

Bathroom Graffiti At Humboldt State University:

A Content Analysis

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## Bathroom Graffiti At Humboldt State University: A Content Analysis.

The following study was conducted on the Humboldt State University (HSU) campus. A content analysis of bathroom graffiti was conducted to determine if there were any common themes that arose in the writing of bathroom graffiti. I set out with my research to answer the following research questions: Are there any common themes? Are there any common graffiti writing styles? Are there any common colors used in graffiti writing? Are there differences between the content and themes of graffiti writing between the men's, women's, and unisex bathrooms? If so, what are these differences? Does location of the bathrooms produce differences in the quantity of graffiti writing such as the floor levels of bathrooms, the frequency of bathroom use, and the location of authority figures such as professors, administrators, and police officers?

For bathroom graffiti to meet the definition of what I term as graffiti the images in the bathrooms must meet the following criteria: 1) The images must be human made such as handwriting, drawings, or carvings, and cannot be any image that was mass produced such as stickers, posted pictures from magazines, photographs, etc. 2) The images must be located inside the bathrooms. 3) The images cannot be produced by chalk on readily available chalkboards in the bathrooms for writing or drawing. 4) The images must be either temporary or permanent. A temporary image can be made by using washable markers, chalk, pencils, correction fluid, etc. Permanent images can be made using ink pens, permanent markers, spray paint, carvings, etc. 5) The images must be more than merely drawing a line on a surface. Any image that does not meet the above criteria is not deemed as graffiti and will not be used in analyzing the content of such images.

In conducting my research I was lucky to have my research coincide with an article on bathroom graffiti that was published in the Humboldt State University newspaper *The Lumberjack* entitled "Students Defend Bathroom Graffiti" reported by Tara Apperson (February 25, 2004) that appeared in the Features section on page 21. The following is a list of the graffiti writing that was reported in the section of the paper entitled "from the stall walls":

- Why do you have to erase our graffiti?
- **Budget cuts will affect us all**
- Who said blacks or whites are bad color doesn't matter quit perpetuating the problem
- **Bathrooms are cold so here we are crapping on each others hearts then kissing each others lips with breath so minty fresh to cover the smell of selfishness.**
- Don't breed it's better to bleed
- **Screw the free world! it doesn't exist, nor has it ever if we are willing to give it up for security Stand up for your rights!**
- Progress is A\* myth (\*drawn as the anarchy symbol)
- Go Bush
- **Stop Vandalism**
- All the liberal hippies in Arcata complain about what President Bush is wrong. The truth is you don't what the fuck you're talking about because all you are is a drain on society fucking free loading welfare recipients get a life hippies.

- **The sacred chao says mu**
- All roads lead to Rome the world is crumbling
- **Shut up take a shit and split**
- Slogans suck
- **If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down"** (the bold type was placed by the original texts emphasis).

Apperson's (2004) article gives an introduction to the diversity and commonalities of themes that bathroom graffiti displays on the HSU campus. I plan to further the exploration of these themes by doing a content analysis of the bathroom graffiti.

Apperson has tapped into an area of study that I think has been overlooked by the social science community, which is the actual content of the graffiti. I think the messages themselves are important in understanding why people graffiti. I think the common themes that arise in doing a content analysis will tell why people write graffiti.

For example if there was a common theme in my research that hypothetically speaking 90% of the graffiti writing was in protest to say the president it could be concluded that the reason why people do graffiti is because they are outraged by the president. The preceding example was only a hypothetical and not to be mistaken as a biased expectation on my part that this theme or political protest in the form of graffiti writing is assumed to be found when I conduct my research. Yet, my content analysis is following the thinking of John Klofas' (1985) research of graffiti inside a juvenile correctional facility. Klofas thought that the unobtrusive research he conducted would tell more about the thoughts and culture of the juveniles within the correctional facility than would surveys or interviews.

Research on graffiti writing is extensive in the literature. However, most research has been aimed at the reasons for why someone participates in graffiti writing (Norlander, Erixon, and Archer 2000; Nordmarker, Norlander, and Archer 2000; Ferrell 1995; Peteet 1996; Hagen, Ender, Tiemann, and Hagen Jr. 1999; Klingman and Shalev 2001; Lachman 1988) or how to eradicate this behavior by placing signs with altruistic messages of why one should not write graffiti in the bathrooms (Mueller, Moore, Doggett, and Tingstrom 2000; Watson 1996).

