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EXTREME FORMALIST STUDY ON HASHIM HASSAN'S NATIONAL DAY LOGO DESIGNS

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Abstract

Hashim Hassan is a significant Malaysian artist/designer who is known as the Father of National Day logos. His National Day logos have been used eight times in the year of 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1991. However, in this study only three logos (1983, 1984, 1985) were discussed as the selected logos were designers' favorites. This qualitative study drew upon to the extreme formalists by examining the formal qualities of the logo designs. The visuals were analyzed based on compositional interpretation. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the researcher is able to understand the application of elements of art and principals of design for logo designs. This study helps to figure out the visual forms used in the logo designs and how they relate to the content or meaning making.

Keywords—Extreme Formalist, Hashim Hassan, National Day, Logo Designs

I.INTRODUCTION

The National Day is the highest point of Malaysia’s achievements for independence from the British Empire (Fig.1), that is celebrated every year. For Malaysians, 31 August 1957 is a historic moment for the country. The National Day is a significant event of this country, which has logo designed especially for this event. Every year, logo and a new

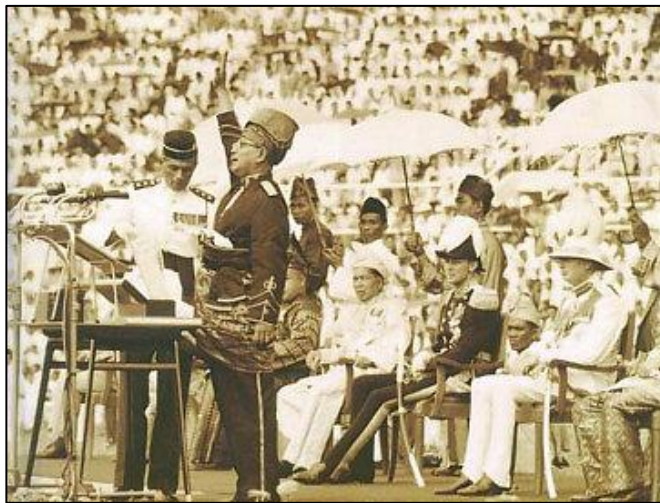


Fig. 1: Independence Day, 1957

theme is designed through “*Pertandingan Mencipta Logo dan Slogan Hari Kemerdekaan*” organized by the prime minister’s department to encourage participation of everyone so that the celebration appreciated by each and every people in this country. Associate Professor Salmah Abu Mansor explained that each and every logo created together with its theme for The National Day are related to social factors and current situation depending on the year (as cited in Sitinurbayu Mohd Yusof & Badrul Redzuan Abu Hassan, 2014). Logo found to be significant in shaping an identity and image for a company, products, organizations and/or countries. Hence, the celebration of National Day was discovered to have a favorable significance that should be studies in depth because of the sensitivity of Malaysians on this historic day, the mass media were welcome to celebrate everybody’s focal point.

