

Graffiti Culture as Playing Media for Youth in Batang Anai Subdistrict

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses about graffiti becoming playing media for youth in Batang Anai subdistrict. Graffiti is a human activity in a culture. The youth graffiti artists in Batang Anai create characters and fonts in playing graffiti, and it serves as a playing media with certain functions from graffiti. The purpose of this research is to describe the meaning behind characters and graffiti fonts as playing media for youth in Batang Anai. The research method in this research is qualitative. The techniques of collecting data include observation, literature review, interview, and documentation. The writer uses semiotics theory by Charles Peirce to analyze meaning and to analyze the function using theory by Robert K. Merton. Based on this research, the conclusion is that the meaning of characters and graffiti fonts for youth as graffiti artists in Batang Anai, such as emoticons, frog science, adopting the scorpions' way of survival, birthrate, and abbreviating real names. The function of graffiti as playing media for youth in Batang Anai includes expression, freedom, creativity, and social interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Graffiti is one of the developing cultures and serves as playing media for youth in Batang Anai. The creative process is unique and done by a part of humanity. In the Batang Anai subdistrict, youth graffiti artists who play graffiti create characters and fonts. Behind these characters and fonts that graffiti artists create, there is meaning.

Aulia in his thesis (2018:44) titled "Functions and Disfunctions of Integration Effort Hip-Hop Community," said graffiti is one of the four elements of hip-hop culture, alongside rap music, breakdancing, and DJ-ing. According to Aulia's statement, graffiti is one of the elements of hip-hop culture.

Susanto (2011:47) said graffiti as a demotic art, giving function at street scratches. In the basic, this action is made by an anti-aesthetic base and chaotic. Indriyani (2011:10) said graffiti is crossing out that has a purpose in making it, as usual using spray paint and street walls as paintbrush and canvas to communicate an expression. Graffiti artists usually call the writer.

In conclusion from graffiti definitions above, graffiti is human activity in a culture which scratches and vandalism is the base it, graffitiers have purpose and media self in creation, as usually as expression form and characters and font that created having meaning.

Playing is activity by doing for fun without consideration final result (Mughtar Latif, Dkk, 2014:77). From his Latif perspective that the youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai subdistrict play the graffiti without restrictions from outside, there is no competition, personal pleasure and team, and enjoy process in playing graffiti.

Eventhough graffiti as playing media for youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai but characters and font from graffitiers have meaning from personal experience graffitiers. Base on the background above the researcher interested to analyze meaning behind characters and graffiti font from youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai and function of graffiti as playing media for youth in Batang Anai.

Next point base on background above, the formulation of the problem in this research is: "How is the meaning behind characters and graffiti font as playing media for youth in Batang Anai ?". "What is the functions of graffiti as playing media in Batang Anai ?".

The purpose of this study is: describe the meaning behind characters and graffiti font as playing media for youth in Batang Anai and describe graffiti function as playing media for youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai.

METHOD

The research method in this research is qualitative. Moleong (2017:6) qualitative research is the research to comprehend the phenomenon about experience things holistically and the way to describe in words form and language, in a special natural context with utilize various natural method.

The research object in this research is the youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai subdistrict, Padang Pariaman regency, Sumatera Barat province. Reason the researcher choose Batang Anai as location because there is no study discuss about graffiti that develop in Batang Anai.

The source data in this research is primary data and secondary. The researcher got the primary data from youth as graffitiers, society in Batang Anai, Police of Pamong Praja. The secondary data got from literature review such as books, journals, thesis, photos and videos relate with graffiti culture as playing media to give information or to complete the data.

The technique of collecting data is trough observation outside, literature review, interview and documentation. The researcher analyzed data by using collecting data, description crude data, data reduction, the categorisazation data, and construct categorization relationship.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Appearance Graffiti in Batang Anai

According to..... is all of system ideas, and taste, actions, and creation who human produced in social life, which they make they own by learning (Koentjaraningrat,1996:72). Based on it the culture from learning process by ideas and concepts through an action that produced creation by human in a culture area.

Indriyani (2011:10) the definition of graffiti is stead scratches that having purpose in making it, as usually use spray paint and wall streets as paintbrush and canvas to communicated an expression. Graffiti as one element in hiphop culture (three other elements is break dancing, dj-ing, and rapping) (Adhi, 2005:85).

Playing is repeat activity for fun (Piaget in Mayesty, 1990:42). There is meaning in playing and function on it. Characteristics in playing is free action, different from true life, time and certain place, create disciplines and have own rules (Huizinga (1990).

