The Semiotics of Graffiti

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IOSR Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences Submission

Abstract

The Semiotics of Graffiti examines the history, purpose, and usage of Graffiti. This artform have been used as a method of expression in various cultures worldwide. A rhetorical vision of the ideological criticism was applied to investigate this artifact's sole meaning and principles. The semiotics theory, along with the methodologies of semantic, syntactic, and pigment, provides insight of this popular artform's characteristics. A literature review of twelve references along with a content analysis of over 27 sources furnished valuable information to execute this investigation. An explanation of the underlying meaning and purpose of the acronyms: FTP, ACAB, and BLM was supplied. This article also investigates the changes in Graffiti following the death of George Perry Floyd, Jr during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic in the U.S. The Semiotics of Graffiti illustrates a useful account of protests, Graffiti, and law enforcement for a basic understanding of their primary purposes in society.
Keywords: graffiti, George Floyd, Jr., semiotics, ideological criticism, rhetorical vision,

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I.   Introduction

Graffiti (grəˈfēdē), is an Italian word meaning "scrabbles on a public wall" in its plural form, but pronounced Graffio when used singularly. The word *Graffiti* was rooted from the greek term "graphein", which is intended to communicate to write, draw, or scratch something for perception. Ong & Hartley (2013) explained, oral art is influenced by the rhetorical concept of verbal reference and visualizing images to convey repetitive vibrations through the noetic processes of grapholects. This artistic expression emerged from oral societies before literacy, when mankind drew symbols, signs, and images of objects to communicate with one another.

Ancient European and Roman civilizations drew paintings of animals and anthropomorphic figures on cave walls to express themselves. These cultures communicated during political protests by writing poems on the walls for everyone to perceive their views on local governance. Blazeski (2017) explained, "*Cueva de las Manos*" (The Cave of Hands), located in Santa Cruz, Argentina, offers one of the first fascinating ancient graffiti. The painting dates from 13,000 to 9,000 B.C.E." On the other hand, provident graffiti was found in the Pompeii ruins of Italy in 1851 (Canvasdesign, 2019). Ashes were the remains of the city of Pompeii due to the Mount Vesuvius volcano eruption in 79 C.E. Graffiti eventually migrated to France, with its presence in the realms of their revolutionary wars, during the 18th and 19th centuries. This art form became noticeable when the World Wars commenced, because the French left rebellious art for the survivors of their civil wars to review. Krishnakumar (2020) unraveled that, "people inscribed their names, the names of battles, revengeful sentences on war-torn buildings. A classic example of this is the Reichstag, a monument of Soviet scribbles after their staggering victory over the Nazis."

Modern graffiti made its way to Philadelphia's Youth Development Center (YDC) through a 12-year-old troublemaker, named Darryl "Cornbread" McCray, in 1965. YDC cooks nick-named McCray, Cornbread due to his annoying requests of, cornbread that his grandmother always prepared for him. Darryl loved the new name, Cornbread, and used small cap spray paint to write his nickname to share with other boys. He used graffiti to avoid drugs and violence which was exclusively for gangs in his community. Colors (2018) reported, "Cornbread spent day and night hunting for fresh spots, scrawling his newly-acquired moniker on nearly every surface in the YDC. He tagged the visitor hall, chow hall, church, and bathrooms, writing "Cornbread" so obsessively that social workers thought he might be suffering from a mental disorder." As he became older, Cornbread eventually became popular and began tagging the streets of Philadelphia with friends and other Graffiti Artists. In a parallel sequence, there were crews of Graffiti Artists in New York City (NYC) that tagged throughout the city. A self-described bored kid with a lot of time on his hands used graffiti to escape the downtimes of life. Canvasdesign (2019) rationalized, "His name or tag as they are called is short for Demetaki,

the Greek alternative for his real name Demetrius. The number 183 came from his address on 183rd Street in Washington Heights. TAKI 183 started a trend with Graffiti Artists to compete to have their names on walls and buildings around New York City." Demetaki was employed as a bike messenger that serviced high-end neighborhoods of Manhattan's Upper Eastside, which influenced Taki 183's conquest to conquer the city by tagging every pole, lamppost, hydrant, and any other place that his name can be seen within a 40-block radius. His popularity led to a New York Times interview that inspired other Graffiti Artists across NYC to become famous through graffiti. A rhetorical analysis will examine the art style of graffiti along with the changes occurred following the death of George Perry Floyd, Junior. *The Semiotics of Graffiti* will explore graffiti, as well as, the ACAB, FTP, and BLM acronyms to understand its history, usage, and purpose.

Figure 1: *Police Officers in riot gear on Bedford Avenue. Adapted from Symbol of N.Y.C. unrest: A burning police car, by Paybarah, A., & Stewart, N., May 2020 (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/nyregion/police-cars-nyc-protests.html)*

Peter Vallone, Sr., a NYC Councilor from the early 1970s until 2001, declared graffiti to be illegal because the artform defaced the city. Graffiti was considered vandalism, if it was conducted on someone else's property without permission, but art when permission was given. Prior to the emergence of the first war on graffiti in the 1970s, some NYC galleries purchased graffiti before, it was reframed as vandalism to the city. The history of graffiti (n.d.) outlined, "In the early days, the 'taggers' were part of street gangs who were concerned with marking their territory. They worked in groups called 'crews', and called what they did 'writing' – the term 'graffiti' was first used by *The New York Times* and the novelist Norman Mailer." This artform reached NYC in 1968, after its advent in Philadelphia in 1965; as artists wrote their "tags" all over the city or "masterpieces" on subway trains, building roofs, and other canvases to be noticed. According to Urbanario (2020), Graffiti was linked to the hip-hop culture in 1980, through the youth of the most neglected neighborhoods of NYC that rapped and breakdanced for recreation. These elements fabricated the hip-hop culture where styles were borrowed from each artform to reach commercial success.

The NYC Mayors John Lindsay and Edward Koch declared graffiti as an "urban problem" needed to be cracked down on with various methods to clean it up. Graffiti Artists used buses and trains as "international routes" to build their reputations and become known within the city. The city began to whitewash trains with security in hotspots known for graffiti, writers then created, and shared maps of deadlock areas to avoid with bolt-holes for artwork. These new areas enabled writers to become creative, as their writing intensified with stylistic changes according to the canvassing areas. Colors (2018) profound, "Writers began experimenting with new lettering styles and flourishes, embellishing their tags with stars, flowers, crowns, and eyeballs, simple tags evolving into what *Raw Vision*'s John Maizels called 'hieroglyphical calligraphic abstraction.'" This led to the construction of masterpieces, which use large caps, different color spray paints, and magic markers to be conducted in the middle of the night in very dark areas. These methodologies of graffiti evolved into today's artistic style of expression by many modern artists worldwide. As the world begun to brace themselves from the second outbreak of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) plague, COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), a mobile video clip surfaced on Memorial Day 2020 of a police incident with an unarmed man in their

custody. The video sparked outrage as the work-week progress along with the realization of how that detainee died. George Floyd. Jr. was apprehended and accused of using a counterfeit $20 bill in a local Minneapolis, MN grocery store to purchase a pack of cigarettes. This incident erupted protests against police brutality and racial profiling; as people express themselves with songs, signs, images, riots, and most importantly, Graffiti. This study analyzes the history of graffiti, in addition to, the changes proceeding the murder of George Floyd, Jr. using a semiotics analysis.