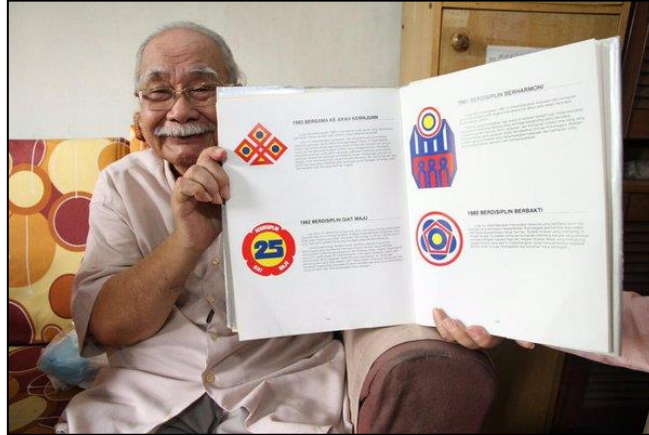


Fig 2: Hashim Hassan showing his logo designs

A day to remember, hence the man behind in contributing the National Day logos should also be remembered. Hashim Hassan as shown in Fig.2 is known as the ‘Father of National Day Logos’ was responsible to design the National Day logos for eight times in the year of 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1991 that has been directed by the Prime Minister’s Department. When he stopped creating logos for the National Day, he was appointed a member of the committee for judging the logo competition held every year for this day. Hashim described that in the past, he used to create five types of logos for the National Day in a week without a computer and the prime minister only chooses one of them. Born in Johor, youngest among the five siblings, pursued his undergraduate study in the field of Graphic Design majoring in typography, signs and symbols at Canterbury College of Art, England from 1965-1969. Later, he furthered his master’s majoring in Art Education at the University of Ohio in 1974. He is a talented artist/designer who served the Faculty of Art and Design, University Technology Mara (UiTM) for 33 years, between 1970 till 2003 prior to his retirement. Later, Hashim joined University of Selangor (UNISEL) and served between 2006 till 2013 (Hashim Hassan, 2015 & 2018).

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

A. National Day Logos

Logo considered important in shaping the identity and image of the company, products, organizations and countries (Malaysia Coin, 2020). The celebration of National day has been found to have a positive impact because of the sensitivity of Malaysians are on this historical day. Thus, the presence of the logo, slogan or theme in the context of the campaign is the celebration of Independence Day felt quite important to the government as organizers for these elements that really appeal or focus effectively if the government intends to use these elements to deliver a message relevant to the community. Sitinurbayu Mohd Yusoff explains

that Malaysia is one of the countries that sees the logo as one of the important elements and has a role in inviting people to live Independence Day (Bernama, 2020) The first logo for Independence Day (1976) was launched by Tan Sri (now Tun) Mohd. Mohd. As the Chairman of the National Day Celebration of the Year, Ghazali Shafie In 1991, Tuan Haji Hashim Hassan, an artist and also a Senior Lecturer, Artist and Artist Study at the MARA Institute of Technology, Shah Alam at that time, specially developed the logo with the theme 'Vision 2020.' The logo is used to convey a message to society because society is easier to understand and accept the messages conveyed through images than words (Moriarty & Duncan, 1990; Sitinurbayu Mohd Yusof, & Badrul Redzuan Abu Hassan, 2014). The logo originally created serves as a website or forum for the government to communicate a message about a problem to the community, such as a logo that symbolises unity, consensus, harmony, etc. through the shape or elements used in the logo of the Independence Day, such as circular shape, people, hands, etc (Sitinurbayu Mohd Yusof & Badrul Redzuan Abu Hassan, 2014). Badrul Redzuan founds that a good National Day logo can work on the essence of meaning to the community assisted by interesting design and visuals that carry a contemporary sociocultural meaning (Bernama, 2020).

B. Extreme Formalist Theory

The arrangements of lines, shapes and colours is known as formal properties of an artwork that is formal. The logo designs were investigated in terms of design elements and principles of design. Undoubtedly, the extreme formalist, Zangwill (2001 & 2005) argues that the key point of all systems of aesthetics is all artworks are purely formal qualities whereby a work of art is purely formal if all its aesthetic properties are formal aesthetic properties.

The theoretical framework shown in Fig.3 of this analysis is based on extreme formalist theory (Zangwill, 2001 & 2005) to analyse the logo designs. The logo designs are analysed in terms of design elements namely line, shape and colour whereas in terms of principles of design namely balance, harmony and unity. Following is the theoretical framework developed to analyse the three selected logo designs:

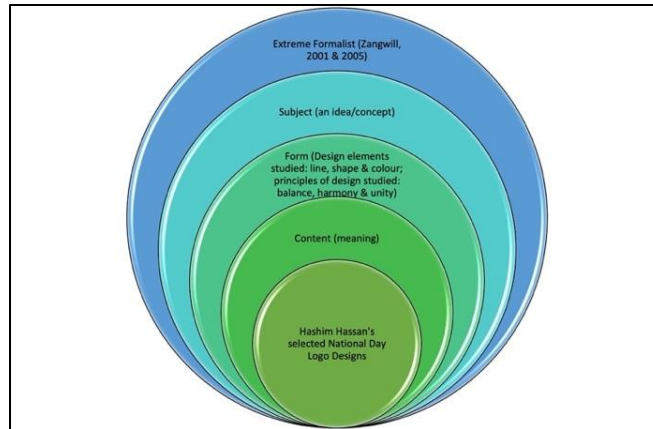


Fig. 3: Theoretical framework developed by researchers

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study that investigates the quality of the material is referred to as qualitative research (Creswell, 2019) and one of the approaches to qualitative study is visual methodologies proposed by Rose (2016). Critical visual methodology grounded in 'The Good Eye' looking at pictures using compositional interpretation. Compositional Interpretation is an analytical framework used by designers to position their audience to interpret a composition a particular way. It looks at the formal elements and principles used in all aspects of the image in order to derive meaning.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling (non-probability sampling) because the subject able to provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation for this study (Creswell, 2019). The designer was selected based on three criteria namely his qualification, practicing designer and is experienced in the field. The sampling strategy used is expert sampling because of the criteria. The subject in this study, Hashim Hassan holds a Master of Education (Art Education), a practicing designer and has more than 25 years of experience in this field. The research site for this study included the designer's nephew's house because there is an opportunity to have an interview with the artist/designer and observation of his lifestyle and his work. The instruments involved in collecting the needed data were the researcher, the trend analysis instrument, one-to-one interview, documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2019).

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

In this section, this study attempts to interpret the three selected logo designs by Hashim Hassan. The research questions have been answered through the formalism process by following the Zangwill's extreme formalist (2001 & 2005). The interpretation of each artwork is made from the personal interpretation based on the research questions below:

RQ1: What are the subjects found in Hashim Hassan’s National Day logos?

RQ2: What are the visual forms of the three selected logos?

RQ3: What are the meanings of the three selected logos?

4.1 Visual Analysis of the First Artwork

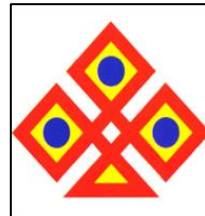


Fig. 4: Hashim Hassan, National Day logo “Bersama Ke Arah Kemajuan” (1983)

The National Day logo designed by Hashim Hassan in the 1983. The subject is an idea (Fig.4) where the designer used elements to create the logo design. The design elements found in this logo is line, shape and colour. The lines shown (Fig.5) are mostly diagonal lines suggesting direction. Hashim Hassan has used geometric shapes (Fig.6) namely square and circle in his logo design. There are three primary colours (Fig.7) namely red, yellow and blue are used in this design.

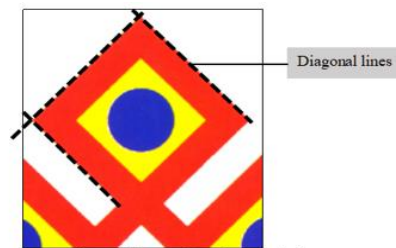


Fig. 5: Diagonal lines used in the logo design

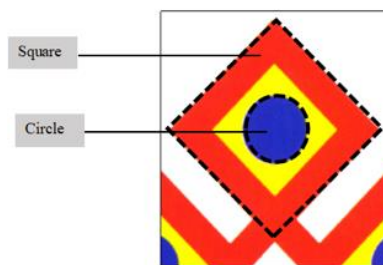


Fig. 6: Geometric shapes used in the logo design

Fig. 7: Primary colours are used in the logo design

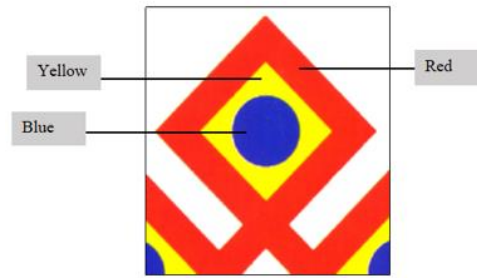
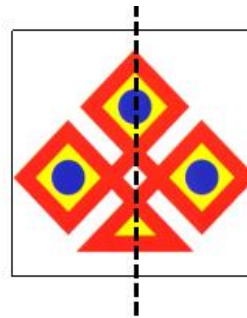


