



## The Hidden Transcripts of Graphic Designer to Power of Agency in Denpasar City

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### **Abstract**

The phenomenon of free design discourse raised by companies or printing agencies as a gimmick to face business competition has caused controversy in the graphic design field. Indirectly, this discourse affects the public mindset and becomes a negative stigma against the graphic designer profession. The free design phenomenon is considered to be a threat to the existence of graphic designers and we should stand to fight it. The formulation of the problem raised includes the form of hidden transcripts, the factors that cause hidden transcripts, and the implications of the hidden transcripts of graphic designers to agency power in Denpasar City. This research uses a qualitative approach and is studied with semiotic theory, discourse analysis theory, and knowledge power relation theory. The purpose of this research is to answer the form of hidden transcripts, the factors that causing hidden transcripts, and the implications of this hidden transcripts. The results of the analysis show that the forms of resistance media used by graphic designers are works of art and text with critical tones. This form of hidden transcripts is implied into conventional media and digital media. The factor causing hidden transcripts is the competition between two groups, the group that rejects free design (the idealist group) and the group that practices free design (the pragmatic group). The implications of hidden transcripts include: agents found this situation (competition), so that they can't make a design for free again, hyperreality of free design, disharmony of relations between graphic designers and agents, and polarization of ideological battle arouse.

**Keywords:** *Hidden Transcripts; Graphic Designer; Power Agency*

### **Introduction**

Along with the development of multimedia technology as it is today, the need for graphic design media is increasing. This need is seen in various forms of publication and promotion materials related to public products or services including the political, economic, social, cultural and other fields of society. However, the increasing need for various design media is not commensurate with the appreciation or appreciation of design work professionally, such as the emergence of the discourse on "free design" that has developed in recent years in the competitive world of printing companies in Denpasar City.

In the Denpasar City you can easily find promotional advertisements for printing companies that contain articles related to free design services, such as: Free design, banner printing - free design, or free

design - only pay for printing costs! and so on. Those such writings are usually found on the billboards of a printing company, banners posted on the streets, even on mass media such as newspapers, magazines and other media including internet-based, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Line, Instagram, Skype, and others.

In further developments, the discourse of free design has become a phenomenon that poses a serious threat to professional graphic designers in Denpasar. Their services are needed by the community. However, people as consumers who previously needed the services of a graphic designer to design various needs with promotions, advertising, campaigns, events, and so on, are now more likely to choose printing companies that offer free design services, in the reason of, they no longer need to spend money. to pay for the design fee as it is included in the printing cost. Then it causes the reduction of interest in using graphic designer services. Consequently, some graphic designers who live by opening a business of graphic design service in Denpasar City have been forced to close their business due to lack of consumers and switch to more promising professions, such as tourism.

Based on certain considerations to avoid various risks, graphic designers as a subordinate group do not carry out open rebellion (negotiations, demos, demands, and so on), but prefer to fight back through safer actions symbolically or referred to as symbolic resistance. This resistance is conveyed through writing, artwork, or critical discussion in order to build a discourse that is contrary to the free design discourse that is already dominant.

## ***Discussion***

This research examines the hidden transcripts of graphic designers to the power of printing agencies that tend to eliminate design services in their business practices. In this study, the problem is formulated in three interrelated points. First, what is the form of graphic designer hidden transcripts to agency power in Denpasar City? Second, what factors influent the hidden transcripts of graphic designers in Denpasar City? Third, what are the implications of the hidden transcripts of graphic designers in Denpasar City?

In general, this study aims to find a new understanding of the hidden transcripts of graphic designers to the power of agency in Denpasar City. The new understanding that is meant is the hidden transcripts of graphic designers in Denpasar City against the phenomenon of "free design" that is being discussed by certain parties (agencies). Meanwhile, in particular, this study aims to explore forms of hidden transcripts by graphic designers to superordinate parties, to investigate more deeply the factors that lead to this resistance, and to explain the implications of resistance.

This study uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand the phenomenon of hidden transcripts and describe this phenomenon in the form of words and language in a special context. Data were collected using various techniques including observation, interviews, and document study. In analyzing the data obtained in the field, interpretive methods are used that based on the interpretation of the researcher. The theory used is Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics, Norman Fairclough's theory of Discourse Analysis, and Michel Foucault's theory that is the power of knowledge. These theories are used eclectically to dissect and analyze the three problem formulations that have been defined above.

Based on the analysis of the data obtained in the field, it can be formulated that there are various forms of hidden transcripts or signs that have very high value and meaning when expressed from the semiotic side, either directly or indirectly. The forms of hidden transcripts that were found, included works of art and writing, which were both individual and critical in nature. This is all a form of resistance to threats to the existence of the graphic design profession by the public and business runners (agency).