In the study conducted by Norlander et al. (2000) the researchers found that in an experimental setting such personality traits such as aggression, independence, and a willingness to take risks combined with childlike behavior and shyness may be associated with graffiti writing. They also found that there were no differences between gender and graffiti writing.

Nordmarker et al. (2000) found that in an experimental setting being under the influence of alcohol alone does not have an effect on one's tendency to participate in graffiti writing, but combining alcohol with frustration did have a positive correlation on whether one participated in writing graffiti. They also found that females participated in more graffiti writing than did men in each of their five study groups.

Peteet (1996) found in her study of *Graffiti of the Intifada* that the Palestinians used graffiti writing to express their frustration of Palestinian and Israel relations specifically the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Her research findings support the aggression/frustration correlation found in the Norlander et.al. (2000) experimental setting research findings. Klingman and Shalev (2001) studied the content of graffiti images produced after the assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel in 1995. Their

findings support both the Peteet (1996) and Norlander et al. (2000) research findings that frustration is a variable involved in the writing of graffiti and the act of graffiti writing is an outlet for those who participate in it to voice their frustrations. Frustration was a cause for why people participated in graffiti writing after a natural disaster in the Red River Valley area of the Great Plains in 1997. Residents of this area were hit with a flood that disrupted the lives of that area and graffiti writing was used to reaffirm the community ethos of that area.

Jeff Ferrell (1995) studied the youth subculture of graffiti artists and found that one reason graffiti writers do what they do is to resist the social, economic, and political authorities that try to control them. The graffiti subculture also provides alternatives for the social, economic, and cultural arrangements they find themselves living in.

This research project aims to analyze the content of graffiti writing inside bathrooms where there is little social control because the area is a semi-public area. I term this area as semi-public because there is an expectation of some privacy inside the bathrooms. This can be tested by simply entering a bathroom and observing how people in the bathroom maintain a posture of privacy. An example of this posture of privacy is how people do not observe as much of the behaviors of others as they may do when they are outside the bathroom. The posture of privacy is a factor that I propose effects the lack of social control similar to the bystander effect that Peggy Checkroun and Markus Brauer (2002) found occurred in their research regarding bystanders who witnessed graffiti writing when other bystanders were present. Further research should be conducted to see if the posture of privacy that exists in public bathrooms deters people from trying to exert

social control on a variety of deviant behaviors including but not limited to graffiti writing.

## **METHODS SECTION**

The following research project was conducted during a three-week span on the Humboldt State University Campus. Along with the aid of two female research assistants, I gathered photographic images and reproduced on paper the graffiti writing inside each bathroom on the HSU campus, excluding the residence halls. I had to employ the assistance of females in gathering the graffiti writing inside the women's bathrooms since I am unable to access these bathrooms.

The theory I employed in my research was the grounded theory method, which involves many steps in the generation of a theory about a social phenomenon. Some of the steps include data collection, open categorizing, memo writing, a core category determination process, going back and open categorizing again, going through the steps again if needed, and writing up a theory. Grounded theory provides an explanatory model of human behavior that arises directly from the gathering of empirical data (Glaser and Strauss 1968).

I chose to do a content analysis of each bathroom on the HSU campus so that I could generalize my research findings to the campus as a whole. The sample size was a whole population sample. The buildings I researched were only the buildings that had classes taught in them and I included the campus library. I chose to exclude the residential halls and the small buildings that house specific services. This was decided based on my wanting to research high traffic areas that all students may frequent. If I were to include the residential halls and the small houses then this would not give an

overall generalization of the common themes of graffiti on the HSU campus because only certain sub-populations of the campus population frequent these buildings. After the gathering of the graffiti to be used in the content analysis I coded the images by location and gender. Following the initial coding I inspected the images for common themes that I could code for to arrive at a more detailed analysis of the content.

As mentioned in the introduction for graffiti writing to meet the definition of what I term as graffiti writing the images in the bathrooms must meet the following criteria: 1) The images must be human made such as handwriting, drawings, or carvings, and cannot be any image that was mass produced such as stickers, posted pictures from magazines, photographs, etc. 2) the image must be located inside the bathrooms. 3) The images cannot be produced by chalk on readily available chalkboards in the bathrooms for writing or drawing. 4) The images must be either temporary or permanent. A temporary image would be made by using washable markers, chalk, pencils, correction fluid, etc. Permanent images would be made using ink pens, permanent markers, spray paint, carvings, etc. 5) The images must be more than merely drawing a line on a surface. Any image that does not meet the above criteria was not deemed as graffiti and was not used in analyzing the content of bathroom graffiti.