Fig. 8: Symmetrical balance used in the logo design

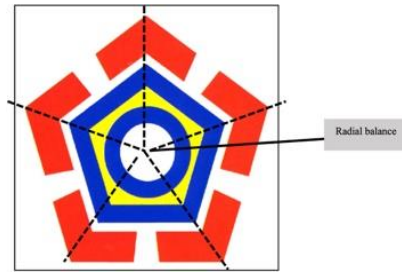


In this design, the designer used symmetrical balance (Fig.7) as one of the principles of design. The repetition of similar shapes (Fig.4) creates a sense of harmony that leads to unity of the design (Hashim Hassan, 2018). The colour red represents passion, blue represents stability while yellow represents full of hope. The logo shows a one-way direction which is the goal of progress. The combination geometric shapes symbolizes the unity and close collaboration between several groups of people in various fields. This is illustrated through the three interrelated symbols of one another that contain circles that illustrate groups of entrepreneurs, private and public administration. These three groups are keen in developing the nation by surrounded with a three-cornered plot. This plot symbolizes the Government's support for collaborative efforts in achieving the nation's aspirations (Hashim Hassan, 2018).

4.2 Visual Analysis of the Second Artwork



Fig. 9: Hassim Hassan, National Day logo,



“Amanah Asas Kejayaan” (1984)

The subject (Fig. 9) is a concept where the designer used design elements such as line, shape and colors to construct this logo. The designer used diagonal lines (Fig.10) to suggest direction. The shapes (Fig.11) shows three hexagons and two circles. The colours used are red, yellow and blue (Fig.12). The designer applied radial balance (Fig.13) and through the repetition of similar shapes (Fig. 14) creates harmony to achieve unity.

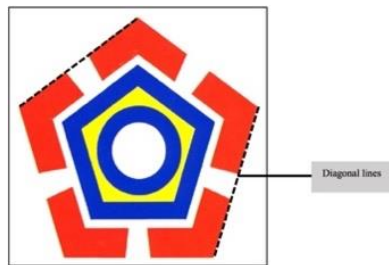


Fig. 10: The use of diagonal lines evident in the logo design

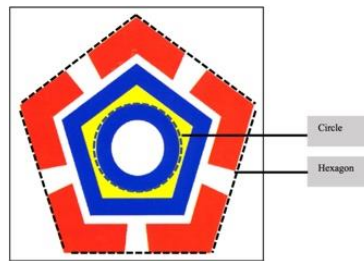


Fig 11: Hexagons (arrow like shapes) and circles evident in the logo design

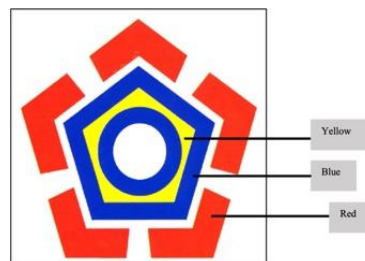


Fig. 12: The use of three primary colours is evident in the logo design

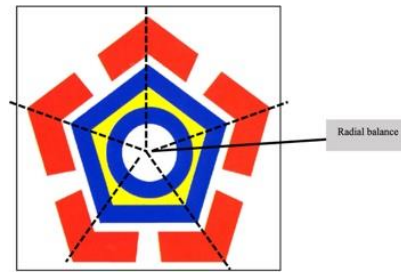


Fig. 13: The use of radial balance is evident in the logo design

The meaning of the logo can be interpreted as white circle represents the innocence, excellence and honesty that is the essence of faith. The blue circle surrounded by a square-shaped blue-yellow diagram symbolizes a life of consensus among the sovereign nation's multiracial citizens, as well as strong collaboration between the public and private sectors that will bring progress in various aspects. The hexagon shapes that symbolizes harmony and balance connecting from the centre of the universal coherence shows it ties everything together and links everything back. Five red arrow-like shapes (Fig.11) suggest that whatever we are working on has led to progress with the arrow beam starting from the white circle as the basis of faith as well as other aspects (Hashim Hassan, 2018).