Graffiti culture as playing media for youth in Batang Anai is a learning process from youth as graffitiers trough ideas in his mind created in characters or font by doing activity in public facility or resident's property and that result is artifact because it can see and to be touched and repeatly in room and certain time without restrictions from outside with own rules that create by graffitiers to be playing media in Batang Anai.

The youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai during this research who as information source arre 4T, croak, SRN, D96K, and ALFA. The youth create characters and font in playing graffiti. 4T and croak are graffitiers who create character and font in playing graffiti. SRN, D96K, and ALFA are graffitiers who create font in playing graffiti in Batang Anai. Kinds of graffiti font in Batang Anai is too much, like; tagging, throw up, bubble, piece, wild style and block buster. Based on kinds of graffiti in Batang Anai, the researcher observeb there are graffiti font such as tagging, throw up, and piece. So, character is kind of graffiti that dominant in Batang Anai.

The youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai play graffiti in public facility and at resident's property. Play graffiti in public facility or public room do it without permission or illegal. When playing graffiti in resident's property, the youth should ask permission. The youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai make boombing (graffiti's term) in public area, create graffiti in all places in fasting time usually in tag form and throw-up and character. In other side at resident's property they create graffiti in piece and character form because in resident's property they need long timing.

Spot in playing illegal graffiti in Batang Anai are in flyover Duku, Padang-Sicincin' toll road project in Sungai Buluah, billboard, and other attractive surface in Batang Anai street. And for spot in playing legal graffiti is in rolling door, walls, bedroom and other that all have society. Creating in illegal spot or legal doing random.



Figure 1: Mistar and ALFA play graffiti in flyover Duku



Figure 2: Blase play graffiti in public property in New Market in Kasang

There are kinds graffiti created by youth in Batang Anai by choosing random spot in society environment make society giving viewpoint about it. The researcher got viewpoint such pro and contra about graffiti and rules in Batang Anai. Interviewed on February 8, 2023, Mr. Pirin said:

"I am pro toward this activity, because image can not separate from life."

Different opinion above, interviewed on February 8, 2023, Mr. Edi said:

"I am contra to see this activity, because this activity make media so dirty, uncozy, and there is no meaning."

March 1, 2023, Mr. Tio said:

"Making the graffiti is imagination's graffitier that delivered. I'm pro about it."

Interviewed on March 1, 2023, Mr. Hendri said:

"Graffiti is so good, live up environment colorful, so it is good compared plain."

Interviewed on May 29, 2023, Mr. Robby Aria Dinata as police of pamong praja in Batang Anai:

“There is no rules for graffiti in police of pamong praja’s rules, but if society uncomfortable with this we will process. There is no the rules now.”

In public’s view above, the conclusion is society pro because the image can not separate from life, giving colorful media, an imagination’s graffitier that delivered on it. Contra view from society because the society just understand graffiti as unseful scratches and do not understand about meaning behind it. Finally graffiti be come scratches that out from art capacity and tend to make environment dirty that is graffiti media.

There is no graffiti rules in Batang Anai. Eventhough no rules about it, if society make a report about graffiti and uncozy, police of pamong praja will process it. Graffiti rules in Batang Anai is not clear.

B. Meaning Behind Characters and Graffiti Font

The meaning is meaning, the purpose speaker or writer, giving definition to languages form (in Indonesian Big Dictionary). If related with activity in playing graffiti as graffitiers in Batang Anai, so there is elements in graffiti that having meaning, are character and graffiti font.

1. Meaning behind graffiti character

There is form and different meaning in making graffiti character, they are;

a. 4T

4T is one the name graffitier in Batang Anai and the named for his graffiti character. Graffiti character from 4T highlight outline (line) in playing graffiti with head form that developed from tagging GORO typically, like emoticon (different in all other location when they play it), and colors give impact because every situatios they play graffiti.

At the same with interviewed result on November 22, 2022:

“4T is tagname and named for my graffiti character. This character meaning is head form that I develop it from tagging GORO (graffiti gank 4T). Created character same with emoticon. Created character depend on the location that I played it. For scare spot, I’ll visualized the head character by choosing black and red color. At the happiness situation, color use is yellow. Based on use it in playing graffiti, I usually use outline or line in creating 4T graffiti”.

Meaning 4T character is tagname and head form develop by tagging GORO. 4T same with emoticon. Situation from graffiti location giving effect 4T in creating graffiti, for example using color. Playing graffiti in 4T usually use outline.