Graffiti writing itself is a norm-violation, but one may not immediately think of the act of conducting a content analysis of bathroom graffiti is in itself also a norm-violation. However, this became apparent during the process of gathering data. The initial act of walking into a campus bathroom with a camera made me aware of three responses by those individuals in the bathroom. One response can be characterized as a look of “what is this guy doing in a men’s restroom with a camera”. This reaction was often

followed by a look of distrust and the noticing male walking into a stall rather than use a urinal or if he was at a urinal he may wait until I went into a stall before he used the urinal. In one case the noticing male walked out of the bathroom. A second reaction was one of indifference, since some of the males in the bathroom could obviously care less that someone was in the restroom with a camera. The third reaction was a reaction of noticing that I was taking pictures of the bathroom graffiti and recording the graffiti on a sheet of paper and the noticing male would then divert his attention to something else. At no time while someone was in the open area of the bathroom while I was in the same area did I take any photographs. I maintained the expectation of privacy within a semi-public space when someone uses a public bathroom.

My reaction to conducting this type of research was mixed. At times I found myself reacting to other people's reactions of feeling uncomfortable at having me in the bathroom with a camera by feeling as if I was doing something wrong even though I knew that I was conducting an academic study of graffiti inside bathrooms. In some bathrooms such as the first floor men's room in the library, I spent over an hour inside one stall recording data and taking photos. I could not see other people's reactions to the camera flashes and my long duration in one stall, but I still felt embarrassed, deviant, and deterred in conducting my research in many bathrooms in a day. I had to spread my data gathering out over many days since I would spend on average one to two hours at length in each bathroom that contained many graffiti images. I also had to give myself a break from feeling deviant. I found this method of gathering data by taking photographs to require a researcher to ignore the natural feelings of embarrassment caused by carrying a camera and spending one to two hours in a single bathroom and replace them by

reminding myself that I was conducting valid academic research. I also always expected to be confronted by a person using a bathroom or by a campus police officer responding to a complaint about my being in a restroom taking photographs. However, neither of these two scenarios ever materialized. It should also be noted that the two female research assistants did not notice any reactions in gathering data in the women's bathrooms as I had noticed in the men's bathrooms.

While the above-mentioned costs of conducting a content analysis of bathroom graffiti did exist, I cannot think of a more effective way in recording the data. At the very least, the intrusive aspect of gathering data via writing down images or using a code sheet, one will still be violating norms that are expected inside a bathroom. Inside a men's bathroom males are expected to use the restroom with little eye contact or eye movement around the restroom. Talking to someone while standing next to them at a urinal is a norm-violation, looking at someone while they are using a urinal is a norm-violation, looking at someone in a mirror while they wash their hands is a norm violation, talking to someone while they are in a stall is a norm violation. While I do not violate the expected norms of using a restroom, I had no choice to violate the expected norm of privacy within the bathroom simply by having a camera on me. Whether I used the camera or not while someone was using a urinal does not matter since having a camera in a bathroom while standing around waiting for people to leave evidently is.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

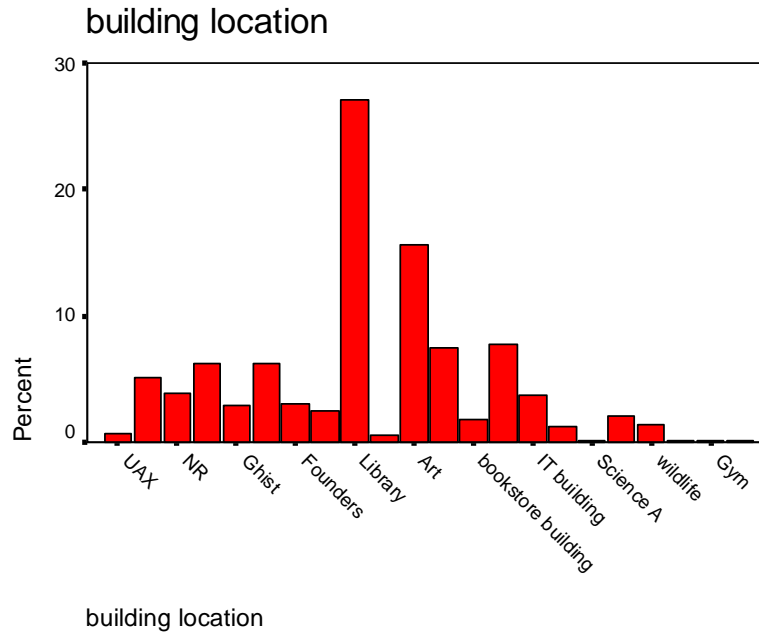
Following an initial analysis of the data gathered on the HSU campus that was entered into SPSS I found that the majority of graffiti was done by men. The men's bathrooms consisted of 80.3% of the total number of graffiti images in HSU bathrooms.