Figure 2: A Selfie token by George Perry Floyd Junior. Adapted from The George Floyd Memorial Foundation, Inc., November 2020
(https://m.facebook.com/gfmfoundation/photos/a.138986014577732/156365662839767/?type=3). Copyright 2020

II.   Literature Review

Anselmino (2018) discussed the translation of the historical semio-anthropological theory of mediatization to a modern scientific theory of semiology. This article examines the studies of the late Eliseo Veron, who connected semiotics with communication studies, through research of the theory of mediatization. The interpretative approach was taken upon the mediatization theory for a greater understanding by Latin American scholars. Anselmino (2018) unfold, "Veron's theoretical development has proved to be not only foundational but also prospective, with a notable heuristic value for the study of the complex phenomena of meaning production, such as those that take place in the context of the media." (p. 230) Veron provided explanations of the various mediatizations to understand the media phenomena's historical sequence. This interpretative approach implied the emergence of semiosis, as it evolved from a system of symbolic meaning into a language. This will provide insight into graffiti based on symbols or a unique style of writing that may interpret another language. Similar to this study, the plan is to connect the semiotics of Graffiti Artists with the message being conveyed to viewers through their artwork. The history of graffiti will provide knowledge and background of this artform. A scholarly interpretation will also give an understanding of, why messages are drawn in such manner by artists.

Semiotic inquiry and distributed significations (2017) is a study that introduces a device, the metabolism design, that enables participants to model their performance. The metabolisme is "a device that aims to encompass all these participants by modeling their relations in the form of dynamic loops." (p. 148) The interactive communication model links actors and their common projects, which condenses the participants by distributing their attributes into five hubs through logic. Researchers applied the stakeholder theory, actor-network theory, cognitive theory, and theory of signs to evaluate this body research device. Darras (2017) asserted, "The semiotic study itself constitutes a framework of experience which is not that of everyday life. It is determined by the academic destination of the study or by its diagnostic mission." (p. 153) The stakeholder theory is a systemic approach that interconnects an organization and consumers, whereas the actor-network theory provided insight into one's social instincts in the natural world. The cognitive theory is a mental approach to evaluating one's reactions, while the theory of signs analyzes the communicative efforts of interpreting symbols. Semioticians designed the metabolisme to analyze and determine one's habits, along with forecasting their new belief-habits and practical habit-taking impulse; through Peirce's Semiotic Theory to provide a framework of habits. Darras (2017) elucidated some artists tend to design signs of characters as a sign of reference instead of lettering. In the world of graffiti, the artists write their names and messages consistently to convey a message to the masses. However, there are various styles of graffiti applied through ink, writing

styles, messages, names, signs, and symbols. A real Graffiti Artist could convey messages using any qualities of ink, writing styles, messages, names, signs, and symbols to make their artwork unique enough for one's perception of the content transmitted.

The semiotics of design in media visualization (2017) is a study of general patterns reconstructuring trends of archeological culture, through computational and visual methods. Dondero (2017) explained, "The purpose of our paper is to discern in what ways the semiotic methods of the Post-Greimasian French structuralist and the American Piercian traditions can enrich the study of contemporary methods of computational analysis of culture" (p. 208). This article also probed the analytical visualizations of archived images in the field of cultural analytics through Russian Art and computer science. A semiotic approach uncovered the visualization with a scientific purpose to review images from the past and current culture. A media visualization cultural methodology to study images' visual qualities independently of verbal language, through an alternative approach of topologic, eidetic, and chromatic categorical deceptors, of visual language. Computer graphics were used, as a semiotic strategy to translate numerical or language data into arbitrarily visualization reassembling images, through the semiotic theories of *rhetoric as mereology* and *the strategies of observation*. Dondero (2017) simplified, "In mereological terms, this kind of visualization could be described as a sequencing of images that respects the wholeness of every image included in the corpus." (p. 211) Observational strategies comprising *cumulating*, *particularizing*, *encompassing,* and *electing* methods were employed to find factual information of the observed subjects. These strategies assisted in gathering global and local focal points, as the theory of mereology characterized images or diagrams for visualization. The cultural aspects of graffiti derived from the combination of art, and neighborhood influence. Artists have the ability to use a steel or robotic theme when expressing themselves with graphic machinery artwork. These unique imagines convey messages to others through this art style according to the environment canvased.

Semiotics and Persuasion in Marketing Communication (2014) probes the role of semiotics as a tool in exceeding goals within consumer advertising, as well as, all aspects of marketing. This article investigates the practices of semiotics in advertising and marketing, as a methodology of persuasion. Semiotics is the study of signs applied by a *signifier* with the use of cultural symbols to communicate a *signified* message to another individual or audience. Advertisers use semiotics as a form of persuasion to guide and change the perception of a product or service to consumers. It can also be very manipulative as subliminal messages are embedded within its content. Epure, Eisenstat, & Dinu (2014) provides an example by examining the Fulga brand, which has quite a few semiotic messages within its product for the Romanian society. The name Fulga is silly but innocent to attract the likes of children indicating a lifetime of friendship to grow together. The brand image signifies clouds in a field of flowers with a cow as the brand character, which some mothers found offensive to its expression in the Romanian language. Patterns and subliminal messages are used to persuade consumers without notice, while *self-persuasion* is "a well-informed choice that best suits our individual tastes, desires etc." (p. 597) Epure, Eisenstat, & Dinu (2014) found semiotics as a powerful procedure in the consumer advertising and marketing field used to persuade individuals, through various types of social orders. This article explains how some Graffiti Artists use their talent as a *signifier* to market and communicate a style to others. The Graffiti Artists' name, logo, symbol, and staple are *signified* art styles known, along with their purpose of using this artform.

