Shifting of Visual Communication Design Criticism in Digital Medium Interaction

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Abstract

This preliminary research aimed to initiate the process of identifying the shifting of Indonesian Visual Communication Design (VCD) Criticism. By identifying the shifting through observation and literature review that becomes a reference in VCD Criticism education, this research objective is to comprehend the shifting and the problems in the development of VCD Criticism. Shifting in VCD Criticism related to the shifting dominantly to digital design medium, public conceptions about the medium, the affordability access of production tools, the behaviour of the designers and the users as the ecosystem changed, the variety of criticism terminology itself, efforts of pushing the design field into cross-discipline with other disciplines, tastes, to the negative myths about criticism itself. The dominant authorities within VCD Criticism showed how the shifts and the stagnancies through the digital medium, then how they affect VCD criticism practice. VCD Criticism is still needed and is still carried out but is often not recorded as co-learning to create novelty value in design, but still discussed as daily interaction in the digital medium.

Keywords: Visual Communication Design Criticism, Shifting of Design Criticism, Interaction in Digital Medium.

Introduction

The word criticism, for fellow visual communication designers commonly known in Indonesia as graphic designers, made them immediately frown as most of them think that criticism is related to art rather than design. This perspective considers that design is a matter of the usage of visual esthetic as a function to convey a message rather than the visual esthetic itself, so it shouldn't be criticized like fine art or other arts in general. On the contrary, several young designers and students whom the author interacts with, tend to be open to criticism and discussion as well as with the author or from other parties, like their lecturer or seniors in campus, community or office. As if there were indications of their desires and hope, that receiving criticism means that they may get provided alternate perspectives and exposure to their thoughts and works. Their hopes of exposure to their thoughts and works are likely to be noticed by someone who is considered more expert as a probability to get a chance of networking for career or personal development. Design Criticism is a kind of way of interaction among fellow designers to elevate skill, knowledge, and networking.

In Indonesian terminology, the word criticism as activity, criticism as person or entity, and critique as outcome, for the three are conveyed in a single word, "*Kritik*". The term itself tends to be interpreted negatively, as this can relate this situation to the visual art critic in the previous period, commonly known in journalistic critique, which has political tendencies and contains advice, flattery, innuendo, curses or judgment (Yuliman, 2020, p. 200). Criticism is known as recording and detailing observations on works of art, an individual and subjective attempt and reaction to interpret the relationship between self and the art object of a critic while forgetting to state the value of the art that helps the audience to achieve artistic appreciation and artistic satisfaction (Yuliman, 2020, pp. 37, 41, 42, 63).

However, design criticism in design education and professional activity is a common and important interaction, as design criticism is an integral part of the design process that tends to give valuable evaluation at each step in the design process. The outcome, the critique formed verbal or written interaction as feedback, evaluation, comparison, review, report, appreciation, assessment, judgment, reflection, or discussion around the design problem, design object, and design element as efforts to solve the problem in visual communication design area of expertise.

This reference to Design Criticism, especially in the field of education and academia, refers to the "*Pengantar Tinjauan Desain*" or Introduction to Design Reviews, by Sachari and Sunarya in 2000. Sachari and Sunarya chose to use the terminology *"Tinjauan Desain"* or Design Review then mentioned that the activity was more in design appreciation (Sachari & Sunarya, 2000). Ten years later in 2010, Sosrojudho wrote the book "Tinjauan Desain Grafis dari Revolusi Industri hingga Indonesia Kini" or Graphic Design Overview from the Industrial Revolution to Current Indonesia. Sosrojudho continues to use the terminology of "*tinjauan*" or review with the intention of design appreciation. In the period in which Sachari and Sunarya wrote their writings in 2000, visual communication design was still transitioning towards computerized graphics and the beginning of the presence of digital images. Even interactive multimedia is still very early adopted by most design circles. Meanwhile, in the era when Sosrojudho wrote the book, a decade later digital media had developed quite rapidly although it was still limited to some circles of the general public. Sosrojudho again proposed a design criticism method by looking at design work through form, impact and use. As we know, impact and usefulness certainly lie in the design-society relationship. The stages proposed by Sosrojudho show how the structuralist method works through formal analysis followed by interpretation and placement of the context of the design work (Sosrojudho, 2010). These two pieces of literature become major references for final reports or theses for bachelor's and master's degrees, including published academic research papers. In the decade after Sosrojudho's book, the development of digital media has already been dominating, leading to the emergence of new branches of design knowledge and skills based on the specifics of digital media that exist today.