4.3 Visual Analysis of the Third Artwork



Fig. 14: Hassim Hassan, National Day logo, "Nasionalisme Teras Perpaduan" (1985)

The National Day logo for 1985 (Fig.15) uses elements such as line, shape and colour to express an idea. The logo design used combination of curved lines, vertical lines and diagonal lines (Fig. 16). The designer used combination of shapes (Fig.17) namely circles and triangles. As for colours, Hashim used red, yellow and blue (Fig. 18) to express the meaning of the logo designs. The balance used is radial balance (Fig.19) that creates a strong focal point (Samara, 2020).

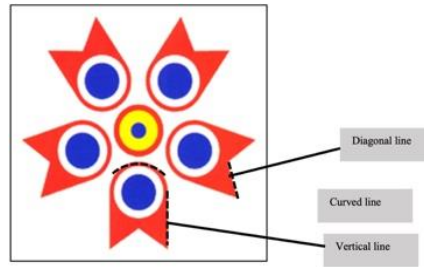


Fig. 15: Various lines used to design this logo

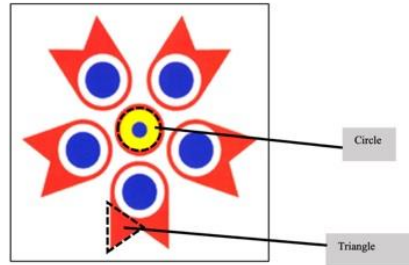


Fig. 16: Various shapes used to design this logo

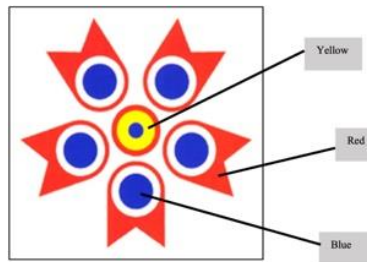


Fig. 17: Primary triads red, yellow and blue used to design this logo

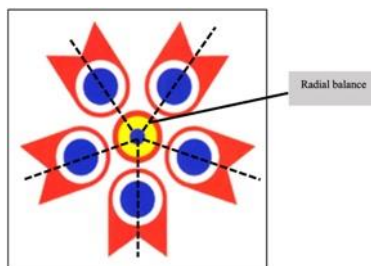


Fig. 18: Radial balance used to design this logo

The repetition of same shapes (Fig.14) creates harmony which leads to unity. The logo symbolizes the theme "NASIONALISIME TERAS PERPADUAN". The five blue circles represent multiracial Malaysians. While the red color represents the spirit of nationalism of the people of

Malaysia. The blue circle in the middle shows the close unity among Malaysians. while the yellow circle symbolizes an independent and sovereign Malaysia. The red circle shows that patriotism is an important foundation in strengthening the unity of the people who love the country (Hashim Hassan, 2018).

IV.CONCLUSION

The findings of this research showed that the elements of art and principles of organizations are vital in unifying and bringing logo designs alive (Samara, 2020). This research showed that despite its origins, through extreme formalist theory and the researcher's interpretation with the help of compositional interpretation of the logo designs have extreme formalist and contain forms that are pleasing to the eye. The intuition should be accessible to designers to guide them towards solutions that align with a universal knowing (Macnab, 2015). In general, in terms of viability for the graphic design sector, which included the study conducting a comprehensive review of the literature and an effective instruction in the creation of a logo. To achieve a deeper understanding of the knowledge and to follow the best directions of the National Day logo designs. Moreover, this research is able to give the graphic designers more information to refer to and create more meaningful artworks.

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