The women's bathrooms consisted of 19% of the total number of graffiti images at HSU, while only 0.7% of the graffiti images were found in the unisex bathrooms. The low percentage of unisex bathrooms can be explained by their limited number on campus.

## Buildings

A comparison of the buildings where classes are taught yielded the following results reported in descending order from the highest frequency to the least frequent of graffiti images found in a building's bathrooms. The library's bathrooms made up 27.1% of the overall number of graffiti images located on the campus compared to 15.6% for the Art building, Van Mader Hall 7.8%, Music 7.4%, Forestry 6.2%, Siemens Hall 6.2%, Harry Griffith Hall 5.1%, Natural resources 3.9%, Industrial Technology 3.7%, Founders Hall 3%, Ghist hall 2.8%, Nelson Hall 2.5%, Science C 2.1%, Bookstore building 1.8%, Wildlife 1.4%, Science B 1.2%, University Annex 0.7%, Student Business Services 0.5%, the Depot 0.2%, Science A 0.2%, The Gym 0.2%, and the Theater Arts building 0.2%.

building location	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
UAX	4	.7	.7	.7
HGH	29	5.1	5.1	5.9
NR	22	3.9	3.9	9.8
Forestry	35	6.2	6.2	16.0
Ghist	16	2.8	2.8	18.8
Siemens	35	6.2	6.2	25.0
Founders	17	3.0	3.0	28.0
Nelson Hall	14	2.5	2.5	30.5
Library	153	27.1	27.1	57.6
SBS	3	.5	.5	58.2
Art	88	15.6	15.6	73.8
Music	42	7.4	7.4	81.2
bookstore building	10	1.8	1.8	83.0
VMH	44	7.8	7.8	90.8
IT building	21	3.7	3.7	94.5
Science B	7	1.2	1.2	95.7
Science A	1	.2	.2	95.9
Science C	12	2.1	2.1	98.0
wildlife	8	1.4	1.4	99.5
depot	1	.2	.2	99.6
Gym	1	.2	.2	99.8
Theater arts	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	564	100.0	100.0	



My research answered my question of whether the floor level a bathroom was located on had a correlation with the number of graffiti images found in a bathroom. An overall comparison of the floor levels of the bathroom provided the following results. Bathrooms on the first floor consisted of 57.6% of the total images found in all bathrooms followed respectively by, second floor bathrooms with 30.3%, third floor bathrooms with 11%, and fourth floor bathrooms with 1.1% of all images found in the bathrooms on HSU. It should be noted that not all of the buildings analyzed had third or fourth floors, however, those buildings with third and/or fourth floors had significantly less graffiti in their bathrooms.

**floor bathroom is located on \* sex of bathroom**

			sex of bathroom			Total
			men's	women's	unisex	
floor bathroom is located on	first floor	Count	264	57	4	325
		% within sex of bathroom	58.3%	53.3%	100.0%	57.6%
		% of Total	46.8%	10.1%	.7%	57.6%
	second floor	Count	142	29	0	171
		% within sex of bathroom	31.3%	27.1%	.0%	30.3%
		% of Total	25.2%	5.1%	.0%	30.3%
	third floor	Count	47	15	0	62
		% within sex of bathroom	10.4%	14.0%	.0%	11.0%
		% of Total	8.3%	2.7%	.0%	11.0%
	fourth floor	Count	0	6	0	6
		% within sex of bathroom	.0%	5.6%	.0%	1.1%
		% of Total	.0%	1.1%	.0%	1.1%
Total	Count	453	107	4	564	
	% within sex of bathroom	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	80.3%	19.0%	.7%	100.0%	