The author's previous study on intra-city bus transport signage, Transjakarta (Rahardjo, 2019) and the interaction of passengers in the wayfinding application (Rahardjo & Sondakh, 2019) not only provides foundational insight into user-centric design but also underlines the importance of field research not only in the physical but also in the digital space, user review as design criticism to achieve awareness in the visual communication design output for public facilities. The "*Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia (SKKNI DKV/DG)*" or Indonesian National Working Competency Standard states that there are three media, namely: graphic, digital, and spatial (Kementrian Ketenagakerjaan Republik Indonesia, 2023). The dominance of individual interactions in the digital medium, or understood as new media, become an arena that has impacts on visual culture in graphic and spatial media. This relationship arises from the ease of accessibility of technology to do design but is not accompanied by the ease of accessibility of theoretical discourse tools for carrying out design criticism. Reflecting on the two studies, the relationship between graphic-spatial-digital medium seems to be juxtaposed and dominated by the digital medium, and yet, probably design criticism also evolved by the digital medium.

Abstract thinking is needed to understand the developing situation design phenomenon by observing graphic-spatial also reflected from the digital medium. However, the situation in education was found different. The excitement of pursuing the latest development in the digital medium somehow put abstract thinking aside.

Rizal and Maulana noted a situation similar to the author's observation, design was forced to move out from the realm of abstract thinking, since abstract thinking seemed to be a matter of art, philosophy or science then design tended to lead to a craft project (Rizal & Maulana, 2021). By the reduction of the essence of visual communication design studies in a situation of exponential growth and impact of the digital medium, could there be a correlation with the stagnation in the development of criticism design references? Was there another kind of shifting of design criticism that worked linearly with a causality, that led to the situation we are facing now with the new media?

Design criticism as an informal interaction in daily conversation and social media indicates the usefulness of criticism in improving knowledge and networking. However, design criticism in Indonesia does not have standard terminology variants in the profession or academics. This led to difficulties in finding the trace of formal written design criticism that could be learned from. Even though the development of digital media which is known as new media with all its connections is not accompanied by the growth in academic references to design criticism. As far that could be found in digital academic journals is the '*tinjauan desain*" (design review) of some of the noted design work that has an impact on the community, that contains more appreciation and semiotic analysis, but that's just all.

The paucity of educational programs dedicated to train in design criticism has not only happened in Indonesia, as was also noted by Bierut & Triggs (Bush, 2016) The accessibility of technology and production learning as well as craftsmanship training in the field of new media has also made the eyes of the younger generation designer fix their gaze upon the new media while neglecting the abstract thinking that is the essence of design studies. However, this does not mean that design criticism as a practice is not carried out. Design criticism is carried out in various disciplines that enrich design knowledge, from semiotics to cultural studies, sociology, information technology, management, communication and so on. Michael Rock commented on the decline in the design criticism situation not only because of changes in the media landscape, but also because of changes in the nature of visual communication design itself since 1920, and since 2008 visual communication design has infiltrated everything (Fuller & Scheffe, 2020). This means that here we can see the need and essence of design criticism, which are shifted in by the impact of digital medium by the interaction space given by our new media, the academic journal become available online, however, the paucity on design criticism references for sure has an impact on the on-design criticism, in quantity and quality. For these reasons, it is necessary to build awareness within the community about the design process that would be consumed by them and impact them daily, through design criticism. This is the reason why this research's objective is to read and understand the shifting of the design criticism in digital interaction and the relational background of why it shifted.

Research Method

To read and understand the shifting of design criticism in digital interaction and the relational background, this study focused on the form and terminology of design criticism. The data are collected, described, analyzed, categorized and interpreted qualitatively through primarily: 1) literature review, 2) online review; and secondarily: the author's observation by experiences and interactions as a design practitioner and educator within the visual communication design community and among the general public. Through the author's participation in research, the result is reflected critically.