A wide variety of communication systems were reviewed to research emerging themes developed by experimental semioticians implementing linguistics of experimental paradigms. *Experimental Semiotics* (2012) "investigate human language in very general terms, distinguishing its core mechanisms from the idiosyncrasies of any specific communication system." (p. 478) The use of linguistics was applied collectively, as speech assumptions among human communication systems, to understand language with respect to other common communication systems in a comparative fashion. Experimental semiotics were developed for students of sign language to assist the expansion of sign language for eager students attempting to improve their speech communication. Experimental paradigms were developed to assist these students with their natural language through repetitive stimuli like music, concept identification, proscriptions of letters, and numbers. Experimental semioticians designed communication systems with two important linguistic properties, *combinatoriality,* and *compositionality*, defining features of human natural language. Combinatoriality exhibits a considerable degree of measured "systems by counting the number of times basic forms recurred across the signs of each system." (p.481) Compositionality consists of semantics from their natural language developed through graphical signs representing concepts of iconic relations. This study addressed different populations and methodological armories of sign language students, using technology advances in attempts to assist their evolution in learning natural speech languages. Moreover, Graffiti Artists are street semioticians that tend to use experimental paradigms when conveying messages. They use the feedback and reaction of those who perceive their content through *combinatoriality* and *compositionality* responses.

Huang (2012) probes the meaning behind a Chinese national publicity film using the DIMT Model of semiotics, which assisted in analyzing the different symbols and how they represent China to foreigners. This article investigates the relationship between soft power and the national image by applying the semiotic theory,

as symbols are used to convey messages. The publicity film is used to promote China along with its political ideology and modern thoughts to share the Chinese tradition with its universal values. *A Semiotic Analysis of China National Publicity Film* (2012) "focuses on how linguistic signs and images represent the meanings of China's national image, and whether the meanings effectively express universal values." (p. 57) DIMT is the acronym for "Discourse", "Image", "Meaning" and "Tao" which is a model derived from the semiotic theory to analyze symbols. This acronym also consists of four elements used to portray China, its people, culture and natural landscapes. A semiotics analysis was conducted to decode the interpretation of images and linguistics with the DIMT model to represent China's national image to the world. The 30-second clip of "Peace and Development" illustrates 38 facial expressions and gestures, providing an image of traditional Chinese values, of peace and prudence. These figures were from various cultural backgrounds of China exhibiting the universal value of peace and development from an elitist-oriented perspective. On the other hand, an 18-minute segment gave viewers content of the Chinese national characteristics with the influence of modern Western culture to share China's history, state of affairs, and future goals. This segment also clarifies their political administration's viewpoint along with linguistic signs and images of traditional Chinese values, to the democratic Western world. Similar to analyzing China's national publicity film, the DIMT model will assist in interpreting graffiti. The *Discourse* of its linguistic signs will provide a typical *Image* of the artist's underlying *Meaning* from the work in *Tao* expressed universally, for everyone's perception.

Figure 3: *FTP Acronym tagged on a postal box outside the Flatbush Station Post Office (11226). Captured on September 13, 2020*

Social Exclusion and Caste Hegemony (2017) "adopts the viewpoint that no society is a symmetric and justifiable one." (p. 130) It provides insight into the social classification of India's Hundi society, to assist in the understanding of Dalits, through semiotic conditions of the social exclusion policy and caste hierarchy. This article also investigates the caste leadership perspectives of semiotics throughout their "socio-cultural conditions of social exclusion and caste hegemony, specifically in Karnataka." (p. 129) Caste is a predominant subculture in India, where socio-political discrimination was applied to prevent the social hierarchy of the Dalits, by signifying a social indication of a lower classification in their society. They were identified as less privileged with a lack of social recognition in downtrodden communities within the Hindu culture. Unfortunately, the Dalits are legally downplayed due to the underlying concepts expressed in the Indian Constitution to provide dominance and hegemony. These practices and power relations are authorized to regulate and control the evolution of the Dalits and other oppressed castes of the Hindu culture. Dalits are a cultural group that is ethnically banned within their homeland. They are discriminated against through visual practices with non-visual forms of communication. Mallikarjun (2017) pointed out, "Historians and linguists tell us that the word 'Dalit' is derived from Sanskirt root form 'dal' which means split, crack, break, etc. When used as an objective, it means split, broken, burst, crushed, and so on." (p. 134) The Dalits in India were treated similar to the Negros in the United States of America (U.S.) during the Jim Crow Era, which is sad that human beings would treat

each other in such a manner. This study investigates the discrimination of a sub-Hindu culture, some Graffiti Artists use their talents to express maltreatment to overcome oppressors. It is a form of optimism used to influence others to live a better life than their current situation.

Sign and Meaning: A Semiotic Approach to Communication (2011) analyzes the theoretical connection between semiotics and communication through its historical concepts of various models. The qualities of semiotics were identified along with the attributes of communication that were justifiable for modern virtues to enter a new stage. Porcar (2011) correlated an "instituted between semiotics and communication, two concepts which relate to a complex of theories and practices, which are so vast that their combination permits a wide range of semantic possibilities." (p. 22) The discourse of semiotics is the action of a transmitter attempting to communicate a symbolic meaning to participants or a receiver to complete a communication process. The dialogue of this methodology has different perspectives and approaches to explore semiotics, along with its meanings to establish a knowledgeable action. A *cognitive* semiotic approach is the adequate description of an object, which could seduce one's mind into perceiving an illusional meaning. On the other hand, the dimensional ideas of a sign implying an instrument acting upon the world to other people is a *pragmatic* semiotic approach. Scholar Jean-Jacques Boutaud pronounced this approach from a social, cultural, and interactional context for verbal or visual communication. The focus of semiotics is centered upon the exchanges of linguistics within a communication process, where it offers the richness of context. The communication of semiotics also represents an ontological, epistemological, and methodological code of thinking when interpreting signs, symbols, and images. Graffiti is the act of writing or drawing on a surface to communicate a message from a cultural, social, and interactional context. Signs, symbols, and images are stylistic artworks by a transmitter in public view for any participants to receive the message given.

The semiotics of non-virtuous data visualization (2017) examines the recurrent signs becoming symbols from a distance "using the famous Charles Minard graph of Napoleon's Russian campaign, the stylistic marker of 'ratcheting', and the employment of semiotic Semantic Profiles." (p. 219) Charles Joseph Minard was a famous civil engineer in the field of informational graphics known for creating *flow maps*. A *flow map* is a chart illustrating the migration or movement of a subject evolving. Data visualization scholar, Martin Grandjean, had revised Minard's flow map with the six parameters of location, troop numbers, temperature, direction, distance, and advancement or retreat efforts. Minard's diagrams also interpreted a conceptual overview of Charles Sanders Peirce, "the founder of pragmatism". Peircean semiotics is a social consensus explaining a sign is a symbol linking the genre of meta-symbols to visual elements of cultural practices. An example of an automobile was given with a picture of the headlamps in angular forms, illustrating the flow of wind, across the surface suggesting air vents. However, there were no air vents in the headlamps demonstrating the ratcheting of a non-functional pattern for semiotic purposes of speed. Furthermore, the reconceptualization of Minard's work by Grandjean provided great insight explaining how "semiotics instructs us that these decisions remain in the service of someone cajoling or enticing a viewer to see the world from a certain position, imposing a frame that is both a culturally determined viewpoint and a constantly evolving one." (p. 231) Some graffiti artwork have 3D interface embedded within its content for an artistic appreciation. The receivers can review the content for hidden symbols, or illusional messages being conveyed with style.

