white shirts', cannibalistically eat bacon 'clutching forks and knives' and they are married to 'piggy wives' whom they take out for dinner. *The Lovecats* by The Cure (1983) expresses similar ideas although in a less definitive way.

We should have each other to dinner, huh?

We should have each other with cream

We may conclude that there are essentially three ascending levels of anthropomorphism, as follows.

1. Similarities can be made between behaviour of animals and humans ('comparison');
2. Animals communicate using human language, either by speech or thought ('cognition'); and
3. Animals are portrayed in engaging in humanoid actions and activities, including the use human accessories and technologies ('material conduct').

Personification and anthropomorphism are similar literary devices that can be easily confused. Personification is the use of figurative language to give human-like traits to inanimate objects or non-human living things or natural phenomena, in a manner that is primarily metaphorical or representative. Anthropomorphism, on the other hand, involves non-human things displaying literal human traits and being capable of human behaviour. Ali explains the subtle difference as follows: "The personified object or animal seems like it is doing something human...the anthropomorphised object or animal is essentially doing something [human]" (Ali p68). By such manner we could describe level 1 above as personification, level 3 as anthropomorphism and level 2 as a potentially ambiguous blend of both. Definitions of personification and anthropomorphism in various sources differ. I would argue that these discrepancies in semantics are not particularly important, but that it is worthwhile assessing whether

the imagery used to mingle humans and animals is specifically physical or cognitive, as distinct from a comparative observation of a similarity in general behaviour.

One of the most famous cultural examples of anthropomorphism is George Orwell's novella *Animal Farm*, a metaphor for soviet-era communism in which a menagerie of animals seizes control of their farm from their human owner Mr Jones. The animals aspire to create an egalitarian socialist collective, but this intent is undermined by a power-hungry pig called Napoleon who instead creates a dictatorship under his rule. The story demonstrates an interesting progression of anthropomorphic imagery. At the start of the story, the animals operate at level 2 above ('cognition'): they appear and behave physically entirely as animals but communicate with human thought and language. As the story progresses however, some animals (essentially the pigs) develop more human behaviours and accoutrements: they sleep in beds with sheets, eat at tables with cutlery, wear suits and ties, and (most importantly) walk on two feet, consistent with level 3 above ('material conduct').

"...out from the door of the farmhouse came a long file of pigs, all walking on their hind legs...out came Napoleon himself, majestically upright, casting haughty glances from side to side, and with his dogs gambolling round him. He carried a whip in his trotter." (Orwell, chapter 10)

The politicisation of the animals becomes drastically heightened from this moment in the story, when the pigs acquire the behaviours of humans.

We might conclude that artists such as the Beatles often make use of anthropomorphism as a means of adding a lyrical dimension which is imaginative, fantastical and surreal. *White Rabbit* (1969) by Jefferson Airplane, with narcotic drug references inspired by Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, offers a strong example of this style ('Tell 'em a hookah-smoking caterpillar has given you the call...Remember what the dormouse said, feed your head'). *Rock Lobster* (1979) by American post-punk band the B-52s is another example of animalia being evoked for almost purely surrealist imagery:

We were at a party
His earlobe fell in the deep
Someone reached in and grabbed it
It was a rock lobster

I am particularly interested in song lyrics which explore socio-political issues. None of the songs referenced or quoted thus far could particularly be described as such; for my Discussion I would like to examine two songs, one from western culture and one from Asia, which have a more discernible socio-political content, and both of which make strong use of animal imagery to convey its message.