Literature data related to previous and current shifting of design criticism discourse is collected, reviewed, and then interpreted according to this article's needs and objective. Online data was collected from recent observations and screenshots on social media's comment or review section, primarily on accounts that discussed and raised recent issues on visual communication design artefacts. Either the account criticizes the ethics of the business process, plagiarism, the usability of design artefacts to the social problem raised by the design process or artefacts. The online data was reviewed and then interpreted.

As the author is a design practitioner and educator within the visual communication design community and among the general public, then the author's participation in research is inevitable. So, the author's observations by experiences and interactions are noted and used regarding the needs and objectives. In the critical reflection process, identification of the authority in the situation is needed to understand the shifting. Since subjectivity is indicated as an issue in design criticism, then identification of the authority becomes a vital part of understanding the subjects, whether a personage, an entity, or a metaphysical subject.

Discussion
Authority within Design Criticism

Observation showed that design criticism is a kind of way of interacting with fellow designers to elevate their skill, knowledge, and networking, though some still have prejudice toward design criticism as the judgment of their works. However, the activity of design criticism may take other kinds of terminologies but is still being done as an integral part of the design processes that tend to give valuable feedback and evaluation at each step in the design process in education and professional activity. However, the design criticism outcome, the design critique, is rarely to never been seen in publication, in written or in verbal documentation. With the shifting of major mediums to social interaction into digital mediums, everyone can be involved in doing design criticism through the output of the design. This form of critique can be seen widely in most comment columns on social media. Another form of critique platform is the blog or design digital magazine medium. Somehow, from the observation, there seems to be a contradiction in the design criticism situation:

1. the design criticism rejection from some fellow designers by the prejudice of the terminology, though contradictory the methods were used daily.
2. the participatory involvement by the user through digital platforms, though they don't even use the term as critique, preferably comment or user review unless it is a negative one.

In design education, the critique used daily as problem and project-based were embodied as ways to learn graphic design by adopting the studio culture. This critique session happened during the design process and was used as an assessment method of education. However, as academic research, the critique shifted accordingly to the two references that use "*tinjauan desain*" or design review terminology, that more likely works as appreciation using formal analysis and heavily in the semiotic analysis. Here, design criticism exists within the contradiction, as the authority always shifts on the situation of design criticism.

The authority within the design criticism relates to subjectivity as a formal analysis of visuals was used. The subjectivity of personnel who do the criticism was considered as a judgment in the evaluation of the works by some fellow designers.

This is the reason why the rejection from professionals happened. The users who gave comments or reviews through digital platforms were kind of public judgment if they were not pleased with the design according to their taste, their situations or the problem that might be solved with the design. In design education, the design criticism itself is used as a method of assessment but in research it becomes appreciation. So, by knowing this kind of authority and how it works, does design criticism work as it should? Situations in academics might show the reasoning.

Authority within Design Criticism at Academic

As design education in Indonesia is rooted and entangled with visual art, the rejection of design criticism may come from the consciousness of the form of critique in the history of visual art criticism. The journalistic criticism has political tendencies and contains advice, flattery, innuendo, curses or judgment (Yuliman, 2020, p. 200). Though criticism should be recording and detailing observations on works of art, an individual and subjective attempt and reaction to interpret the relationship between self and art object of a critic while forgetting to state the value of the art that helps the audience to achieve artistic appreciation and artistic satisfaction (Yuliman, 2020, pp. 37, 41, 42, 63). This can be seen, in how the subjectivity of articulation in design reviews came from. How formal analysis was used that it might need much knowledge in art-design knowledge and references to art-design history, just to even relate the design output and outcome to their user and stakeholder. Visual communication design output was then assumed as a work of visual art and the outcome as functionality that bound to a stakeholder or their clientele. Lupton suggests that design critics work their process in the balance between two ways since talking only in one way means losing another. (Lupton in Heller, n.d.) :

1. Attempt to get inside the mind of the creator.
2. Attempts to take the position of the receiver, or audience, of the work, by putting less interest in what the designer intended and more in the cultural uses and the meaning have to be.

By this, design criticism cannot ignore the factors of the designer/group of designers working together with their stakeholders (intention-process-output-achievement-value) and the factors of the intended audience/users or the general public who are exposed to it (psychology-sociology-culture).