From Semiotics to Choreography (2017) is a reflection of semiotics and information designed to change the formation of Choreography over a period of time. The researcher was invited by the Australian government to establish the Communication Research Institute (CRI), where their focus went from semiotics to semiosis to understand the pattern language of choreography. Researchers used real people to repeat dance moves for a design with the usage of a dynamic pragmatic. Semiotics is the study of signs, whereas semiosis is the process of sign making and usage. These methodologies assisted in analyzing the information design of Choreography using a constructivist approach. The constructivist approach is the social practice a sender applies when collecting and transmitting information using metaphorical messages to a passive receiver. An evaluation of museum semiotics was performed to classify an older tradition of scholarship interpreting the foreign and exotic information design. However, the CRI designed and tested dance forms for people who have the ability to fill them. The patterns had contemporary activity illustrating a dynamic relationship between people and information. Three forms of choreography were measured in different stages described as accomplished tasks, along with errors people made during this exercise. The first attempt to develop a formed choreography had an 60% error level with 40% being error-free. The second attempt saw a 30% error, due to a minimized instructions to reduce further errors. The final test resulted an error rate of 0.3% due to the change in form fillers of two documents, where one only contained numbers and the other containing instructions. These tests eventually led to other documentation types of choreographies for standard letters, bills, insurance policies, legislation, and other legal documents. Most Graffiti Artwork is premeditated, where artists have an ideal image, and style of being conveyed. This form of art is coordinated by time, place, ink, and color for a fine perception of a message, especially when drawn illegally.

Analysing Images: A Social Semiotic Perspective (2015) explores Kress and van Leeuwen's visual social semiotics model for images and other non-verbal points presented to readers, through advertisements of honeymoon packages. It analyzes the visual design of images through the visual social semiotics model, to interpret a tour operator's website from a visitors' viewpoint. For this model, a functionalist approach was conducted upon the social semiotics model to perceive the underlying metafunction characteristics of the visual representation of the honeymoon packages. The visual aspects of this metafunction carried the encoding of narrative or conceptual structures, where a narrative structure processes actions and event conceptual structures representing the meaning, class, or structure behind the subject. The characteristics of the interactive metafunction are items of information that assist the engagement of participants viewing the honeymoon package website. On the other hand, the interactive portion provides three dimensions of images which are image act, social distance, and point of view to influence the participants' urge of engagement of the visuals presented. Furthermore, the model of visual social semiotics provided by Kress and van Leeuwen is applicable for website promotions, teaching materials, painting, fictional stories, folk tales, and other non-verbal communication methods for meaning-making metafunctions. A good Graffiti Artist can perform metafunctional images to communicate meaningful messages to others. This style of imagery focuses on transmitting local social and moral norms to convey a viewpoint by street social semioticians.

Condom Semiotics (2009) investigated the semiotic actions of condom usage through constraining behavior in Malawi. This article "contributes to the general sociology of culture, as well as the broader issue of condom use for protection against HIV in sub-Saharan Africa." (p. 171-172) It explores the meaning of condoms from a semiotic perspective, as part of the Malawi Diffusion and Ideational Change Project (MDICP), to find fertility-related behaviors in preventing the transmission of AIDS. A qualitative survey and content analysis of journals between 1999 and 2006 of the sub-Saharan African country of Malawi was conducted, where 12 percent of their 13 million citizens tested HIV positive. Researchers attempted to define the fixed meaning of condom usage, as a gesture, or within statements in their social systems. Tavory & Swidler (2009) explained, "a semiotic space suggests that meanings can shift within that space, so the meaning of condom use can change registers or locations even within a particular interaction (Sewell 1992, 1996)." (p. 173) The 1998 sample consisted of 1,500 ever-married women and their husbands with follow-up interviews in 2001, 2004, and 2006 along with 22 journalists taking note or recording interviews. On the other hand, a content analysis was conducted for condom use in 304 journals followed by a convenience sample of men and women in rural Malawi to find the acceptance or rejection of condom use. Tavory & Swidler (2009) found the advantages of concepts, ideas, and beliefs of structures within interviews, while data accuracy and dependency on journalists' memory were the disadvantage. Researchers also found that younger Malawians accepted the use of condoms with regular partners, as it is more understandable in the modern culture than the 1990s. The sensual urge for "sweetness" of bodily fluids, self-protection, and safety of condom usage was understood as a result of this study. Similar to condoms providing safety to one's health, some graffiti might insinuate a safe neighborhood from oppression upon perception. On the other hand, an individual may interpret a message transmitted through graffiti to find a safe haven location.

Research Questions

As the world continued to witness the worst pandemic of this generation, Americans perceived an incline of violence upon each other, as well as, by law enforcement. Innocent people died from natural causes or by the hands of others; which made life difficult to protect themselves and loved ones from a virus with no cure. Individuals with no income, and police using excessive force on people struggling to survive in their darkest times were the focal point. Uplifting messages and acronyms were written on walls to express viewpoints of those seeking a better way of life for all. However, some are proclamations of hatred towards oppressors with the hopes that these actions will stop soon. This style of art and messaging has been around for decades, possibly centuries, as a method of expression. Therefore, I pose the research questions of:

• *What is the primary use and purpose of graffiti along with the occurred changes proceeding George Floyd, Jr.'s death?*

• *What are the underlying meanings of "FTP", "ACAB", and "BLM" and the messages they convey?*

Figure 4: Acronyms, FTP and ACAB, on an old public telephone booth at the corner of Flatbush Avenue & Albemarle Road. Captured on September 10, 2020

Theory of Semiotics

The theory of Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, their function, and substitutions for verbal communication. This theory analyzes the communication between individuals through signs and communicative objects to interpretate a meaningful message. The theoretical framework of semiotic is divided into three methodological divisions: *semantics*, *syntactic*, and *pragmatics*. *Semantics* is the study of linguistics in various cultures, with a logical concern in transmitting a message. The second methodology, *syntactic*, studies the structure of symbols, gestures, signs, and grammatical pronunciation; as it may correlate in various societies. *Pragmatics* is the philosophical approach of how sensible thoughts and things can relate within the communication process that may affect one's lifestyle in society. According to Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel (2017), "Semiotics brings to light the relationship between the world of things and the world of signs; it is the study of signs, symbols, and signification." (p. 101) The representation of feelings, situations, objects, and ideas are signs within the theoretical framework of Semiotics. It is the "intersubjective mediation by signs" due to the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic methods applied within this structured theory. The semiotics theory explained the relationship of signs, symbols, words, and language structures, that humans use, and how it may affect us within various societies and cultures. According to Craig (2007), "Communication theorized in this way explains and cultivates the use of language and other sign systems to mediate between different perspectives." (p. 78)

III.   Methodology

Graffiti is a form of street art that is used to communicate with others in public view. To conduct a factual analysis of Graffiti, a rhetorical criticism was performed to interpret the communication process within this art form. Rhetorical criticism is an analysis that explains the language used by an interpreter to communicate nonfiction events to an audience. Foss (2018) claimed, "It is a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes."