I hypothesize that most first floor bathrooms will be more heavily used by students who are entering a building. This is easily understandable that a student would use the most convenient and nearest bathroom when he or she has to use a bathroom. Whether or not the graffiti writer's have analyzed the frequency of use of the first floor bathrooms in their decision to post their messages in a place that will have a higher circulation of their messages to potential readers is unknown. To discover if this is so would require gaining access to the graffiti writer's identification and interviewing them to find out they purposely decide upon first floor bathrooms for this purpose. However, I would hypothesize that graffiti writer's do not consciously take this into consideration, but they themselves frequent these bathrooms the same as non-graffiti writing students

for the same reasons of convenience and closest proximity to the entrance of the building when they have to use a bathroom.

## Markings

Overall, the type of instruments used in doing graffiti yielded the following results with ink pens 69.9%, carving/scratched 18.1%, permanent marker 7.8%, pencil 3.5%, and correction fluid and paint combined totaled .7% being used. These findings are to be assumed as representative of what writing/drawing utensils are available to those who frequent the restrooms. It should be noted that of the images that consisted of the use of paint as a medium these images were found in the art building where paint is readily available and used. The low percentage of images made by the use of pencil may perhaps be explained by the lack of permanence pencil provides as a writing utensil. This lack of permanence may also have affected the findings since the custodial staff may have more easily erased these images with cleaning products. However, my theory for why ink pens are used most is based on the availability and frequency that students carry an ink pen with them. There is a greater chance that a student will be carrying this type of permanent marking instrument as opposed to a permanent marker. An ink pen is more permanent than a pencil so it has a greater chance of not being removed by the custodial staff.

		writing instrument used			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ink pen	394	69.9	69.9	69.9
	pencil	20	3.5	3.5	73.4
	permanent marker	44	7.8	7.8	81.2
	white-out	3	.5	.5	81.7
	paint	1	.2	.2	81.9
	carving/etched	102	18.1	18.1	100.0
	Total	564	100.0	100.0	

Whether or not graffiti writers take the permanence of their writing implement into consideration can only be definitively proven by acquiring the identities of the graffiti writers and asking them if they take this into consideration. Without the ability to do this, based on my research findings I think graffiti writers do consider the temporary/permanence of their messages dependent upon the importance of the message to themselves. A graffiti image such as the grout theme messages written on the grout of the tile are not very serious messages. These messages are often a play on the word grout and how that word can be substituted for other words in a popularly known statement such as “ the grout lebowski; grout expectations, oscar the grout; Wayne Groutski; etc.” These messages were mostly written with pencil. I propose two reasons for the use of pencil in writing grout messages. 1) The messages are not very personal to the writer. 2) The messages are less likely of being spotted by the custodial staff and removed. These two variables would appear to be the basis for the use of pencil in grout writing as opposed to pencil being used in writing on stall walls, etc. My findings are the basis of my second hypothesis that the level of importance the message has to the author and the possibility of the message being removed by the custodial staff is a determining factor of whether the graffiti writer chooses to use a temporary or permanent writing instrument in posting his/her graffiti images.

### **Themes**

There were common themes among the graffiti images that were gathered. The common themes were coded as political, pop-cultural, anger/hate, anatomy/bodily

functions, signatures of the graffiti writer, grout themes such as “the grout escape” which were written on the grout in between tiles, religious, drug references, love, and sexual.

Without analyzing for the effects of gender upon graffiti themes the research has provided the following results in descending order from most frequent to least frequent theme: Political messages comprised 17.9%, followed by anger/hate with 15.9%, grout themes 12.5%, signature’s 11.1%, sexual themes 10.9%, pop-culture themes 10.1%, drug themes 6.3%, anatomy/bodily function themes 5.8%, love themes 5.4%, religious themes 3.6%, and music themes were the least frequent at 0.4% of all graffiti images gathered.