There are similarities in certain points when comparing what Lupton said to two "*tinjauan desain*" (design review) references. Sachari and Sunarya point out the focus of design reviews on design issues, processes and design-society relationships, which can be studied cross-disciplinarily (Sachari & Sunarya, 2000). Meanwhile, Sosrojudho shows four stages in the design review (Sosrojudho, 2010): 1) Descriptive stage, by describing the design elements; 2) Formal analysis stage, discussing the structure of the design elements into a visual appearance; 3) Interpretation stage, interpreting the meaning of the design. 4) Evaluation stage, understanding the harmony of the design with the scope and time of the design created by the designer. Lupton shows the critic's position in looking at two subjects, the creators and the users, in the cultural and meaningful sphere, rather than tendencies to show the critic's position in a single subject position to isolate the relation of object-meaning-society.

Here, placing the authority of critics to facilitate interaction between subjects in the design criticism seems to suit the contemporary consciousness with the spirit of inclusivity, rather than a position of sole authority that uses the limited single-person knowledge position to analyze the output and outcome of the design. Though subjectivity as authority is unavoidable, the intention of the authority within design criticism to facilitate inter-subjectivity between the creators and the users is something to be considered under the spirit of the digital era.

Comparing the situation of the design review references as major references in education and academic papers, and the development and dominance of digital medium that led to the emergence of new branches of design knowledge and skills based on the specifics of new digital media that exist today; might explained why after two decades design criticism doesn't grow as a body of knowledge that legitimizes the visual communication design profession. Compared to architecture criticism and industrial design criticism, they have grown from a body of knowledge to a legitimized profession. (Heller, 2014).

In the past, Indonesian design magazine publishing as a medium could be the potential spearhead of design criticism & discourse since 2002, as an alternative to academic publication. After 2010, the number of magazine publications declined. (Kardinata, 2009) along with changes and the dominance of digital media. Academic journal publications are gradually shifting to digital media too.

The position of sole authority as a critic, with the limitation of single-person knowledge to do descriptions, analysis and interpretations only went as far as the person's repertoire of knowledge, might not necessarily encourage interaction between creators and users, the consequences are that the output of design criticism has less impact to the design societies, unless it is something well made; or on the contrary: controversial, sensational or refers to terminology in digital interaction on social media, viral! However, these kinds of controversial and sensational things will not survive from peer review or editorial review. This kind of topic will gladly be discussed in informal conversations in informal communities only. Does this mean that there is a shifting by the digital medium, in authority within Design Criticism at Academics? From the observation data, though the digital as space to disseminate was already growing well, it seems that we are not there yet for design criticism to grow as a body of knowledge to legitimize the visual communication design profession. However, participatory involvement in digital platforms might attract academicians who want to understand what is happening in society to comprehend what was shifted by or with the design output.

Digital Medium Shifting, Shifted the Authorities within Design Criticism.

The participatory involvement, by the design users through digital platforms, indeed are strong interaction in encouraging professional development and change, both in graphic & spatial design mediums and in digital design mediums which are generally known as new media. Here can be understood that design criticism participatory involvement on digital platforms is the result of shifting in dominant use of the digital medium itself.

Due to the nature of interaction, immediacy, and anonymity, this digital medium provides stages for the voices of users and non-users, from many to many. So, the sole authority idea is no longer relevant. This means, there is a change in authority by the existence of digital medium.

Digital platforms, as a medium, have encouraged change. Is there a shift in cultural behaviour in design criticism? What is the situation like for those giving and receiving critiques? Design criticism also includes the word design, the consequence of which is the definition of design as creating value from problem-solving. (AIDIA et al., 2019;

Kementrian Ketenagakerjaan Republik Indonesia, 2023) should appear in the design criticism, by considering designer-stakeholder as creator factors and user-society as cultural factors in the spirit of design criticism. Regarding the definition, the shifting in cultural behaviour and the situations may seem to recognize the value of design criticism.