(p. 6) The ideological criticism is a perfect concept for this investigation, due to the system of idea and pattern beliefs conducted through art. This criticism tests the quality of judgment, teaches obedience to rules, and clarifies signs as a form of structuralism. On the other hand, "Semiotics provides a way to study components of an artifact as clues to its meaning and ideology." (Foss, 2018, p. 240) within the communication process.

Graffiti is a nonverbal art form used to convey messages on surfaces with ink, paint, or other pigments as "a figure of speech". It is the stylistic usage of symbols, words, phrases, and slang of visual communication used on unauthorized public space for societal review. The logic behind *semantics* is writing graffiti in the local society's popular language, where any- and everyone can review the meaning of the message upon sight. It is also the consistency of art published in a community, where people can identify with the message conveyed. *Syntactics* are the language rules associated with the style of graffiti, along with its arrangement of the message

projected in the form of *syntax* for a proper understanding of its linguistical structure. This method of art typically gives reference to a neighborhood, gang, phrase, street name, or code within its content. Graffiti is the simplest form of illegal advertising available throughout the world. A writer has the ability to convey personal messages on surfaces to the masses through artwork and placement of penmanship without permission of any authority. The *pragmatic* behind graffiti, constitutes the practical judgment of art styles applied, to express an interpretation for others to recognize and absorb upon perception. There are various styles of graffiti to explore, which include but not limited to: *hollow*, *wildstyle*, *tag*, *throw-up*, *murals*, *straight-letter*, *piece*, *stencil*, *blockbuster*, *stickers*, *extinguisher*, and plenty more. Furthermore, this sample evolved from the Flatbush (11226) neighborhood of Brooklyn after the George Floyd, Jr. protest begin in early 2020. The plain eye can review acronyms of FTP, ACAB and BLM throughout Flatbush, as well as, the borough and city with the possibility of the same occurrence across the U.S.

Figure 5: *Police Vehicle engulfed in flames during the Flatbush protest at Bedford and Snyder Avenues. Reprint from Symbol of N.Y.C. unrest: A burning police car, by Paybarah, A., & Stewart, N., May 2020 (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/nyregion/police-cars-nyc-protests)*

In March 2020, the U.S.A. along with other countries around the world had to take quarantine safety precautions during the Coronavirus Pandemic. People encountered a lot of health issues throughout the country due to this uncurable virus. During the peak of the COVID-19 in NYC, George Floyd, Jr. was murdered by police officers in Minneapolis, MN on May 25, 2020. A Caucasian officer, Derek Chauvin, kneeled on Floyd Jr.'s neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds, while three other police officers and bystanders watched him die. Floyd, Jr.'s death made international news when mobile phone videos emerged, and people understood how he died in the streets, in police custody. The videos, press, and thoughts of how Floyd, Jr. got murdered sparked outrage throughout the country, as protests emerged worldwide. I reside in Flatbush, Brooklyn, where press and helicopters showed people on my block burning, damaging, and jumping on police vehicles; with a Coronavirus Mobile site on the next block, in Sears' parking lot. I noticed a flux in graffiti throughout the city, where I was an essential worker working outside my field of work. Most of the art was from Graffiti Artists, while others were messages from protesters. The protesters typically wrote "RIP (Rest In Peace) George Floyd" or "SIP (Sleep In Peace) George Floyd". I also notice the acronyms "BLM (Black Lives Matter)", "FTP (Fuck The Police)", and "ACAB (All Cops Are Bastards)" written for perception. These scenes influenced my research on graffiti, along with the acronyms of "BLM", "FTP", and "ACAB", using the theory of semiotics for better insight of these research objectives.

Figure 6: Bubble Graffiti artwork by Romer. Captured in August 2020

IV.   Discussion

Semantics

Graffiti is a method of writing that enables the author to use symbols, signs, figures, and an interpretation of their native language to prescribe to viewers. It is the basic style of free handwriting in an art form, as words and images are used, to describe something or give a reference. Semantics in Graffiti brings the conceptual and associative meaning to this art form, which makes Graffiti unique in its own way. For example, the conceptual meaning of *Black Lives Matter* is something regarding the lives of black people that matter. The actions, characteristics, and stereotypes surrounding black lives is the associative meaning of a linguistical approach comprising semantics. According to Thomason (1996), "Semantics is the study of the meaning of linguistic expressions. The language can be a natural language, such as English or Navajo, or an artificial language, like a computer programming language. Meaning in natural languages is mainly studied by linguists. In fact, semantics is one of the main branches of contemporary linguistics." This practice will assist in understanding the underpinnings' interpretation of Graffiti as conveyed by the pen-man. The early graffiti writers of Philadelphia and NYC in the 1970s were young and poor individuals that had the options of joining a sports team, street gang, or write on walls during their free time. For the average Graffiti Artist, "tagging allowed these young men and women the opportunity 'to get fame and respect for their deeds', rewards which, in any other part of their lives, were totally elusive." (Colors, 2018) In this point of history, they referred to themselves as writers and not artists, when legible penmanship was of importance for anyone to perceive their handwriting.

Figure 7: Semantics emblem by Graffiti Artist, Pilot. Synder Avenue. Captured on September 2020

Syntactics

Syntactics are the principles associated with governing Graffiti in one's traditional language, style of penmanship, and slang used as a reference to translate the message a wordsmith is communicating to the receiver(s). Clint (n.d.) suggested, "This syntactic knowledge helps us figure out the meaning of a word by using context." A writer's name, emblem, symbol, gang, posse, sign, slang, image, or sketch are techniques used in Graffiti to convey a meaning to others. During the World Wars, a Fore River Shipyard employee from Halifax, MA named Kilroy worked as a checker, and would chalk his name on freight when they shipped. According to Canvasdesign (2019), Kilroy would tag "Kilroy was here" as a count, which made its way around the world. "As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable." (Canvasdesign, 2019) Kilroy's Graffiti grew to be a popular American symbol worldwide, and the first viral meme as the world wondered, "Who is Kilroy?"