4. Discussions

One of the most creative and celebrated Indonesian song lyricists is Iwan Fals, who is fond of using individual characters or metaphors to illustrate broader socio-political situations. *Bento* (1989) contains the first-person reflections of a hideous and unscrupulous business leader ("To hell with the losers who get in my way / Deceit, lobbying and graft, I'll show you how it's done!"). In *Guru Oemar Bakrie* (1981) an honest and hard-working teacher arrives at his school to find it has been taken over by police and student bullies. One common type of imagery in Fals' songs is anthropomorphism. Rohmah et al. examine the frequent use of animal imagery in Iwan Fals songs, concluding that Fals finds strong similarities in the domain of humans and animals. *Belalang Tua* (2002) is a Dylan-esque acoustic guitar and harmonica song which draws parallels between an aged grasshopper chewing a leaf and elderly patrician leaders in Indonesia who are reluctant to cede their power (Rohmah p59). I would like to focus on a well-known Fals composition *Tikus-Tikus Kantor*, which can also be interpreted as containing political semiotics amidst its use of anthropomorphism. One of the first issues which must be discussed is Fals' choice of

animal for his imagery. The word *tikus* is more ambiguous than in English, as it may apply to both mice and rats. English translations and discussions of *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* vary, some refer to mice, others refer to rats. Personally, I find this ambiguity a pleasing aspect of the anthropomorphism, as there are elements in the characterisation which could be more applicable to rats, and others may be more applicable to mice. Indeed, as I discuss two possible interpretations of the lyric, there is one reading which might be more appropriate to the mouse, another for a rat.

Tikus-Tikus Kantor paints a highly metaphorical lyrical picture of an office environment, in which the main actors are rodents (rats/mice), and there is also the occasional presence of a cat. One possible interpretation is that the rodents (in this instance I shall call them mice) are workers in the office, and the cat is their supervisor. When they are unsupervised, the mice are poor workers: they are dishonest, evasive (“*ingkar janji lalu sembunyi*”), greedy and spiteful. However, when the cat appears the mice suddenly transform to well-behaved and beyond reproach (“*tak tercela*”), a complete change in demeanour (“*ganti muka*”). Although it is implied that a cat is actually inferior to the mouse (“*tikus teramat pintar atau mungkin si kucing yang kurang ditatar*”), nevertheless the mouse is happy to play a subservient role, in order to please their supervisor (“*Masa bodoh hilang harga diri*”). Another interpretation is that the song is a political allegory which explores the historical issue (“*kisah usung*”) of corruption in the Indonesian government and bureaucracy. By this reading the rodents (in this instance I shall call them rats) are corrupt officials, whereas the cat is an ordinary citizen who is deceived and exploited by the rats. In this case the rat is a corrupt official who breaks promises to the public and then evades scrutiny when queried about their role in the nation’s misfortunes. The rat bribes the hungry cat with a piece of bread (“*Kasih roti jalan pun lancar*”), and by figurative comparison a corrupt government offers small benefits to the public, which helps keep the citizens distracted and oblivious to the wider corruption which is occurring.

The role of the cat is important to consider in the meaning of the song, and crucial in determining whether the word *tikus* means mouse or rat. If the creatures are mice, then their relationship to the cat is more likely to be subservient. Cats hunt and eat mice. While the mice may seek to evade and outwit the cat, they will always be endangered by the cat’s presence. If we assume this dynamic, then the allegory of cat as supervisor and mice as office-worker seems to fit. If the creatures are rats, they are less likely to be directly threatened by the cat. Whilst the rat is likely to be wary and cautious of a cat, it is not so endangered - many cats will regard a rat as too big or too adept in self-defence to be considered an easy prey (Parsons et al.). On this reading, the metaphor of the rat as corrupt official and cat as deceived public seems best. With its sheer size, the general public (cat) is capable of removing a corrupt government and its officials (either by democratic elections or - and more appropriate to 1990 when *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* was written - by popular uprising), and so a threat does exist; however, the corrupt official (rat) is usually too cunning and agile, thus managing to thrive in its political status and corruption without serious risk of retribution. Rohmah favours the idea that the cat is an honest law official who is effortlessly outflanked by the corrupt rat (p61). Either way, the rat and cat interpretation relies on an assumption that the cat is basically an honest and deceived party. The lyric “*Kucing datang tikus menghilang*” (the cat comes the rat disappears) may be important to answering this question of interpretation. If we apply the roles of worker mice and supervisor cat, the most likely meaning of the line is that the mouse radically changes its office attitude and persona in the presence of the supervisor cat - it presents one identity to the co-workers and a different identity to the boss. Whilst this does comply with the song’s idea of duplicity, the word ‘*menghilang*’ (disappear) does not really suit the action of enacting a duplicity. If we use the interpretation of rat as corrupt official, then this lyric easily adjusts itself to suggest that the official manages to evade any investigation or consequence for their corrupt behaviour. The public (cat) may ask questions, but will never receive any answers. I like this interpretation more, and it also synchronises better with another line, “*Asal tak terbukti ah tentu sikat*