**general theme of message**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	pop-culture	50	8.9	10.1	10.1
	political	89	15.8	17.9	28.0
	music theme	2	.4	.4	28.4
	anger/hate	79	14.0	15.9	44.4
	anatomy/bodily function	29	5.1	5.8	50.2
	signature	55	9.8	11.1	61.3
	grout theme	62	11.0	12.5	73.8
	religious	18	3.2	3.6	77.4
	drugs	31	5.5	6.3	83.7
	love	27	4.8	5.4	89.1
	sexual	54	9.6	10.9	100.0
	Total	496	87.9	100.0	
	Missing	Don't know	68	12.1	
Total		564	100.0		

### Gender Differences

Gender differences were found among the graffiti images gathered. The main difference among gender or sex of the bathroom was that the men’s bathrooms contained a total of 453 images or 80.3%, while women’s bathrooms contained 107 images or 19%,

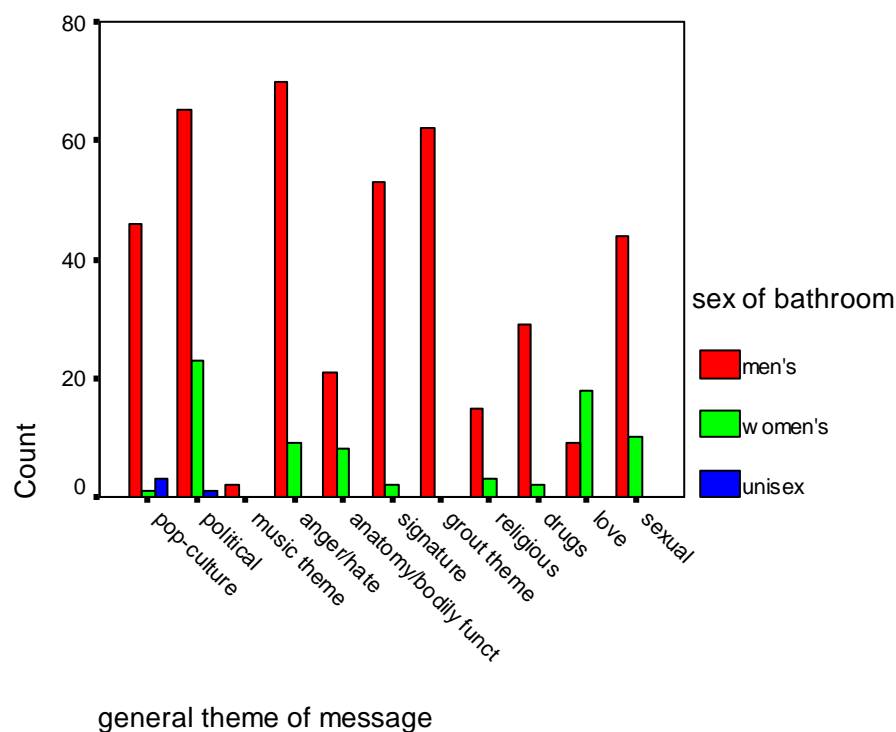
unisex bathrooms contained only 0.7% of the total graffiti images gathered. The men at HSU on average make more graffiti than women in the bathrooms on campus.

### **Men's Bathrooms**

In descending order from the most frequent type of graffiti themes to the least frequent themes found in the men's bathrooms yielded the following results from this study. The most frequent theme found in the men's bathrooms was anger/hate at 16.8%, followed by political at 15.6%, grout theme 14.9%, signature 12.7%, pop-culture 11.1%, sexual 10.6%, drugs 7%, anatomy/bodily function 5%, religious 3.6%, love 2.2%, and the least frequent theme was music constituting only 0.5% of all graffiti images analyzed.

### **Women's Bathrooms**

Women's restrooms yielded the following results with regard to the most frequent to least frequent themes found in all of the women's bathrooms analyzed. The most frequent theme found in the women's bathrooms was political consisting of 30.3%, followed by love 23.7%, sexual 13.2%, anger/hate 11.8%, anatomy/bodily functions 10.5%, religious 3.9%, signatures 2.6%, drugs 2.6%, pop-culture 1.3%, while music and grout themes were not found constituting 0% for both themes.



			sex of bathroom			Total
			men's	women's	unisex	
general theme of message	pop-culture	Count	46	1	3	50
		% within sex of bathroom	11.1%	1.3%	75.0%	10.1%
		% of Total	9.3%	.2%	.6%	10.1%
	political	Count	65	23	1	89
		% within sex of bathroom	15.6%	30.3%	25.0%	17.9%
		% of Total	13.1%	4.6%	.2%	17.9%
	music theme	Count	2	0	0	2
		% within sex of bathroom	.5%	.0%	.0%	.4%
		% of Total	.4%	.0%	.0%	.4%
	anger/hate	Count	70	9	0	79
		% within sex of bathroom	16.8%	11.8%	.0%	15.9%
		% of Total	14.1%	1.8%	.0%	15.9%
anatomy/bodily function	Count	21	8	0	29	
	% within sex of bathroom	5.0%	10.5%	.0%	5.8%	
	% of Total	4.2%	1.6%	.0%	5.8%	
signature	Count	53	2	0	55	
	% within sex of bathroom	12.7%	2.6%	.0%	11.1%	
	% of Total	10.7%	.4%	.0%	11.1%	