A lot of street names and terms originated in the 19th century that gave reference to a person's lifestyle, characteristics, work ethic, hobbies, and plenty more. *Tramps*, *Gigolos*, and *Hobos* were some of the common terms used to describe one's persona in the late 1800s to the early 1900s. A *Tramp* is usually a female characterized, as a homeless bum, that wanders from place to place within a city for work and will immorally sleep with anyone for money. Yet, a *Gigolo* is an attractive male vagabond using his social companionship of older females for residence or financial support. Migrant workers, homeless vagrants, and traveling derelicts were distinguished as *Hobos,* who searched for work by traveling on freight trains throughout the country. Canvasdesign (2019) revealed, "They used symbols that were unknown to outsiders and they'd write their messages in chalk or coal near train yards, bridges or other known hobo spots for others to read. Some of their communication warned other hobos about strict law enforcement in the area or recommended a place to work or camp out." These workers used symbols and signs to communicate warnings, directions, and routes to other Hobos on their journeys. Hobo graffiti became a safe haven path to guide one another to resources and away from dangers throughout their voyage. Some graffiti provide semiotic instructions and messages of survival for others living a similar lifestyle, while others may identify a territory for affiliates and foes.

Figure 8*: Cameo tendered syntactic message with semantic stamp. Regent Place. Captured in September 2020*

Pigment

The various styles, colors, designs, textures, and coatings used by a scribbler are the pigment within Graffiti. This is a predetermined routine an artist apply to their art to communicate a message in a unique manner. Travis (n.d.) clarified, "Pigments and dyes are called colorants. The ways in which colorants are used determines whether they are pigments or dyes. Pigments are water-and oil-insoluble natural and synthetic products that impart color to materials such as paper and plastics. Dyes, by contrast, are water-soluble colorants, although some are converted into insoluble lake pigments by coprecipitating onto an inorganic base. Artists' colors are pigments that are spread on a surface suspended in a suitable medium, such as oil." Therefore, Graffiti Artists use various types of pigments as a tool to create a communicative message for others to perceive. It is an artistic expression used to transmit one's name, neighborhood, mood, or other feelings through their strategic artistic viewpoint. Most importantly, the main component used in Graffiti, is a penman's artistic expression which is determined by its quality, quantity, and texture.


Figure 9: A tag by Snooper. 86 Street Train Station (R-Train). Captured in June 2020.

A *tag* is the street name, symbol, or sign associated with the Graffiti penpusher when conducting their art. It is also known as *tagging* due to the continuous use of expressing themselves for popularity. Writers apply this craft, as a method of self-expression to become a popular bomber, where quantity is more valuable than quality. *Throw-ups* and *Pieces* are the graffiti styles typically used by beginners due to its simplicity. *Pieces* (short for *Masterpiece*) are large and complex graffiti with the least of three colors incorporating transitions. Artists apply this art style on large canvas such as train cars, billboards, trucks, and other large areas of space to be viewed by others from afar. A *Blockbuster* is a huge masterpiece with gigantic, wide letters and broad outlines created by paint rollers to stand out for perception. Similar to Blockbusters, *Bubble Graffiti* are simple masterpieces with round edges illustrating a bubble style. They tend to be two-tone or more in color with the advancement of Graffiti from the early stages of doodling. *Kinds and Styles of Graffiti* (n.d.) simplified, "Throw up, Blockbusters и Bubble are the styles of graffiti for the newcomers, the aspiring writers. All other styles are practiced by more experienced graffitists. Sure, the diversity of graffiti styles is not limited to the above-mentioned ones. Every graffiti crew practices its own, special, different technique. Even the genuine professional can sometimes use simple graffiti styles when bombing, for instance, or complex ones when, say, decorating the premises on commission." *Wildstyle Graffiti* was created by "Tracey 168", who started the Wildstyle Graffiti Crew, which was a street gang of over 500 members that scribed their wildstyles all over NYC. Anapur (2016) clarified that wildstyle graffiti is, "The convoluted and interlocked letters, arrows, spikes

and other decorative elements merge into one another making it difficult to discern what has been written. The complex pattern of letters and other forms creates dynamic abstract images where letters can only be detected by professionals." This type of art is very attractive, but hard to distinguish due to its stylistic values. However, viewers love the artistic values and dimensions that are presented, as some refer to wildstyle as, graffiti "on steroids". The average Graffiti Artist freehand their work, whereas others use stencils. This would enable the scribbler to easily input an image, character, or text on an intended canvas with the ability to repeat and reuse at various locations. Duncan & Nichols (2019) deciphered, "Stencils (also known as stencil graffiti) are usually prepared beforehand out of paper or cardboard and then brought to the site of the work's intended installation, attached to the wall with tape, and then spray painted over, resulting in the image or text being left behind once the stencil is removed." These stencils provide artists the ease of using layers, assorted colors, details, and illusions to their artwork with a clean but graphic finish. Similar to stenciling, some artists use wheat paste to poster their art as billboards. Wheatpaste is a gel, or liquid created from the combination of wheat flour and water to glue posters on walls for graffiti, artwork, and advertisements for public view.
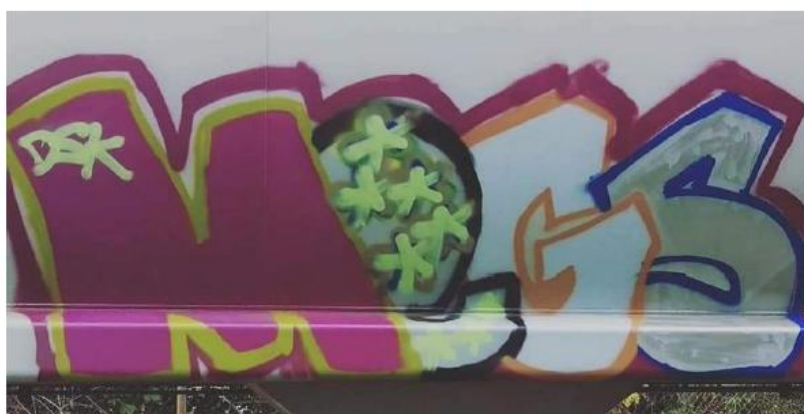
Figure 10: Great pigment produced by Megs through colors, coating, and style. Captured in September 2020

