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'Keranamu Malaysia' Logo: The Connection Between the Object, the Representation, and the Interpretant for the Malaysia National Day Logo

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Abstract:

This study on Malaysia's National Day logos aims to analyze the meaning of each symbol in the logos. A total of 36 National Day logos have been introduced to Malaysians from 1976 to 2022. However, this study only analyzes the logos from 2000 to 2006. This selection was made because the logos from these years were reused for six consecutive years, which intrigued researchers to understand the true meaning behind these logos and why they were kept for so long compared to other years' logos.The National Day logo is a symbol introduced to inform people about events happening in that year. This study involves the methodology selection where data collection takes the form of qualitative inquiry, delving into the comprehension of significance through written and visual data. Within the context of this study, the chosen research design is qualitative, utilizing qualitative data comprising textual descriptions, images, or visual representations of the Malaysian National Day logo to unveil the symbolism.The analysis of the National Day logo is conducted using semiotic theory based on the characteristics of the National Day logo. The collected data will then be analyzed using established methods. Analysis using sign and symbol theory is performed to understand the overall findings of the study. Data on the Malaysian National Day logo is collected and will be mapped using careful observation involving the logo's characteristics. Using an analysis table, each characteristic will be categorized and its meaning in the Malaysian National Day logo will be determined. Observation will focus on the elements and principles of design as well as the meaning for semiotic analysis based on the characteristics of the National Day logo. The analysis technique utilizes the semiotic slice theory, where the researcher divides the analysis table into several columns containing the main semiotic elements: object, representation, and interpretant framework of action. The results of this phase will be analyzed based on the analysis table. Most of the findings will produce several signs and symbols existing in the National Day logo and will be interpreted using a semiotic approach based on characteristic analysis supplemented with the meaning triangle theory

Keywords —logo design, semiotic, Independence Day logo, sign and symbol

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I. INTRODUCTION

Not all countries in the world use a logo to celebrate their Independence Day. Malaysia is one of the countries that sees the logo as an important element to help people feel the meaning of Independence Day (Yusoff & Hassan, 2014). According to history, the Federation of Malaya gained independence on Saturday, August 31, 1957 (JabatanPenerangan Malaysia, 2008). The first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj,

shouted 'Merdeka' seven times as a symbol of freedom from British rule, witnessed by the Malay rulers and about 20,000 citizens of the Federation of Malaya, along with delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries (JabatanPenerangan, 2009). Independence Day is a major national achievement celebrated every year with various activities and events.

The Independence Day logo was introduced in 1976, about 19 years after Malaysia gained independence on August 31, 1957. The creation of the Independence Day logo was introduced by Tan Sri (now Tun) Mohd. Ghazali Shafie, the Chairman of that year's National Day celebrations (Bingkisan Merdeka 52 years, PemangkinAspirasi, 2009). The logo design is meant to convey the chosen theme by the Information Department. Each logo is based on the celebration theme agreed upon by the National Day Celebration Central Committee. Additionally, the Independence Day logo aims to show the image of a country free from foreign colonial rule.

This study on Malaysia's National Day logos aims to analyze the meaning of each symbol in the logos. A total of 36 National Day logos have been introduced to Malaysians from 1976 to 2022. However, this study only analyzes the logos from 2000 to 2006. This selection was made because the logos from these years were reused for six consecutive years, which intrigued researchers to understand the true meaning behind these logos and why they were kept for so long compared to other years' logos.

Although Malaysia introduces its own National Day logo every year, studies on these logos are rarely published because not all countries have a National Day logo. However, the appearance of the National Day logo is eagerly awaited by the public. This is evident when there are issues or controversies (Hashim et al., 2021) regarding the logo design, as people today are vocal, especially on social media (Kosmo, 2022)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Searches for information on Malaysia's Independence Day logos have been conducted in various databases over the past ten years, and it was found that not many studies have been published. Only a few studies have been conducted since 2014 regarding Malaysia's Independence Day logo (Subramaniam et al., 2021; Hashim et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2019; Yusoff& Hassan, 2014). This is one of the main reasons for this study: to gather as much data as possible about Malaysia's Independence Day logos.