All of these are described in accordance with Scott's opinion that hidden transcripts resistance is not so dramatic, but it is everywhere. This resistance was individual and often anonymous. Hidden transcript is an indirect resistance that is carried out in the form of activities that present various complaints and challenges symbolically in the form of writing, artwork, or discussion that is critical.

Hidden transcripts can reveal forms of rejection of the subordinate class against the domination of the superordinate class, or reveal various motives and interests hidden by the superordinate class. In symbolic resistance, the subordinate class has its own considerations and reasons in hiding resistance and showing obedience to the superordinate class. Likewise, the superordinate class requires various forms of justification with certain claims that legitimize its power that can be accepted by the subordinate circles (Scott, 2000: 210).

The resistance media of the graphic design profession is a form or representation of rejection and criticism indirectly. The representation of rejection is expressed through a work of art and the form of text, which is manifested in the form of a real work of graphic design itself. Various forms and variants of hidden transcripts are carried out by graphic designers is a form of resistance with the aim of erasing the impression that has been published by certain parties who display free design discourse formerly. The impression that emerges from the social context point of view is that the graphic designer profession has no value and price, both globally and academically.

Forms of resistance carried out by graphic designers are in the form of text and works of art published through several media, both conventional and digital media. Conventional media as a form of communication media in the form of poster designs, t-shirt designs (t-shirts), and sticker designs. Meanwhile, digital media in the form of text is published on social media such as Facebook (FB), Twitter, and Instagram. All of these things are forms of resistance to the agency authorities who are discussing the term free design.

Broadly speaking, the hidden transcripts of graphic designers through conventional media has a very limited target range, because the media used are posters, t-shirts and stickers. It is different when compared to resistance through digital media, the discourse of free design rejection can be shared to many people because the media used is social media that has a wider range. This raises a such difference between resistance through conventional media and digital media.

The hidden transcripts of graphic designer in Denpasar City arises from four factors, namely: conflict of interest among graphic designers, control of graphic designer knowledge capital, free design gimmicks, and power relations and hegemony. These factors are based on the reality that there are interests from several groups who are involved in the world of graphic design. First, the group that rejects free design (idealist group). Second, the group practicing free design (pragmatic group). The first group consists of graphic designers whose skills go through a rigorous lecture and selection process (idealistic designers). While the second group consists of agencies, namely printing companies, consumers, and practicing graphic designers (pragmatic designers).

The hidden transcripts of graphic designers is based on a number of social realities and critical thinking of idealists. Academically, idealistic groups acquire design competencies through a long stage in the academic world. Their aim in this field is to fulfill their academic obligations and life work choices, especially in the aesthetic quality of design. Pragmatic design groups express their ideas according to the characteristics of capitalist ideology who are focused on profit oriented, and as a results of power relations based on the competence possessed so that they can take the dominance. This ideology according to the concept of epiphenomena is a system of ideas that expresses the desires of the dominant class, but also reflects the relations between classes in an illusory form. Meanwhile, the idealist designer group opposes the domination of pragmatic group power relations by working on designs through "not

free" language. Obviously the ideology he embraces is a fundamental ideology. This group emphasizes moral prescription and rationality as central priorities.

Different from groups of idealistic designers who maintain scientific moral prescriptions, pragmatic groups prioritize different things. The pragmatic group repeats the view of Machiavelli (2014: 87) that the exercise of power is not determined by moral legitimacy, but what determines is the strategy and tactics to maintain domination, including pretense and cunning. Furthermore, power relations are established by the agent group for the sake of profit orientations around them.

The agent is a major factor in the occurrence of resistance. This group consists of printing entrepreneurs, pragmatic designers (designers who practice free designer), and the public as consumers. Entrepreneurs are placed in the first position to come up with free design ideas. This free design idea was a way for the printing entrepreneurs to compete with other printing companies. Pragmatic designers are partnered to carry out free design practices. Free design practice refers to Foucault's view as episteme knowledge practice. Episteme knowledge in the context of free design is a way of working to suppress and dominate other printing companies and groups of idealistic designers. Episteme knowledge related to marketing strategies and techniques. This group realized that free design has the power of text in attracting prospective consumers to order and become target customers.