V. Findings

ACAB

      The abbreviation of ACAB is an acronym meaning "All Cop(per)s Are Bastards", which is an international slogan and catchphrase, usually expressed in graffiti, tattoos, music, and other artistic methodologies. ACAB is a political slogan regarding the police system, in general, it encourages an end to police brutality and refers to the government policing their use of misconduct in the police force. Paton (2020) clarified, "The origin of the phrase ACAB is itself highly contested, though it likely started its days in England in response to the creation of the world's first modern police force in 1829 under Robert Peel, whose name was the inspiration for the colloquial term 'Bobbies'." ACAB also has a numeric alternate "1312", where the numbers evolve in reference to the alphabetical order of this slogan's acronym. The specific origins of this jingle are unknown, but ACAB emerged in England somewhere during the first half of the twentieth century. This popular phrase is recognized worldwide and can be seen throughout London's Underground rail network in various styles of Graffiti. In addition, ACAB appeared in Indonesia, Germany, and Spain through graffiti and merchandise challenging police brutality in their societies. Poulter (2020) hinted "Graffiti writers are frequently harassed by cops, and writing ACAB on walls is an easy way to strike back. The phrase is also written on walls by political activists critical of the role or existence of the police." Moreover, this acronym became popular within a younger generation when a teenager inscribed ACAB on his jacket after seeing it on a Hell's Angel biker vest. ACAB inspired the teen's friends to join the crusade, as they thought it meant "All Canadians Are Bums". Once they gained further knowledge of the original meaning behind the acronym, it became a belief; because they were tired of being bullied by the police. The phrase, ACAB eventually found its home in punk music, as "the punk movement carried ACAB around the globe, where it became a watchword for anarchist and anti-authoritarian movements from New York to Indonesia." (Groundwater, 2020)

Figure 11: Acronym ACAB tagged on the ground on Church & Flatbush Avenue. Captured in September 2020

In the world of entertainment, this cliché influenced the anarchist popular song, "ACAB" by the British band 4-Skins, released in 1982. A German band, The Incredible Herrengedeck, mentioned the rally cry in their 2008 song, "Angst vor Punk". An Australian band, Ja Panik, titled a 2014 release "ACAB (All Cats are Beautiful)" followed by a 2015 breakthrough by German Rapper, SpongeBOZZ Sun Diego, dubbed "A.C.A.B.". Alternatively, Sidney Hayers' delivered a 1972 crime drama called, *All Coppers Are…*, while there was an Italian film entitled, *ACAB - All Cops Are Bastards* in 2012. In Great Britain, the wordplay of ACAB could mean *All Canadians Are Bastards*; meanwhile, in Madrid, Spain, it is customarily deciphered as *All Cats Are Beautiful*, but most Atheists and Anarchists refer to ACAB as *Anarchist Chaotics Argue Better*. In a similar fashion, Neo-Nazis had a racial acronym AJAB for *All Jews Are Bastards*, whilst ACAB in the British prison systems suggests *Always Carry A Bible*. This byword is alternately known as *All Cops Are Bad*, but the initial "B" is originally abbreviated for the word *Bastards*. It is *Bastards* because all cops are not individually bad, but are bastards entirely. To be a bastard, one must be in a system that is corrupt. The law enforcement in the USA is designed to devalue and encourage violence upon people of color, lawfully. This police system is bastardized, because it does not serve its original purpose, function, and is lowered in quality.

Figure 12: Acronym of ACAB on the base of Traffic Light at the intersection of Flatbush & 8th Avenues. Captured September 2020

Podnar (2020) claimed, "The first organized, publicly funded police force was established in Boston in 1838 in order to protect the transport of goods to and from Boston's port. But in the south, many primary policing institutions came out of a need to cage and abuse black people; they were slave patrols that continued into the Reconstruction era, and, arguably, continue in another form today." Police officers are trained that everyone around them is a proposed threat, and they should react immediately if their life is in danger. Once the first sight of threat is perceived in a high-pressure situation, a police officer is allowed to shoot to kill the suspect. The American police system was built by Caucasian people to protect and serve white people; nevertheless, it is a racial bias to suspect a person of color to always have a weapon. These trained enforcement

officers instantly make people of color a target and viewed, as an oppressor that must be policed. Cab (2020) published a written confusion from the viewpoint of a former bastardized police officer. Officer Cab discusses the hiring, socialization, and training of law enforcement professionals in a major metropolitan area of California. This officer policed a predominantly poor non-Caucasian neighborhood of first-generation immigration, where Cab (2020) admitted, "For me, police work was a logic puzzle for arresting people, regardless of their actual threat to the community. As ashamed as I am to admit it, it needs to be said: stripping people of their freedom felt like a game to me for many years." However, Officer Cab has never made any false criminal arrests by planting drugs, guns, nor serious offense upon an innocent victim within his police jurisdiction. Yet, if he was to make a report of misconduct within the police system, Officer Cab would get outed with no punishment by the "bad apples", because "even police leadership hates rats. That's why no one is 'changing things from the inside'. They can't, the structure won't allow it." (Cab, 2020) continued, "None of us protected the people (you) from bad cops. This is why 'All cops are bastards.'" In training, the older generation in the police force uses tactical fear, which may have brought nightmares of being murdered in the line of duty upon rookie officers. The veteran bastards use procedures of unlawfully enforcing the law as a practice during training. The attributes of bastardized police officers come from within the police department, as it is passed down from generation to generation through training techniques. To correct the United States Law Enforcement system, bastardized police officers need to be discharged with the replacement of a proper policing system, update of laws, and regulations that citizens will understand within their communities.
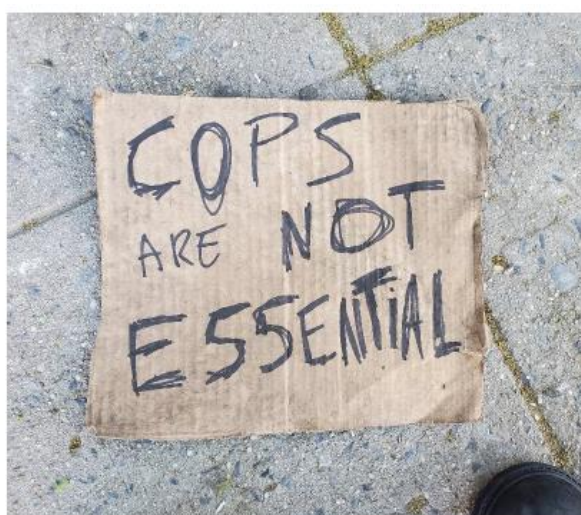

Figure 13: A Protester's Sign found after a rally at Bedford & Tilden Avenues. Captured on May 31, 2020

FTP

Wiles (2014) proclaims, "the use of *fuck* to mean 'to strike'". Therefore, FTP is a derogatory phrase meaning "Fuck The Police", which is a statement invoking damage to law enforcement officials. To announce, write, or insinuate FTP signifies to strike the police, especially, in an environment of protest. Throughout history, people have commonly declared this notion directly or indirectly to one another, as well as, to the police themselves. FTP has also been the topic, theme, and plot in various content throughout the entertainment industry.