Using color in certain spots from graffiti character 4T like Zuhriah’s opinion (2018:9) in his thesis titled “Makna Warna Dalam Tradisi Budaya; Studi Kontrastif Antara Budaya Indonesia Dan Budaya Asing” is black color is usually related with mysterious things, scare and the dark. Red related with blood (Zuhriah, 2018:9). They related with using color 4T in scared spots. Yellow is cheerful, happiness and happy (Zuhriah, 2018:9). Yellow color that 4T used in spot bring happiness like meaning of the color.



Figure 3: Character 4T

b. Croak

Croak is different character with 4T character. Croak is one name of graffitiers in Batang Anai. Croak is dominant character frog visual and it is his typically in playing graffiti. Based on the researcher result interview on November 26, 2022 with croak, said:

“Croak is tagname and named for my graffiti character. Croak is frog visual character. When croak character appear I fell it is my self. The next significancy because I usually use frog term in daily life. Frog science term is develop term in my society environment for someone who acts without think before and no plane to do something. Example for this is frog science term in playing graffiti I’ll create croak character in certain spots and using spray paint in limited playing graffiti that is without think and plane.”

Meaning croak character is visual from frog. Named of croak from sound frog. Other meaning croak character is usually use frog science term in daily life and playing graffiti. Frog science term is develop term in Batang Anai society for someone who acts without think before and no plane to do something.



Figure 4: Character Croak

2. Meaning Behind Graffiti Font

Other meaning that can see it behind character, graffiti can be interpreted through font. Where is font meaning from letter form explored color in playing graffiti. The following font meaning by graffitiers:

a. SRN

SRN is symbol graffitiers name in Batang Anai with simple font and light colors. Based on result interview on December 2, 2022, this SRN said:

“SRN is scorpion acronym. In playing graffiti, I created abbreviation from scorpion font, not visual from scorpion. I mean font SRN see from scorpion who underground life, they survive in extream condition until giving light in the dark and I relate it how font to be able mirrored for my self keep moving in underground and extream spot in bright colors in graffiti.”

SRN is acronym from scorpion is not scorpion visual. Font SRN have meaning about scorpion life in underground, survive in extream condition and related with graffitiers creativity in using bright colors. Picture 3 graffiti SRN create in rolling door with graffiti font piece using bright color as follow:



Figure 5: SRN Font

b. D96K

Graffiti throwup D96K mirrored birthrate by visual like eyes. Based on result interview on February, 2023, he said:

“D96K font is combination between letter and number. Font and number D96K have meaning an initial my real name was born in 96. Number 96 describe eyes.”

Meaning from D96K graffiti is combined real name and his birthday date outside graffitiers and become his tagname in playing graffiti. Number 96 describe eyes if visualized.



Figure 6: D96K Font

c. ALFA

ALFA meaning same with font characteristic of ALFA by wild letter that term is wildstyle, acronym the real name of graffitiers. Based on result interview on February 21, 2023, he said:

“ALFA meaning is when I was alfa in school. Next ALFA is acronym from my real name that related with my habit. ALFA font become my story. ALFA font included in wild style in graffiti font”.



Figure 7: Wild Style ALFA Font

Semiotics theory by Charles Sanders Pierce, it the researcher use to discuss questions about meaning behind font and graffiti character as playing media for youth in Batang Anai. Pierce divides three type sign. The first sign is icon, it is sign relate with the same object, the same or like object seem in physic two or three dimension.

Sign index is sign related cause and effect. Symbol is the sign convention, or mutual agreement after learning. New symbol can understand if someone understand about agreement before (Pierce in Berger 2010:16).

Based on conclusion this research, the research got data about meaning behind character and graffiti font as media for youth in Batang Anai same with semiotic theory by Pierce about three type sign. First type, icon sign same meaning with 4T character visualized head, croak visualized frog, acronym from scorpion font (SRN), combination letter and number from font D96K and ALFA font is as wild style in graffiti. Character meaning and font are same with icon type sign seems in physic two.

Sign index type same with 4T character like using color in certain spot, croak character that usually practicing science frog in playing graffiti, meaning SRN font adopted the way scorpions to survive in playing graffiti, and meaning ALFA font is acronym from real name and usually alfa was in school. Character meaning and font same with sign index type because relathioship cause and effect that happened when youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai.

Three sign symbol same with emoticon meaning and tagname in playing graffiti, symbolized real name and born date. Character and font same with sign index type based on convension.