Based on previous research, studies on Malaysia's Independence Day logo have focused only on the design elements of the logo. Yunus et al. (2019) analyzed the 2018 National Day logo in terms of design and its application to the mediums that host the logo. The research by Subramaniam et al. (2021) found the incorporation of artistic elements and design principles in the Independence Day logo design. Yusoff and Hassan (2014) studied the impact and communicative implications of the Independence Day logo, particularly the 1Malaysia concept, in the daily lives of the country's citizens.

Logos play an important role in serving as a bridge and means of communication between designers and the public. Therefore, it is crucial that the design of a logo has a profound impact on society (Hashim et al., 2021)

very logo created must be easy to interpret and have significance that makes it memorable for all Malaysians. Lilik Damayanti (2013) argues that the Independence Day logo should contain criteria that stimulate a sense of patriotism in each individual. The logo and theme of Independence Day are closely related to social factors and current events throughout the year (Mohd Yusoff& Hassan, 2014). Various opinions and issues have been discussed regarding the Independence Day logo. According to Yunus et al. (2019), there were flaws in the structure and design management, including elements like color and discipline principles, which affected the effectiveness of the 2018 Independence Day logo in terms of visual communication.

Meanwhile, the 55th Independence Day logo in 2012 sparked controversy because the official logo included political elements based on the slogan "JanjiDitepati" and its design was seen as unattractive. After receiving heavy criticism in 2012, the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia organized a logo design

competition for the 56th Independence Day celebration (Yusoff& Hassan, 2014). Independence Day logos usually reflect the image of a country free from foreign colonization. The elements used in designing the Independence Day logo typically relate to patriotism and are crafted to be visually appealing, simple, yet rich with underlying meaning, effectively conveying the intended messages.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF MALAYSIA NATIONAL DAY LOGO

The word "logo" originates from the Greek word "λόγος," which means "word." As illustrated by Henderson & Cote (1998) in Figure 2.2, symbols found in logos such as i) the bitten apple for Apple products, ii) the letter 'M' for McDonald's, and iii) the three thick lines for Adidas serve as visual signals and identifiers used by businesses to help consumers recognize and identify their products or brands (Ismail et al., 2016; Adîr, Adîr, & Pascu, 2014; Melkumyan, 2011; Machado et al., 2015; Pimental, 1997; Indra Sapa'at & Kurniasih, 2018). Begitu juga denganpenyataandariAdîr, Adîr, & Pascu, (2014), who consider it an integral part of a company to effectively convey corporate benefits and brand messages (Indra Sapa'at & Kurniasih, 2018).

The National Day logo is a symbol introduced to inform people about events happening in that year. Researchers interviewed a designer of Malaysia's National Day logo about its purpose. It was created to be a symbol representing the nation, fostering awareness, and patriotism among the people. It's also meant to promote National Day celebrations and related programs.

Since 1988, logos for each year's Independence Day have been designed by lecturers and students of MARA Institute of Technology, Shah Alam. Each logo, based on the celebration's theme, is approved by the National Day Celebration Central Committee.

However, in 1988, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Sanusi Junid, Chairman of the National Day celebration, suggested holding a Logo Creation Contest to improve the quality of designs and encourage participation from Malaysians. Since then, the logo creation contest has been managed by a Small Logo

Creation Contest Committee. The winning logo becomes the National Day logo.

Except for 1991, when the 'Vision 2020' themed logo was specially designed by Tuan Haji Hashim Hassan, instead of through a contest. The logos used in other years were created by winners of contests. Tuan Haji Hashim Hassan, a prominent figure in Malaysia, is known as the father of the National Day logo. His significant contribution includes creating Independence Day logos since the 1980s and designing patriotic logos for eight years starting from 1980.

However, Malaysia used the same logo and theme slogan "Keranamu Malaysia" (Because of You, Malaysia) for Independence Day for six consecutive years, from 2000 to 2006. This logo was created by MadeniMinwari.

Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**- : Malaysia National Day Logos from 2000 to 2006

Sumber :JabatanPenerangan Malaysia (edit dan layout oleh sitifairuz, 2020)

The same thing happened from 2009 to 2011, where Malaysia's National Day logo used the same theme of 1Malaysia but only changed the slogan.

Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-1 : National Day logos year 2009-2011

Sumber :JabatanPenerangan Malaysia (edit dan layout oleh sitifairuz, 2020)

After three years of using the same logo and facing continuous criticism from the people, the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia organized the National Day Logo Design Competition again in 2012, in conjunction with the 56th Independence Day celebrations. As a result,

the country received a new logo through the winner of the National Day art contest in 2013. The theme for the National Day in 2013 was "MalaysiakuBerdaulat, Tanah Asalku" (My Sovereign Malaysia, My Homeland).

The theme, logo, and song for Malaysia's Independence Day celebration in 2015, #SehatiSejiwa (One Heart, One Soul), were retained for the celebration in 2016, as announced by the Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Datuk Seri Dr. Salleh Said Keruak, after chairing a meeting of the National Day and Malaysia Day Celebration Main Committee in Angkasapuri on June 21, 2016.

Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-2 : National Day logos year 2015-2016

Sumber :JabatanPenerangan Malaysia (edit dan layout oleh sitifairuz, 2020)

Similarly, from 2018 to 2019, the same National Day logo was used. According to the Minister of Communications and Multimedia, the government decided to retain the official logo of the 2018 celebration with the addition of a new theme, which was "Malaysia Bersih" (Clean Malaysia), for the year 2019.

Figure 3 : National Day logos year 2018 and 2019

Sumber :JabatanPenerangan Malaysia (edit dan layout oleh sitifairuz, 2020)

The National Day logos of Malaysia for the years 2020 and 2021 also used the same theme of "Malaysia Prihatin" (Caring Malaysia), which carried significant meaning for the Malaysian people, especially in light of the country facing the Covid-19 pandemic. The heart-shaped logo, adorned with the colors of the Malaysian flag, symbolized the Malaysian government's concern for the diverse communities in the country.

IV. SEMIOTIC

Logo and semiotics are closely related. Semiotics, as described by Crow (2003), refers to something related to symbols and logos. Aro (2019) also states that Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols, and meanings, specifically focusing on how signs are used and interpreted. Here, a sign, according to Onipede (2020), is one of the elements of a logo. In short, symbols and logos are created from various elements such as shape, lines, color, typography, images, sound, and body language to convey a message, while semiotics is the study of the sign system itself (Muhmad Ghani). Therefore, to define semiotics, according to Sebeok (1976, 1991), it refers to the study of signs and symbols, especially their processes and systems. Media Analysis Techniques by Arthur Asa Berger (2005) describes semiotic analysis as an approach involving the interpretation of signs and their underlying meanings.

Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, Roland Barthes, and Umberto Eco are some well-known semiotic philosophers. Saussure and Peirce agreed that semiotics was fundamental to human communication and should be used subtly. In religion, symbols like the new moon and star are associated with Islam. Although they share similar views, each has a unique technique for defining what a symbol is.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was a philosopher and logician from America. He pioneered the emergence of semiotic theory. This is because signs are not just limited to linguistic symbols but also involve other signs like images and numbers. Peirce's division places this theory on

a broader scope than de Saussure's. Peirce introduced the sign system, known as the triadic model, a system used to create meaning-making. The sign is central to this system, also known as the 'representamen' in the Triadic system. According to (Cowin&Matusitz, 2011), Peirce's triadic model has long been rooted in philosophy. It consists of three significant parts: the representamen (or the sign itself), the object (or the reference to what the sign refers to), and the interpretant (interpreter, audience interpretation, or the effect on the audience). The figure below illustrates Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic triangle.

The process of semiosis involves three basic elements: the representamen (the form the sign takes, such as a picture, word, or legislative representation), the object (the subject being referred to by the sign), and the interpretant (the interpreted meaning or idea), described by Peirce as a triadic relationship (Fauzi Harun et al., 2018).

Representamen: This is the form taken by the sign. It doesn't necessarily have to be material; it often resides in the interpretation of thoughts.

Interpretant: It's the meaning or concept supported by the symbol. It serves not only as an interpreter but as an interpretation in understanding the sign.

Object/Referent: This refers to something beyond the context of the sign.

Based on the Pierce semiotic figure above, there are three semiotic stages: representamen, object, and interpretant. The dashed line at the base of this triangle means there can be no direct relationship or entirely similar relationship between the representamen and the object. Representamen is divided into three types: Qualisign, Sinsign, and Legisign. Peirce further categorizes the object into three types of signs: icon, index, and symbol.

