

The Rhetorics of Political Graffiti

on A Divisive Wall

by

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to the literature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by offering rhetorical and discourse analysis of political graffiti on a wall built by Israel in Palestine. The analysis attempts to answer the urgent questions of why, who, when, how and for whom these graffiti exist. The data collected for the analysis consists of personal photos of graffiti taken randomly in 2010 and 2013 in Bethlehem, on the Palestinian side of the massive wall. Several theories in rhetoric and discourse analysis were consulted to perform the technical rhetorical and linguistic analyses of the graffiti utterances, images, and messages in selected photos of the graffiti. Social, physical, psychological and political factors that affect communication between the wall graffiti artists and their readers is discussed to assist in the interpretation of the messages of these graffiti from a Palestinian perspective. The findings of this qualitative study show that graffiti on such a high profile site are not typical of violent gang graffiti as commonly interpreted in the US, but rather contribute a universal interactive rhetorical mode employed by local and international graffiti artists to show their solidarity and demands for basic human rights for a misrepresented culture. Moreover, the wall graffiti function as evidence that graffiti has evolved into a formal performing art that can be found in respected art galleries. The wall graffiti create a dialogue between uncoordinated actors who come from different orientations to produce an array of positions not usually present in corporate media outlets. The analysis of the wall shows that these graffiti promote deep cultural and historical understanding, as well as break down boundaries and stereotypes. The collective threefold result of the analysis is the following:

First, graffiti on the wall have a collective universal motive; second, the graffiti give voice to the voiceless; and third, the graffiti can prompt a sociopolitical change that can lead to a long overdue peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Keywords: Political rhetoric, discourse analysis, Burke, Halliday, Banksy, political graffiti, street art, Arab graffiti, rhetorical and linguistic patterns, dramatic, identification, universality, Palestine divisive wall, intertextuality

DEDICATION

To my grandchildren: William, Ryan and Isabel

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This dissertation would have never been possible without the support and patience of my family and friends in the United Arab Emirates and the United States, and my committee members at Arizona State University.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On his first official and religious three-day visit to the Holy Land in May 2014, the Vatican Pope's unscheduled stop and his photos at a massive wall in Bethlehem called for international attention. Reporting from the Manger Square in Bethlehem, *The Guardian's* reporter Peter Beaumont stated that to the bewilderment of the press and the confusion of his bodyguards and official escorts, the pontiff stopped his motorcade under an Israeli military watch tower, descended from his armored vehicle, touched the graffiti-covered concrete wall with the palm of his hand, closed his eyes, and bowed in prayer (Beaumont, 2014). On the same incident, Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesperson declared, "this powerful gesture was a very significant way to demonstrate his participation in suffering . . . it was a profound spiritual moment in front of a symbol of division" (Beaumont, 2014, para. 6). The intense amount of political graffiti on this same wall inspired this research and called for a thorough rhetorical analysis rather than a mere physical pause.

For more than six decades, exchanges of violence and negotiations have failed to find a just and final resolution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The massive literature on this conflict discounts the importance of graffiti in Palestine except for very few studies about graffiti that surface sporadically in villages and cities. Therefore, this research will add to the knowledge of those who are interested not only in political graffiti, but also in knowing more about the conflict. The analyses that were used for the construction of meaning in this case study are based on personal photographs that were randomly taken of graffiti in 2010 and 2013 on the Palestinian side of a massive wall.

The massiveness of this wall snaking through Palestinian villages and splitting Palestinian families dictates the powerful graffiti messages that are conveyed on this wall. Graffitiists come from the four corners of the globe to visit the wall and contribute to the story it depicts.