In June 2020, Rapper YG released a song entitled "FTP" along with a music video professing the defunding of America's Police Departments. This anti-racism track addresses George Floyd, Jr.'s death, protests, and misconduct action upon citizens of color by the police. Shaffer (2020) profound, "The powerful video, directed by Denied Approval, edits together viral videos of police brutality against protesters that have been shared across the internet over the past two weeks — LAPD unleashing tear gas onto a crowd of peaceful demonstrators, a police vehicle driving through a group of protesters in Brooklyn and two officers in Buffalo violently pushing an elderly man to the ground, to name a few." Yet, "Fuck tha Police" released by N.W.A. (Niggaz wit Attitudes) in 1988 was the first protest song about bastardized police officers. American Rock Band, Rage Against the Machine, released a song in 1998 with the same acronym followed by Alternative Metal Band, Dope's "Fuck The Police" in 1998. Rap group, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony also released a song titled "Fuck The Police" in 2017 with a 2020 spinoff, due to a recent escalation of police brutality in the United States. This war cry is commonly expressed through music, graffiti, and as a figure of speech against police oppression on innocent people.

Figure 14:Black Lives Matter Mural at 608 Ocean Avenue. Captured on September 25, 2020

BLM

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a social movement established in 2013 following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman. It was founded by Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors to fight racism, violence, and police brutality against black people worldwide. After BLM's emergence, it became extremely popular when Presidential Candidate Benson Carson used BLM, as a hashtag on Twitter, in the civil black topic during his 2016 Election campaign. However, BLM became a common household phrase that individuals around the world use, in reference, to the oppression of black folks. This slogan is used in times of need, to support those in racial situations and protests. BLM seems more than an organization, where it can be visualized in fashion, social media, advertisements, media, entertainment, and casual conservations.

As the Summer of 2020 kicked off, BLM organized and designed murals to be placed in the streets of various locations in NYC, as well as, around the country. Murals near Foley Square, Trump Towers, the White House, 125 Street in Harlem, and Fulton Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant along with streets in Cincinnati, OH, Jackson, MI, and Portland, OR emerged, where volunteers from local organizations assisted. Jacobs (2020) reported, "The artists and designers behind the community-driven works say that there are important uses for this symbolism, like education and providing meaningful public art commissions by Black artists." Architectural designers created the 600-foot murals on a 3D software with guidance from professional muralists and the Department of Transportation to perform these memorable canvases. They were constructed with yellow paint, primarily used for road markings, along with approximately 100 gallons of street paint per mural. These murals provide a symbolic expression of royalty, unity, and legacy in their surrounding African-American communities. Black Lives Matter is a very successful civil social movement.
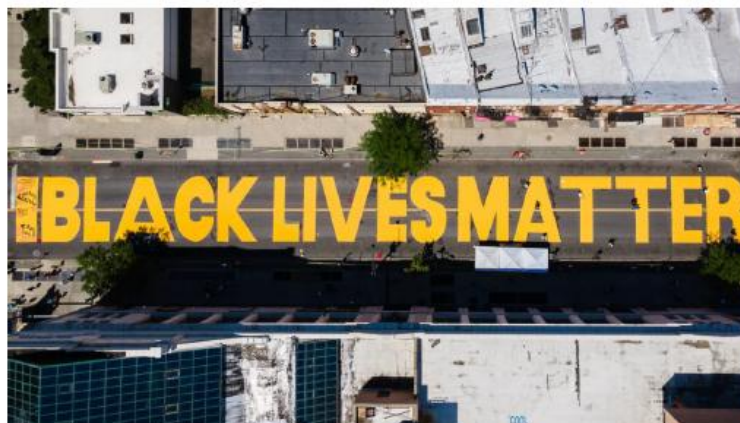

Figure 15: Black Lives Matter Street Mural on Fulton Street. Reprinted from Fulton Street gets block-long black lives matter mural, by Maisel, T., June 2020 (https://www.brooklynpaper.com/fulton-street-gets-block-long-black-lives-matter-mural/). Copyright 2020

Subsequent to George Floyd, Jr.'s Death

ACAB has reached popular peaks, beyond its British roots in the anarchism culture, when protests erupted following the death of George Floyd, Jr. In mainstream media, ACAB has been used in hashtags on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. The ability to review actions that had been going on for centuries upon African Americans on advance technology and social media became the enemy of the police force. Proof of human mistreatment due to one's skin pigment invoked an outrage of various protests nationwide stemming from the lynching of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, who were both innocent African Americas gunned down for no reason. Protesters applied acronyms in Graffiti during outcries against police brutality, because actions of bastardized officers had climaxed at an alarming rate. According to the Associated Press (2020), protests of September 2020 in Memphis, TN was calling to defund the police following the death of Breanna Taylor. BLM in Graffiti was found on tourist attractions such as Graceland, "I Heart Memphis" and Levitt Shell.

Figure 16: Angry protesters on Bedford Avenue of Flatbush, Brooklyn damaging a police cruiser during a rally. Reprinted from NYC police vehicles take heat of George Floyd protesters' ire, by Keogh, E., & Sanderson, B., May 2020 (https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-police-cars-burned-george-floyd)

Saturday May 30, 2020 was the third day of protest nationwide, hundreds of people gather on my block in Flatbush to rally, attack police, and their properties before marching downtown Brooklyn to the Barclay Center. The aftermath was a lot of debris, damaged police vehicles, protest signs and Graffiti of FTP, ACAB, and BLM. I honestly thought FTP, ACAB or BLM were organizations that gathered people to meet on my block and left their affiliation in Graffiti throughout my neighborhood. Further research enabled me to gain background of these acronyms, as Groundwater (2020) explained, "that display of supportive but needling graffiti is a good reflection of where ACAB stands in the protest movement today. On one hand, ACAB is an easy watchword and an effective expression of anti-authoritarian solidarity. On the other, it's aggressive—undeniably aa provocative, and one that may generate more problems than solutions." Salo (2020) reported, NYC had undergone four nights of protests following the horrifying death of George Floyd, Jr. in Minneapolis, MN, in addition to, a flux of graffiti. Storefronts, police equipment, and other public property were vandalized leaving behind tags, messages, and acronyms of ACAB, BLM, and FTP. Videos went viral, as millions of people reviewed footage of Minneapolis Police Officer, Derek Chauvin, kneeling on George Floyd, Jr.'s neck for over nine minutes with three other police officers stood by watching. The release of this video sparked outrage worldwide, as "protests turned to riots as police started showing up in riot gear and attacking protesters and press en masse with rubber bullets, tear gas, and night sticks. A woman lost an eye to rubber bullets. Another woman claimed that police 'stomped' on her pregnant belly and induced a miscarriage. One video appeared to show an NYPD vehicle driving into protesters." (Gagliardo-Silver, 2020) People began rallying ACAB through chants, social media posts, and graffiti throughout NYC. Overall, these worldwide protests were public demands for shrewdness of wrong doings. Hopefully, the problem gets fixed soon and justice is served upon those that broke the law.

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