Iconic: An icon is a sign that refers to an object by showing similar characteristics to what it depicts, and it has resemblance.

Indexical: An index refers to an object that shows the effect of the object. A common example of an index is smoke and fire, where smoke can be seen as a sign for fire.

Symbolic: This refers to an object that points to a rule or law and usually represents a combination of general ideas.

Interpretant is not an interpreter but an interpretation, as stated by Paul Cobley and LitzaJanz (1998): "...it is a proper significate effect. Most often it is thought as a sign in the mind that is the result of an encounter with a sign." This statement clearly indicates that the interpretant is a sign in our mind immediately after we identify the sign. The interpretant is then divided into three types: Rheme, Dicent Signs, and Argument.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study involves the methodology selection where data collection takes the form of qualitative inquiry, delving into the comprehension of significance through written and visual data. Within the context of this study, the chosen research design is qualitative, utilizing qualitative data comprising textual descriptions, images, or visual representations of the Malaysian National Day logo to unveil the symbolism (Lebar, 2017). The preference for qualitative research stems from its flexibility regarding sample size, utilization of diverse evidence and data sources, and absence of statistical testing for significance (Lebar, 2017). Building upon prior research, the adoption of a qualitative approach in unraveling the meaning behind the national day logo aligns with Lebar's assertion that qualitative research unfolds within natural settings, with the researcher serving as the primary data collection instrument, focusing on the participants' interpretations, and employing expressive language for analysis (Lebar, 2017). This study aims to provide a comprehensive depiction to elucidate the characteristics and symbolism of Malaysia's National Day Logo. Furthermore, the interpretation of semiotics theory by Piece elucidates the interplay between object, representant, and interpretation.

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE LOGO

The analysis of the National Day logo is conducted using semiotic theory based on the characteristics of the National Day logo. The most important features are color, typography, shape, and

visual/image. The three main semiotic elements, representation, object, and interpretant, are analyzed based on the design and meaning of the logo. The collected data will then be analyzed using established methods. Analysis using sign and symbol theory is performed to understand the overall findings of the study. Data on the Malaysian National Day logo is collected and will be mapped using careful observation involving the logo's characteristics. Using an analysis table, each characteristic will be categorized and its meaning in the Malaysian National Day logo will be determined. Observation will focus on the elements and principles of design as well as the meaning for semiotic analysis based on the characteristics of the National Day logo. The analysis technique utilizes the semiotic slice theory, where the researcher divides the analysis table into several columns containing the main semiotic elements: object, representation, and interpretant framework of action according to Staudte (2021). The results of this phase will be analyzed based on the analysis table. Most of the findings will produce several signs and symbols existing in the National Day logo and will be interpreted using a semiotic approach based on characteristic analysis supplemented with the meaning triangle theory. This research encompasses every aspect of the logo, as well as the artistic elements and design principles contained within the National Day logo, and the semiotic meaning triangle of representation, object, and interpretation. The detailed analysis of the Malaysian National Day logo is provided in the table below, showing a comprehensive analysis of the Malaysian National Day logo from 1976 to 2020.

	Year: 2000-2006 Theme : Because Of You, Malaysia (Keranamu Malaysia) Designer : MadeniMinwari

Object	
Representment	Three human figures seem to be raising both hands
Interpretant	Raising hands together *'Keranamu Malaysia'* is a sign of gratitude, a sense of indebtedness and pride in experiencing development and prosperity in the blessed land called Malaysia.

Object	
Representment	The circle is blue, and the star moon is yellow
Interpretant	describes a country consisting of 14 states where Islam is the official religion, but other religions are freely practiced, and the people all live in a state of peace, prosperity, and unity.

VII. CONCLUTION

The main purpose of this research, in broad strokes, is to analyze and describe the interrelations between object, representamen, and interpretant meanings of the signs found in Malaysia's National Day. These signs are analyzed and interpreted using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic method. Based on the research findings outlined in the discussion, the research can conclude that the creation of a logo refers to the symbolic representation of the diverse and harmonious multi-ethnic society and the enrichment of culture in this country. A logo requires the creative power of designers to convey messages and meanings to the community. A logo can be considered successful if it is understood by all segments of society. Logos play an important role in mediating and communicating between designers and society. Therefore, it is crucial that logo design can have a deeper impact on society.

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