grout theme	Count	62	0	0	62
	% within sex of bathroom	14.9%	.0%	.0%	12.5%
	% of Total	12.5%	.0%	.0%	12.5%
religious	Count	15	3	0	18
	% within sex of bathroom	3.6%	3.9%	.0%	3.6%
	% of Total	3.0%	.6%	.0%	3.6%
drugs	Count	29	2	0	31
	% within sex of bathroom	7.0%	2.6%	.0%	6.3%
	% of Total	5.8%	.4%	.0%	6.3%
love	Count	9	18	0	27
	% within sex of bathroom	2.2%	23.7%	.0%	5.4%
	% of Total	1.8%	3.6%	.0%	5.4%
sexual	Count	44	10	0	54
	% within sex of bathroom	10.6%	13.2%	.0%	10.9%
	% of Total	8.9%	2.0%	.0%	10.9%
Total	Count	416	76	4	496
	% within sex of bathroom	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	83.9%	15.3%	.8%	100.0%

### Comparison of Men's and Women's Bathrooms

Eighty-eight point six percent of all anger/hate messages were found in the men's bathrooms compared to 11.4% in the women's bathrooms with these types of messages representing 16.4% of all of the messages found in the men's bathrooms while the same messages constituted only 11.8% of the total of all messages found in the women's bathrooms. This was the highest percentage and most frequent type of message found in men's bathrooms. The more frequent occurrence of finding anger/hate messages in the men's room was what I had hypothesized I would find. Anger/hate supports the findings of Norlander et al's. (2000) research that found that aggression and hostility are variables that are correlated to whether or not a person partakes in graffiti writing. I propose that aggression and hostility are present in the writing of anger/hate theme graffiti. My

findings would suggest that men at HSU who write graffiti are more aggressive and hostile than women since they produce more anger/hate themes in graffiti writing.

The predominant messages in the women's bathrooms were of a political nature constituting 30.3% of all images found in women's bathrooms. Political messages were the second most common type of message found in the men's bathrooms at 15.6% of the total of messages found in their bathrooms. Messages of love were the second most common type of message in the women's bathrooms at 23.7% of their total compared to men's messages of love constituting only 2.2% of their total. Women also had a slightly higher percentage of their total images being made up of a sexual theme with 13.2% compared to men's 10.6% of their total. Drug themes were nearly three times more likely to be found in men's bathrooms than in women's bathrooms. Signatures were six times more likely to be found in men's bathrooms than in women's bathrooms. Anatomy/bodily function themes were twice as likely to be found in women's bathrooms as men's and they tended to be about the female menstruation cycle.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY**

Overall men's bathrooms contained a much higher frequency of graffiti images than women's bathrooms. First floor bathrooms contained much higher frequencies of graffiti images than second, third, or fourth floor bathrooms. The most frequent theme found in men's bathrooms was an anger/hate theme, while the most common theme found in the women's bathrooms was political. I propose that the men at HSU who write graffiti in the bathrooms are more hostile and aggressive than the women at HSU who write graffiti in bathrooms. My study has taken the findings of Norlander et al's (2000)

artificial setting of a study group and applied it to the natural settings of real public bathrooms on a university campus. My findings coincide with the Norlander study that found aggression and hostility as correlations for graffiti writing. The library's first floor bathrooms had the most graffiti of any building on the HSU campus.

A limitation to my research project was that the data gathering was only three weeks long. Three weeks is too short of an amount of time to derive a valid theory as to why certain themes are found in bathrooms as opposed to others. In order to answer the question of why a person chooses to write a certain theme in graffiti writing in bathrooms I think at the minimum an entire academic calendar year should be used to gather data. I cannot be sure if the three weeks I gathered data is a sufficient amount of time to generalize the results of my findings to the content of bathroom graffiti at HSU. I think my research is valuable as a starting point from which to further analyze the content of bathroom graffiti at HSU.

## References

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