Regarding the ease of accessibility of software and technology in the production of design artefacts, digital design has already become a massive output of visual communication design that is used daily. The digital design is designed by considering the technical aspect and behavioural aspects of the digital media and social media users. The platform site for dissemination needs to be promoted by using social media as a site for interaction and engagement. New users may be interested in the platform but they need assurance by checking the reviews and comments by other users. The users also can engage, give feedback, appreciation, review, criticize, and even suggestions for upcoming products, and form unofficial supporting communities for the platform they like. Everyone may express themselves using words, emoticons, gifs, trolls, memes, and so on. Some of the digital design artefacts become tools for communication with other fellow netizens too. Even the competitor may join the party to do their research before launching their platform or digital design. The complexity of interactions and engagements that may occur, especially in unmoderated interaction spaces. The interconnectedness of factors, such as ease of production, and the massive quantity of digital designs produced by user behaviour in each digital media, dissemination platform, and social media, cannot be ignored, to be seen as one digital ecosystem & culture. At a glance, the shifting of authority on platforms and social and digital media seems to be a more utopian idea as sole authority shifted into plural individuals-to-plural individuals' authority, or commonly known as many-to-many.

On the other hand, in terms of dissemination of works on digital platforms as well as interaction and engagement on social media, consideration is given to how things that are most watched, most liked, most commented or reviewed, most shared, or maybe by using certain paid service or subscription, become the top views and are often to be displayed in the top of feeds. As a result, the race for popularity cannot be avoided, and using a kind of paid services and strategies as a catalyst to boost popularity becomes an inevitable need. Even when it comes to critical debates between fans and haters, or service providers that pretend to be fans or haters, the debates are often enriched by the presence of those who add more perspectives. What is considered popular, has more chances to be displayed on top of everyone's feeds, and ultimately this popularity becomes something that is observed, imitated and modified with all its similarities and similarities by others as reference. In digital media, popularity seems to be both a boundary and a reference for visual culture. So, as a spiral of casualties, the nature of popularity in digital media becomes the authority.

Relation of authority and terminology within design criticism

Within the reactions and responses in interactions and engagement, the design criticism aspect naturally emerges, examining creators and users within their social context. These aspects appear not in the sole individual source of opinion, but from multi-individual sources of opinions with various perspectives and ways of expressing and expressing. The acts of expressing and expressions in countering each other's opinion, correcting and supporting an opinion, soon become a grouped collective opinion by a common perspective. Individuals who have knowledge, skills and sensitivity in visual communication design may offer their perspectives in the form of design artefacts. Design artefacts as outputs of alternative perspectives of thoughts, then get reactions and responses in interaction and engagement from similar perspective groups. It is not uncommon for stakeholders to offer these individuals to participate in their future design process. These kinds of design artefacts may be used as learning material for self-taught designers, and students or as case studies in academic studies. So, design criticism that shifts organically in digital media takes the form of offering alternative perspectives in a kind of verbal text or design artefacts. These alternative perspectives then encourage further affect changes to advance the society by the achievements of the original design. This can be said to be the creation of value within organic design criticism in the digital medium.

The reach of academics in making these interactions and engagement situations in the digital medium as a source of learning is also limited by time. And, the nature of design criticism cannot go beyond the output and outcomes of the design itself. The result, academic action to be fruitful for society is often too soon or late. What has been discussed in the digital medium, suddenly has become obsolete. The interaction and engagement may have shifted to other recently popular ones. In the long term, the need for the design of criticism in academia seems to shift the concepts and methods of design criticism, so that it can bridge what is happening in the digital medium soon before they get shifted. However, is this an attempt to place authority on academics? By realizing the importance of academic dignity in producing knowledge to become a source of learning together, come with intentional awareness, not to become part of authority. Since efforts to place authority within design criticism on academics are futile. What design academics can do is position design criticism to grow as a body of knowledge, which then can be used to legitimize the visual communication design profession and improve social welfare through the knowledge it produces. From the current situation, the need for inclusive and accessible methods as happened in design production tools, is needed to be made available to society.