The reality of free design cannot be separated from the circle of power relations and hegemony of entrepreneurs and consumers. Power relations are an effort to create recognition and represent legitimate domination. Power in this structural relationship produces domination. This domination is strengthened by the practice of hegemony. The pragmatic graphic designer is always in this vortex because the system operates through a hegemony contract. Pragmatic graphic designers find themselves under the control of friends, bosses and printing entrepreneurs. This hegemonic practice binds itself in a loop structure of relations.

Through the relationships of friends, leaders, and entrepreneurs, graphic designers are isolated in the vortex of relationships. According to Foucault, power has an impact on the formation of strength, growing and structuring, rather than blocking and making surrender or destroying. It is in the construction of this relationship that personally the graphic designer is bound by the regulatory power of discourse which become a subject for himself and others. These power of hegemony and power relations formed the free design discourse that produces social order as expected.

The relationships that are built being a distortion and reduced by superficial views of graphic designers. There are no essential relations, only hegemony and power relations. The dominance of graphic designers, in Laclau and Mouffe (in Barker, 2016: 87), social life includes various things related to power and antagonism. The relation of power and hegemony to graphic designers is an antagonistic social relation and a false social consciousness.

The hidden transcripts announced by the idealist designer group is an ideological battle through the power of aesthetic discourse against the strong discourse of free design in Denpasar City. It is hoped that the knowledge and strong discourse of idealistic designers will be able to stem the free design discourse. The hidden transcripts carried out by the idealist designer group has four implications, they are: awareness of agent so that they won't run a free graphic design service, the hyperreality of free design, disharmony of relations between graphic designers and agents, and polarization of the idealist and pragmatic ideological battle.

The awareness of agents, especially printing entrepreneurs, not to serve design service for free, arises because there is resistance from a group of idealistic designers. The company signboard (billboard) does not say any free design gimmicks. This awareness arises as a tribute to designers who have received

a lot of orders from consumers. This reality is not completely pure as authentic consciousness, but a hyperreality of consciousness. On the company signboard it doesn't say free design anymore, but keeps practicing the free design on it.

Another way this is done by agents is to convert, eliminating design costs, but increasing printing costs. This is known as free design hyperreality. Hyperreality is the development of society, art, and culture in which humans do not perceive it as a false reality. Strictly speaking, hyperreality according to Piliang is a mass unconsciousness of transformation, self-re-formation and reformulation of the meaning of life as a result of the incarnation of a pseudo-reality world. The incarnation of this pseudo-reality world, actually cannot be separated from the development of capitalism in the economy (Piliang, 2004: 197-198).

The awareness of hyperreality creates disharmony in social relations between graphic designers and consumers. This implication is metaphorized as a "mind-body tangled scrawl." Friendly relations become disturbed by hidden transcripts voltages. Paying for the design is not because of the moral awareness of academics and the profession, but for the sake of diluting the tension from the resistance that is carried out.

Economic ideology occupies an important position in the hidden transcripts' implications of free design. This ideology is embraced by a group of agents who practice free design. The economic ideology in the implication of resistance is inseparable from the matter of profit of printing companies and pragmatic graphic designers, as well as for consumers in saving design costs.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions of this study are as follows. First, hidden transcripts are able to reveal forms of rejection of the subordinate class against the domination of the superordinate class, or reveal the various motives and interests hidden by the superordinate class. In symbolic resistance, the subordinate class has its own considerations and reasons in hiding resistance and showing obedience to the superordinate class. Likewise, the superordinate class needs various forms of justification with certain claims that legitimize its power that can be accepted by the subordinate circles. Media as one of graphic design resistance is a form of indirect representation of rejection and criticism. Denial representations are expressed through works of art and text forms which are manifested in the form of real work from a graphic design itself.

Second, the hidden transcript of graphic in Denpasar City arises from four factors, they are: conflict of interest among graphic designers, the mastery of graphic designer knowledge capital, free design gimmicks, and power relations and hegemony. These factors are based on the reality that there are interests of several groups involved in the world of graphic design, namely groups that reject free design (idealist groups), and groups that practice free design (pragmatic groups). The idealist group consists of graphic designers whose skills go through a rigorous lecturing and selection process. Meanwhile, the pragmatic group consists of agencies, namely printing companies, consumers, and graphic designers who practice free design.

Third, the hidden transcripts announced by the idealist designer group is an ideological battle through the power of aesthetic discourse against the strong discourse of free design in Denpasar City. It is hoped that the knowledge and strong discourse of graphic designers will be able to stem the wave of free design discourse. The hidden transcripts carried out by graphic designer groups has four implications, namely: agent awareness of paid graphic design services, hyperreality of graphic design, disharmony of relationships between graphic designers and agents, and polarization of idealist ideological battles with pragmatic ideologies.

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