

Psycho-semiotic analysis of the reflection of high school students' moods onto the school walls

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Graffiti which has been a self-expression since humans started to draw pictures to the cave walls is today used especially by young people. Puberty is a physical, sexual social transition period between childhood and adulthood, where stressful and conflicting instabilities are observed in the feelings, opinions and behaviors of the individuals. Thus, since teenagers cannot convey some of the feelings in their inner worlds due to the social pressure, they try to achieve an abreaction through graffiti. Seeking to leave a mark by attracting attention as if saying "I'm here too" and screaming their feelings, the walls mostly used by young people are the ones at and around school. Students are able to express themselves perspicuously since the writer is unknown, and they reflect their feelings and ideas which they want to communicate to other people onto the walls with their negative attitudes towards the system. This study aims to evaluate the graffiti psychologically and analyze students' moods.

The study includes the photos taken of the walls of all public high schools in and around Pendik district containing different cultures located in İstanbul, where internal immigration occurs the most in Turkey. The graffiti on the photos were examined, and a table was created where such photos were classified under general subject headings based on the contents. According to the theory that claims that patterns of writing provide information about the characters and inner worlds of individuals just like the other patterns of behaviors (graphology), the writings were analyzed from a psychological aspect. Thus, some psychological conclusions were drawn about the general moods of high school students, which had been manifested by reflecting onto the school walls.

According to the analysis performed, writings mainly include sentences about sadness, disappointment, unhappiness, regret, being deceived, rage, love and pain, but also include political writings even though few. Besides, single names of people, which are likely to belong to the darling/friend of the writer or the writer itself, are outnumbered. Young people who easily reflect their rage onto the walls through slang and abusive writings also reflect their internal worlds with creative, touching and humorous sentences from time to time, if appropriate. Young people who have difficulty in telling about their lives to those around them and their families shout out their moods to the walls where they can create free space for themselves. However, it was seen that these writings had been painted out by municipalities and school administration in most of the schools. Instead of covering up the problems, it is essential to try to understand the feelings of students and approach them sensitively, and to protect this free space where they can express their feelings. It should be remembered that the common feeling that brings teenagers into action to express their despair and show that they have a right to speak in the spaces created by them through these writings on the walls is the urge to say "I have a right to easily express my opinions to other people, too!".