lagi” (as long as there’s no proof, of course there will be more stealing). The only line which truly lends itself towards a more subservient (i.e. mouse-like) role is “Masa bodoh hilang harga diri” (Indifferent to the loss of self-esteem); this image does perhaps better suit the sneaky office-worker who tries to fool their supervisor, although it’s hardly conclusive and could still bear relevance to the amoral government officer. Either interpretation seems to work, although I favour the second reading, that of the rat as a corrupt official. Henceforth I shall refer to the tikus of the song as a rat.

Romah et al view the main parallel as the “dirty environments” of rodents and the corrupt financial and social life of humans. It is notable that Fals uses some very similar imagery and language in *Belalang Tua*, in which he also refers to the old grasshoppers’ hunger as ‘tak kenyang-kenyang’ (not sated) and ‘rakus’ (greedy). One of the lyrical techniques which makes *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* effective is the heightened use of material conduct as anthropomorphism. These rats wear ties, work at desks and use steel cabinets.

Kisah usang tikus-tikus berdasi
Yang suka ingkar janji lalu sembunyi
Di balik meja teman sekerja
Di dalam lemari dari baja
(The old story of rats wearing ties
Who like to break promises then
Hide behind work colleagues’ desks
Hide inside steel cupboards)

The latter section of the song adds a further layer to its anthropomorphism when it uses the strange lyric ‘Otak tikus memang bukan otak udang’ (A rat’s brain is not a prawn’s brain); my best interpretation is a reference to the colloquial concept that a prawn stores faeces in its head; a crude image to express a lack of intelligence.

For a comparison to another song which uses animal imagery in the business world (I will discuss later whether this can be properly defined as anthropomorphism), we can consider *Dogs* (1977) by English rock band Pink Floyd. This 17-minute opus was the centrepiece of *Animals*, a brooding and ruminative concept album which created an anthropomorphic world of corrupt pigs, ambitious dogs and brainwashed sheep. The themes of power and corruption seem to be loosely based on Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, although the environment is more corporate, less political. *Dogs* encapsulates the fatalistic life of a ruthless and callous opportunist who occupies a middle rung in the business world. The lyrics offer an intriguing blend of anthropomorphism and personification; the character behaves like an animal (“You’ve got to be able to pick out the easy meat with your eyes closed/ Moving in silently, down wind and out of sight”) is treated like an animal (“Who was fitted with collar and chain/Who was given a pat on the back”), yet at the same time exhibits a facade of civilised humanity (“Work on points for style / Like the club tie, and the firm handshake”). Lyricist Roger Waters is clearly critiquing the duplicitous and insincere activity of the corporate world (“A certain look in the eye and an easy smile / You have to be trusted by the people that you lie to”), although throughout the song there is a sense that the ‘Dogs’ have little control over their destiny, rather they have been trained and indoctrinated to behave in this manner and to fulfil the function in life which they have been allocated (most likely by the pigs who seem to be shadowy rulers of this bleak industrial milieu).