It can be indicated the reason why design criticism has prejudice in the terminology. Even in the participatory involvement by the user through digital platforms, criticism is terminology for a negative comment or review. Feedback is considered a proper term for sharing an opinion or two on a design process, output and outcome. This may come from the communication culture of Indonesia to avoid expressing opinions directly but they choose to cover their intention in smoother diction. If the assumption of this communication culture is acceptable, then the term design appreciation that is superimposed on design review is nothing more than an attempt to smooth or reinterpret design criticism. However, if we look at the design review methods of the two main references, there are significant differences. Reviews focus on the design achievements and outcomes. Criticism considers the review aspect and the process-subject-intention of the creator.

Discussion about visual communication design as a discipline in education may also be interacted with and discussed using cultural studies, social sciences, linguistics, technology, management, art and so on. Problem/project-based education and the massive growth of informal learning communities increasingly encourage the need for critical discussions through design criticism. The nature of design learning through studio-based simulation, along with the need for critique in each stage of the design process, including the expanding conversations about inclusivity, makes design criticism irresistibly central to learning and knowledge development of visual communication design, both in classrooms/lectures, community discussions, through social media or blogs and so on. Informal critique sessions are delivered verbally/by text between two individuals or in groups and even with groups outside the design community. Design criticism in formal critique is more commonly found in education. Meanwhile, in the professional situation, it is more dominated by verbal critique in the form of dialogue, or recorded in an evaluation report. Every organ in the design ecosystem can ideally provide a critique. On the other hand, written design criticism is less common to be found, design reviews are more commonly found in the academic sphere. As a result of this situation, the figure of the "*Kritikus Desain*" or Design Critic who specifically carries out Criticism seems hard to find in society as a profession, even though this is not only felt to be essential in the development of visual communication design as a knowledge, skill, sensibility, profession, or design artefacts as output of design activity.

Design academics in their training to hold a master's or doctor's degree are certainly equipped with analytical tools that are multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary. With the reference of a design review, the achievements and outcomes of the design can be analyzed, while the process-subject-intention of the creator may be suggested to be discussed using other disciplinary analytical tools. Compared with Lupton's statement, there's a possibility that the kind of approach for design criticism is on a master's or doctor's degree level approach. Meanwhile, the design creation process itself is categorized as monodisciplinary. Although it is rooted in the visual arts discipline, in practice, design education is often found under the umbrella of other faculties, such as business, computer science, communication science, architecture, creative industries, and others. This means that visual communication design creation can be said to be transdisciplinary which synthesizes various disciplines. However, in the implementation of education, it is more dominant towards skills rather than the ability to think abstractly. (Rizal & Maulana, 2021). What is expected from visual communication design, by commonly misunderstood discipline, is the output, the craft, or the design artefact rather than the outcome, the impact on behaviour or the social impact. This explains why design criticism is less developed as a body of knowledge in the academic arena.

In the government's legal reference documents regarding visual communication design professions, Indonesian National Work Competency Standards, SKKNI NO. 126/2023 (Kementrian Ketenagakerjaan Republik Indonesia, 2023) indicate that the appraisal/assessment of competencies was mentioned more often (76 times), than evaluation (14 times), comparison (4 times), open to opinions and criticism (3 times), review (2 times) and did not mention appreciation at all. The design review, referred to in this document, is a knowledge to carry out self-review and external review to determine which design options to finalize as a design concept, after being evaluated for concept improvements and refinements. The appraisal/assessment refers to artefacts/tangibles as the output of each process stage.

The evaluation aimed at inlining capability and suitability of achievements and the goals/plans in each stage of the design process. The comparison refers to the ability to compare the information received. In other professional reference documents, it is indicated that there are 2 (two) critical words included in the design thinking process, in the identification and research process (AIDIA et al., 2019). These two documents do not mention any methods for criticism or other possible terminologies. The subjects involved refer to the creators only (designer & stakeholders). This means that there are no standard references or guidelines for the public to participate and get involved, as in the case of digital media situations.

The situations shown in interaction and engagement in digital media showed that design criticism activities have dynamically shifted. By this discussion, it can be indicated that design criticism is needed, and the assumption that design criticism shifted as a form of interaction can be accepted. The lack of fixing the terminologies of design criticism does not prevent design criticism from continuing to be carried out, developing and shifting organically in and by the digital medium. The reference documents show that accepting differences of opinions and criticism is one of the essential competencies of a visual communication designer. There are five types of authority shifting within design criticism in this discussion:

1. The authority by the use of formal visual analysis with subjectivity that is considered judgmental (sole authority)
2. The authority of the critic's intention in facilitating inter-subjectivity interaction between creators and users by the spirit of the digital era.
3. The authority by the shifting into digital medium & the authority of medium characteristic (digital medium authority)
4. The authority of participation involvement shifted the sole authority from plural individuals to plural individuals' authority (many-to-many authority)
5. The authority by popularity in the digital medium.