C. Functions of Graffiti as Playing Media for Youth in Batang Anai

Graffiti functions for youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai have various from person. There are two functions graffiti in Batang Anai according to Robert K. Merton, they are manifest function and latent function.

1. Manifest Function

According to Robert K. Merton, manifest function as real function from a cultural practice and social activity that aim for effort to fulfill collective goals (Merton in Tubagus Y. A 2018:19). From definition, manifest function in graffiti for youth are:

a. As expression form

Expression according to Septian Arga Rismawan is expression or feeling and human thinking. The human expressing way depend on situation and condition that happened from experience. The youth play graffiti and create it based on they feeling such font and character.

b. The unique originator

Character and font are not created by other graffitiers so the graffiti that created is not same with other graffitiers, so that specialty is on the writer.

c. Creativity

The youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai able to make new combination based experience and knowledge that getting before from own environment, such youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai giving respond the location where they are playing graffiti based environment condition with character form and font, matching colors with the location too.

d. Giving color at Wall

Graffiti function give color at the wall which match graffitiers desire and his creativity in Batang Anai. Process from the function do in wall media until dirty wall also the graffitiers giving color too in Batang Anai.

e. Increasing activity is characteristics of graffitiers

This function is the youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai do different activity to get out from the game like game online and gamble online. Based on this function same with Homo Ludens Johan Huzinga's theory with characteristic or other game criteria than real life (1990:11)

2. Latent Function

According to Robert K. Merton latent function is hidden function from a cultural practice and social activity (Merton in Tubagus Y. A 2018:19). Based on it, the researcher found latent function from interview as below:

a. Personal Happiness

Graffiti function as an expression or place to express the happiness for graffitiers.

b. Open minded graffitiers to learn other things out off graffiti

Information about history, moving, information and other about more graffiti in English. Relate it the youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai having initiative to learn other things out off graffiti such learn English language.

c. Time management

Graffiti function is to manage the time for graffitiers in Batang Anai because in create graffiti in public facility, graffitiers in Batang Anai make efficiently or as fast as possible in public facility and main priority to achieve the location target or targeted spot to show productivity in playing graffiti.

d. Nostalgia

Function of graffiti as nostalgia it's mean result created from graffiti create as one way to remind the past and an evidence of graffitiers ever making graffiti in the past. For example, graffitiers in Batang Anai when find graffiti that his made before in difficult location to create graffiti legal or not.

e. Relax after work and school

In Batang Anai activity of graffiti as refreshing form out off the other daily activity. At the same by Homo Ludens Johan Huizinga's theory about play criteria having place and certain time. Begin and ending the play at the certain moment (1990:13). For example, the youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai make graffiti in certain place (public facility, resident's society) out off the other daily activity.

f. Increasing sensitivity toward physical archives

Function of graffiti is increasing sensitivity toward physical archives for graffitiers related to documentation of the activity product and keep as one of archive.

g. Theraphy

Graffiti is one tool of stress diversion who experienced by related individu as graffitiers.

h. Social

Social function is expression through graffiti, graffitiers in Batang Anai share creative ideas each other, media and tools. Indirectly, this attitude create a sense of sociality among graffitiers. Design of usefulness of graffitiers to around the society also increasing sense of sociality and graffiti product as result of art, giving color in around society environment by creativity process graffitiers.

i. Freedom

Function of graffiti for youth in Batang Anai relate feel free is kind of freedom expression, playing graffiti is not order from anyone with refers to tolerance and the norms in society. Relate with them graffiti is not order from anyone same with Homo Ludens Johan Huizinga's theory, game's characteristic as free action. Huizinga said if the game ask from someone is not the game (1990:10). Example of freedom is ask permission before do graffiti activity in resident's property.

CONCLUSION

Graffiti culture as playing media for youth in Batang Anai is one process for youth through ideas in mind and create it in character form or font by doing activity in public

facility or society property until produced artifact because seems, to be touched, and doing repeatedly.

There are kinds graffiti in Batang Anai based meaning (character and font). By character and graffiti font will appear meaning such same character meaning with emoticon, choosing colors in certain spots like yellow in spot is happiness, visualized character and practicing science frog in playing graffiti, using bright colors in every font and adopt the scorpions way to survive to life in playing graffiti.

At the same above, playing graffiti doing by youth as graffitiers in Batang Anai has functions as sign expressions, an unique, creativity, coloring wall, happiness, learn other things out off graffiti, time management, nostalgia, relax after work and school, therapy, social, and freedom.

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