Fals is highly critical and judgemental of his main characters; the rats are ‘rakus’ (greedy), ‘cerdik, licik’ (cunning, sly) and ‘tak kenal kenyang’ (insatiable). Pink Floyd also makes harsh assessments of their dogs, who ‘strike...without thinking’, ‘lie’ and ‘put the knife in’ people that trust them. The dogs however are equally afforded a degree of empathy and exculpation. The dogs are ‘confused’, suffer from a ‘creeping malaise, and trapped in a ‘maze’; as well as being perpetrators they are clearly victims of some kind. In the final stanza of the lyric it is revealed that they have been subjected to maltreatment from

unseen forces (most likely the pigs who are featured in other tracks on *Animals*). These forces seem to be both domestic (the dogs were 'born in a house full of pain' and 'trained not to spit in the fan') as well as hierarchical ('broken by trained personnel'); the negative characterisation of the dogs is linked to these formative traumas, and their ultimate fate is to be 'ground down in the end' and 'found dead on the phone'. Cohen describes *Dogs* as the 'life of an average businessman struggling to survive in a cruel capitalist world' and that this is a task which 'necessitates developing animalistic instincts' (p2).

Dogs is a complex lyric which presents multiple viewpoints expressed in first, second person and third persons. The first section of the song is written in second person and uses much imperative language ('You've got to sleep on your toes... You've got to keep one eye looking over your shoulder'). Rose speculates that these are instructions given by an experienced dog to a younger one (p60-61), although Cohen offers the idea of a "broad accusation against the Western bourgeoisie" (p2). The second section of the lyric is written in first person, with the protagonist 'dog' itself reflecting on its own situation and a fate over which it has no control ('Sometimes it seems to me as if I'm just being used'). For Cohen he is "a prisoner in his own life, he cannot see a way to escape what binds him" (p2). The closing stanza of the song shifts to third person, with same protagonist reflecting on the fate of another dog - and likely predicting his own bleak destiny ('a killer... who was dragged down by the stone'). By contrast, *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* does not use any personal pronouns at all, and can thus be interpreted as being entirely in the third person.

Although *Dogs* is rich in animal imagery, I would argue that the song does not strictly use anthropomorphism. Whilst *Fals* uses more explicit anthropomorphic imagery to create animals that behave like humans, Waters has conversely created humans that behave like animals. Indeed the word 'dogs' is only used in the song title, not in the actual lyrics (interestingly, Pink Floyd use musical tropes to accentuate the animalistic theme, with sound effects of dogs barking, and electric guitars which also emulate canine sounds). The resultant message is very similar, but the means of achieving it is subtly different. The other songs on the album *Animals* are similar, the imagery is better described as humans exhibiting animal qualities ('your head down in the pig bin ... pig stain on your fat chin' from *Pigs (Three Different Ones)*; 'Meek and obedient you follow the leader ... Bleating and babbling' from *Sheep*). Waters' style is arguably more accurately described as zoomorphism - the attributing of animal characteristics to humans. Both lyrical techniques make for effective portrayals, and yet there is something particularly engaging and inventive about *Fals*' image of rats conducting business in their furnished office wearing business attire. This explicit use of anthropomorphism which has animals performing human physical acts creates, I believe, more visceral lyrical imagery and a more potent message; if the song simply drew general comparisons between the attitude and behaviour of human characters and cats and rats (e.g. rats are cunning, cats are easily deceived), the song would have a less striking impact. A further impact of camouflaging the themes with anthropomorphism is that the listener is required to visualise these humanoid animals and translate the visual image into a plausible human scenario - a higher level of cognitive processing is required of the listener.

The focus of this article is on lyrical songwriting style. However, it is certainly worth noting that the two songs are presented in divergent musical contexts. *Tikus-Tikus Kantor* has an upbeat feel: there are roaming fiddle and banjo, and the chorus is underpinned by a jaunty country and western 2-step beat. *Dogs* offers a highly contrasting musical vision: it carries an almost lugubrious weight and intensity, with brooding and dissonant chords. Cohen argues that the "[chord] progression well illustrates the paranoia and helplessness expressed in the text" (p4).