Inevitably, design criticism has already been involved and evolved in and by digital society as a daily conversation. Even design criticism has an impact on daily life as the visual communication design output and outcome do. Design criticism, as well as the design artefact as output and the outcome of design, become parts of visual culture. This discussion may echo what Steven Heller said years ago:

> "Younger designers insist that they want a cold eye, but prefer a warm hand. Celebrating success and ignoring failure has been the prevailing editorial policy for years. Substituting a rigorous critical analysis, no matter how positive does not compensate for the loss of flattering profiles that can be used as self-promotion. This ambivalence has essentially limited the potential forums for critical discourse…. Although the quality of design writing has generally improved as journalism has replaced cronyism, the current level of criticism fluctuates between the astute and the sophomoric.. . " (Heller, 2014)

Rephrasing Heller's words while using the identification of authority within design criticism in Indonesia may look like these. Response to design criticism will be always mixed by the sole authority. Designers might feel hungry by cold criticism, but the warm welcoming one gives them strength to be sustained in the profession.

So, the authority of a critic's intention in facilitating inter-subjectivity between creators and users by the spirit of the digital era is needed to sustain the discussion of visual communication design itself. The digital medium authority has liberated space for young and veteran designers to come and go, to the spotlight of the authority of popularity in digital medium. Though this shift may not be affecting well-positioned designers in the industry, it may affect students, the autodidacts, newcomers, and junior designers. However, the many-to-many authority may give liberated spaces for disseminating, interacting and engaging, but the spotlights are always keen their eyes only on the successful while ignoring the failures. This situation might not differ from the situation of a decade before. The authority within design criticism shifted, but design criticism as a body of knowledge is stagnant.

Stagnancy of design criticism as the body of knowledge and the shifting of design criticism in practice

The stagnation of design criticism does not seem to be a problem, because the stagnation has already appeared three decades ago. (Heller, 2014) . By the medium shifting, shifting the authority within design criticism continues to develop organically, in line with the development of digital design production. With the development of the medium, which was thought to be an organic development, it turned out to only transfer what had happened in the past with journalism criticism into visual art critique. (Yuliman, 2020). Debates about what is good and best, spotlight the success and ignore the failure, what is ordained by the media to be considered good and popular immediately forms a copy culture that is duplicated by all practitioners, students, and enters higher education. In fact, in the moderated media of the past, there were no known terms or practices such as Internet Trolls, Rants, Spill, Roast, even the "*kejamnya jempol/mulut netizen*" (the cruel thumbs/mouths of netizens) - or even then the social sanctions from those who were unrelated and didn't know anything about the problem nor the context at all. This situation is complicated by the generation gaps and the way each generation interacts on the Internet.

The shifting in the design production process from manual, digital, and automation, with the ease of gathering tutorials and instructions, as well as the easiest and fastest way to produce them, along with the equipment and technology. The shifting in the production process to dissemination is exponentially getting more efficient and effective. These situations support and boost design work process and commercial purposes for delivering function through visual identity, informative or persuasive. However, the process of documenting and discourse that then emerged, as a result of the output and outcomes of design, by the absence of methods of design criticism, resulted in critiques that were too formalistic, too subjective, and too slow to handle that fastness. Surprisingly, the imbalance situations seem to be taken for granted as something organic that arises from freedom of opinion on social media. Even more surprisingly, things that appear on digital media, which are predominantly verbal-visual and auditory, are considered to fall into the realm of visual communication design.

The assumptions then consider that content creation is attached to visual communication design can be both justified and rejected. Justified, as in the elements and the medium can be identified as the identity, informative or persuasive function displayed visually. Rejected, since the methods in content creation do not necessarily use visual communication design methods, or design thinking.

