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The Art and Expression of Graffiti

Graffiti is more than just gangster street art. It's a way to express yourself. The television show I decided to do my analysis on is *Good Trouble*. If you know anything about that show, it's a sequel to the original series, *The Fosters*. *Good Trouble* follows two sisters, Callie and Marianna, moving to Los Angeles to pursue their dreams. The message the show is portraying is defying society's standards, doing what you're passionate about no matter the struggles, and coming out of it stronger.

I love what the show is teaching us because it shows you the struggles people of color go through and how they navigate life with that. I completely relate to that as someone with a physical disability. I have my fair share of struggles. People of color and, especially, people with disabilities, grow up and adapt in a world that's not made for us. On top of that, we deal with things such as discrimination, get fired or denied from jobs, and don't receive proper health care, just to name a few. The thing is: even with all the challenges we face, we still show up every day and don't quit.

We see different kinds of graffiti; we see fourteen images throughout the video. Each one of those portrays a different story or meaning. Throughout the video, all we see is a lot of graffiti art. Yes, that is all we see. I know what you might be thinking: how can

a theme of showing one thing reveal anything to you? My answer: a lot more than you think.

In an article by Berger, a sign is defined as “a combination of a concept and a sound-image, a combination that cannot be separated.” Semiotics is all about learning a new language, and that’s exactly what graffiti can be: a language. The images we see are ones that reveal the dark side and struggles we go through and triumphs we experience.

If you notice, it starts off with darker, sadder colors, depressing images. It leads to brighter colors, happier images to look at, and it repeats that pattern until the video ends. That’s exactly what we go through. We deal with the hard times such as discrimination, getting fired from jobs, and those experiences lead us to something greater. It leads us to something that’s more meaningful.

This brings up a question that was talked about in the lecture video: how do images hold and convey meaning? The short answer: they tell a story. They portray something that someone may relate to. In an article by Berger, Pierce stated, “a sign is something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity.” Graffiti is a form of expressive art. That is the theme of the whole video. The messages are the images we see.

Earlier, I talked about the “watermelon” aspect of the images. Now, I’m going to get into the “seeds”, the nitty gritty part of it all. The darker images we see are all black and grey. Additionally, we see some images of just one person or thing, or they are in a group. This shows you that you may think to believe you’re experiencing these things on your own, but you’re not. You’re going through these extremely tough times in your life,

and you may not know who to turn to or what to do. You're in denial about what's happening.

Once you comes to terms with the fact of what happened, that's where the light start to come in. You've accepted what happened, you've accepted you need help, and you start to move forward. During that period, those exemplify the images that are both colorful and dark. In those images, we see one person or thing. This part of your journey is yours to figure out. You're the one taking the steps to overcome that challenge.

In an article by Barry, he states, "the meaning we give to words are purely arbitrary, and that these meanings are maintained by convention only." Art, especially graffiti, is completely random. You don't know what to expect. When people think of graffiti, some think it's not art. They say it's vandalism and degradation towards community buildings. Others think of big and beautiful murals. I have to agree with the second assumption. Art in the street, and throughout the city, is happy to look at. It adds color and liveliness to what would otherwise be boring and grey. Furthermore, it makes tourists experience more meaningful and memorable. When art is big and stands out like the way graffiti does, people remember it. Lastly, it just makes the commute better. It wakes you up. Graffiti is just art but on a different canvas.

In an article by Coulthard, the "sequences is particularly informative about the series, neither clearly indicating narrative focus, genre, or story and [...] feature a central character. [...] We have no real sense of characters or storylines yet [...] is strong in conveying atmosphere. As I mentioned above, you don't know what to expect when it comes to art. Just like in the video, you don't know what type of graffiti art is coming

next. One thing is black and grey, then it's all bright and alive, and it switches until the video ends. Not only do the images itself tell a story, but so does the order of which it's shown.

The next type of art we see is just happy and bright colors. This signifies that you've made it. You've made it past all the hard obstacles, and now you can breathe. You've mastered the hardest part of your journey, and it's now time to move forward. You become a stronger person because of the experience.

The last picture we see is brown and black, and they aren't necessarily the colors I was hoping for the last image of the video. If you notice, you see two people walking forward with their shadow following behind them. This shows that there are people who are inspired by them and their story to follow in their footsteps. This is the most rewarding part. The fact that the challenges you went through and how you persevered made someone want to do the same? That's the best feeling. That's the end of your story, thus the last image of the video.

The song in the video is called "Bel Ami" which means "Dear Friend" in French. That sums up the entire meaning of the show. You may think you're going through your obstacles alone, but you're not. You just have to find the right people, and you'll feel less alone. You just need a friend.

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