There have been several other examples of anthropomorphism in Indonesian culture and literature. *M.M.M.: dan Lain-Lain Tjeritera Binatang Moderen (M.M.M.: and Other Modern Animal Stories)* is a collection of five short fables written in 1954 by Prijana Winduwinata, all of which express socio-political comment about Indonesian society and use animal characters in a heightened state of anthropomorphism. Tigers drive vehicles, cats and dogs fire guns and throw grenades, rhinoceros wear lipstick, perfume and

wristwatches; in the story *Pertandingan Kecantikan* (The Beauty Contest), female goats, deer, pigs and other creatures compete in an exploitative competition for the lust of a male animal audience:

'Swaying the part of her body above her thighs and belly... [a deer] Miss Netty walked up and down the stage...members of the jury and half the audience nod their heads. some began to whisper to their friends. Others licked their lips. One middle-aged tiger took out a handkerchief and wiped off the saliva which had fallen on his chest'. (Windiwinata)

The inclusion of specific human behaviours, gestures and accessories augments the power of the imagery and reinforces the social message conveyed.

In the novel *Sang Keris* (2020), author Panji Sukma employs a highly original method of personification. The main character in the book is an ancient ceremonial dagger, which narrates a front-row first-person history of Java as it passes through the hands of various owners, from princes to thieves, from the Majapahit Kingdom until modern times. There is one segment of genuine anthropomorphism (or perhaps transmogrification would a more appropriate word), in which the keris turns into a young adult male and becomes romantically involved with the daughter of an aristocratic family.

Putu Oka Sukanta uses highly visceral anthropomorphism in the short story *Surat Undangan* (The Letter of Invitation), a tense psychological thriller set amidst the communist persecution of the New Order regime. As the narrator is being interrogated (and perhaps tortured) by an army official, he begins to hallucinate:

"His yelling was like a dog barking in my ears. My eyes held him central to my gaze, watching as his hefty safari-suited body began to turn into a guard dog. His teeth seemed to lengthen, and a snout seemed to form around his chin. I wiped my eyes, but when I looked again it was still there. He talked on and on, but it wasn't the sound of a human voice anymore. I rubbed my ears, but all I could hear was the barking of a dog" (Sukanta p67).

Subsequently the narrator feels violated as though his body is ransacked by a horde of animals in a "zoo without cages". He senses dogs, rats, cockroaches, mosquitoes, ants, leeches "probing around in my body" (p67-68). Such gruesome animal-based imagery is not necessarily anthropomorphic of itself, but is clearly designed to express the perspective of a prisoner whose captors behave like animals without any moral limits. Eka Kurniawan also uses horror-style animalistic imagery in his novel *Lelaki Harimau* (2004), in which a disturbed teenage boy from an Indonesian fishing village becomes possessed by the spirit of a white tiger and bites out the throat of a licentious local artist who had an affair with the boy's mother. When interrogated in custody, the boy denies culpability: 'It wasn't me ... There is a tiger inside my body' (Kurniawan p38). Again, this kind of bedevilment is not strictly anthropomorphism (rather it is a human with a psycho-spiritual affliction), but the animalistic imagery is very important in drawing a behavioural parallel between humans and animals.

Author Stanley Adi Prasetyo says in the New Order period authors would have to disguise their ideas in order to avoid detection and persecution (Prasetyo p.xi). Anthropomorphism is one such possible disguise. However, in my listening experience (which is far from exhaustive) I have not come across many examples of anthropomorphism in Indonesian popular music. In 1967 the Koes Brothers wrote *sang Djadikan Aku Domba Mu* (Make Me Your Sheep), although this is a very mild use of animal metaphor, a common cliché of subordination not unlike the Rolling Stones' use of 'wild horses couldn't drag me away'. If any JUSA readers are aware of other examples of anthropomorphism or zoomorphism in Indonesian folk or popular music, I would be very happy to hear from you.

5. Conclusions

Anthropomorphism and zoomorphism are powerful lyrical devices which can be effectively blended into the lyrics of popular songs. Despite a natural propensity to obscure or camouflage a literal

interpretation of such lyrics, animal-human metaphors also have an image-based potency which can heighten the socio-political message of a song.

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