As a result of this public assumption on a surface level, content creators become a target by design students as references and outcome of their education, even though the content creator who is referred to does not necessarily need to comprehend the design process. What they are targeting once again is the issue of popularity, which is achieved through the production of content without quality and in-depth messages that are more dramatic, controversial, give-away and even sensual, to achieve popularity which is measured through the number of subscribers, viewers, likes, comments (Rysan, Alamiyah, Claretta, & Achmad, 2021). The impact of the comments that emerge in this interaction has a tendency to take the form of praise, support for things one likes (Sabrina & Vera, 2023), and satire to sarcasm and other violations of language ethics for things one doesn't like (Amirah Budi, Aida Aziz, & Suwadah Rimang, 2023; Mega Ayu Lestari & Gallant Karunia Assidik, 2024).

Particular Instagram content creators who discuss design, such as @designrant, @bebenahdesign, @mantapfunny, also show similar incidents, specifically in the field of design. Banter, satire, sarcasm, comparisons, hidden messages, straightforward messages, and even roast that are critical to design outcomes and designer behaviour are displayed by these three accounts. @designrant and @bebenahdesign predominantly commented on the interface and user-experience design of the application. Both show differences in intonation that may indicate the admin generation category. @mantapfunny predominantly comments on what is currently popular with a more satirical and sarcastic intonation.

Roasting, which originates from the American comedy tradition, is a considered normal practice in popular entertainment, even when the content tends to be offensive to tendencies in bullying. Positive responses from parties affected by roasting are often appreciated and become learning material for the audience. On the other hand, a negative reaction from the party affected by the roasting provokes other parties to comment in a negative opinion, causing a commotion to bullying. Criticism design activities were then considered to be something similar to roasting, which was interpreted as something fun, and light, even though it was rough but considered insightful, and formal constructive critique was considered obsolete. (Mahfunda, n.d.). So, it can be said that in social changes due to the five types of authority shifting within design criticism in this discussion, design criticism is then considered to be separated from the issue of expertise in visual communication design itself. Openness is a characteristic of the digital medium, giving anyone the right to share their opinion. Even design criticism as a practice in the digital medium has become a spectacle and entertainment phenomenon. However, a matter of giving and receiving criticism, feedback, or opinions constructively and with good intentions is questionable.

In generations before Generation Z, roasting was considered normal social behaviour. The Millennial generation is also used to watching roasts on comedy shows on social media channels. However, for Generation Z, or today's young designers, roasting has become a challenge and obstacle that should be avoided. At first glance, they expected a cold critique but preferred a lukewarm opinion (Heller, 2014). From this discussion, it is clear that no matter how times change, with technology, media and social behaviour, establishing design criticism as a body of knowledge is a factual challenge.

Conclusion

From observation, it is indicated that there are problems in the terminology and references in design criticism that have an impact on the paucity of education on design criticism. This discussion showed how technological advancement has had a huge impact on the production process of visual communication design, even pushing the studies further into the digital medium and branch of design knowledge into the new media design. As digital media gave space for everyone involved to send reviews, comments, opinions, critiques, and feedback, those showed indications of how design criticism shifted from formal and sole authority to informal and many-to-many authority. Digital mediums facilitate inter-subjectivity interaction between creators and users in the spirit of the digital era.

The popularity of digital media seems to be both a boundary and a reference for visual culture and behaviour. So, as a spiral of casualties, the nature of popularity in digital media becomes the authority. Even academicians too take sources and get feedback from this medium. But as the necessity of design criticism as practice, the government document references and academic references don't give a certain terminology, or clue on how, who, when and where to give critique. Indeed, the shifting of the medium nor the authority within design criticism doesn't change the behaviours of the design individual or the society. The stagnation of design criticism as a body of knowledge when compared to the current situation, showed the tendencies of design criticism as roasting is normalized and then impacted by how each generation reacts and responds to this roasting culture. However, the era, technologies, mediums, and social and generational behaviours are shifting, still it is challenging to place design criticism as the body of knowledge.

This discussion also suggests further research in tackling design criticism education and critical practice by designers and the public. Even though setting design criticism as a body of knowledge is challenging, the design community and society still can have a certain level of collective consciousness on creating value for a better future.

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