Based on the conventional function of graffiti as means of communication among writers, their community and the outside world, the graffiti production on this particular wall, as this study will show, has a collective motive which is to express the needs, memories and expectations of the long-time misrepresented Palestinian people. Apart from answering the undeveloped linguistic questions about who paints on this particular wall, this dissertation will attempt to answer several fundamental questions. First, what kind of relationship does the graffiti on this wall has with earlier traditions of graffiti in the Arab World context, and how has graffiti there evolved to become so political? Secondly, what does a celebrated graffitiist contribute to our understanding of the wall that is different from his work elsewhere? What does his work at the wall and elsewhere in Palestine highlight about graffiti, the context, and the writers? Thirdly, does the wall graffiti based on its location, environment and messages function differently than other types and examples of political graffiti such as the Berlin Wall? Fourth, what are other historic political struggles that are used on the wall to convey information about the current political issues of the wall? Lastly, what kind of effects might the wall graffiti have on its readers? Answering these questions may or may not convince a reader of a different background that the political graffiti on this wall are of a different rhetorical genre in terms of its subculture, patterns, goals and effects. However, this research may be employed as an eye opener to a different rhetorical function of contemporary political

graffiti.

I put the argument forward that the political graffiti on the wall highlights the Palestinian's suffering in a broader context. They give "a voice to the voiceless", particularly the Palestinians living in the vicinity of the wall who are desperate to tell their story and deepen the readers' understanding of their situation. In comparison with the main function of conventional graffiti, this wall serves not only to advertise the daily suffering of a people or some members of a subculture, but also demonstrates yet again that visual rhetoric affects social and political human practices. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the sociopolitical context of the wall graffiti in order to disambiguate the motive behind most of the graffiti there. The setting of the wall in place and time serves as a dynamic platform for local and international graffitiists who use different techniques, colors, designs, and languages to express their insightful opinions on the wall.

Due to the controversial and sensitive political nature of the topic of this research, and by being a modest anthropologically trained researcher, and by having a different perspective living in the United States, it is important to document this case study. Moreover, my background as a Palestinian American added to my knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and my modest academic qualifications will provide a base to perform a systematic rhetorical and linguistic analysis of the syntactic and lexical components of the wall graffiti. The data collected for the analysis are based on amateur photos of the Palestinian side of the wall graffiti taken in person at the *Qalandya* Israeli military checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. These photos were taken with an iPhone4 camera at two different visits to the location of the wall: once in July 2010, and again of the same site in June 2013. The section of the wall that was photographed is

about a hundred feet in length where graffiti increase towards a major Israeli checkpoint that is well equipped with high-security measures. In times of tension between the two parties in conflict, Israelis and Palestinians, and during demonstrations or blockades, no stopping or gatherings were allowed during the day at that point. Therefore, the process of taking these photos in both visits was carried out hurriedly within a window of ten to fifteen minutes and most of them while seated inside a mobile vehicle. Interviews were unlikely to be conducted with any of the painters or even viewers as people there seemed to be rushing by the wall running after their own business. Moreover, curfews by the Israelis are daily enforced after nine in the evening until six o'clock in the morning, therefore, graffiti writers would become active after dusk between seven and nine o'clock in the evening. In a couple of photos taken around midday, I posed for a very short time next to the wall for the purpose of authenticating the original photographer of these photos, and to illustrate the height and length of the wall when comparing an interesting graffiti to the size of an average individual. The photos that will be used for this research were carefully selected as evidence for specific points of view; some were cropped and enlarged to show specific details; therefore, they might be missing the date the photo was taken on. No Photoshop or any other photography application or software was used at the time of this research to modify any of the photos. Taken by an unprofessional photographer, these photos may not be of a high quality resolution, but they are clear and adequately rich to answer the research questions. As the case in most qualitative research, every photo tolerates more than one interpretation; the ones that are interpreted here are solely based on my own modest rhetorical, linguistic, social and political background as a Palestinian American researcher.

Hence, this qualitative case study explores the power of political graffiti as a discourse mode that activists may utilize to influence and manipulate the international community's stand on the Palestinian condition, and may ultimately bring about positive changes on the ground. Local and international newspapers ignore the significance of graffiti on this wall. Other than the unbinding resolution of The Hague International Court of Justice in 2006, there is a mass media blackout of the wall's situation and its effects on human lives there. By analyzing the wall graffiti, I expect to show that the messages of these graffiti may prompt the world to take action and demolish this wall as history repeats itself and had witnessed the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The wall graffiti is a window to the societal, cultural and political attitudes of the Palestinians that may explain the exchanged grudge, and why suicidal bombers wrapped with explosives would end their own lives and others in such a horrible way. Looking for the reasons that cause such violence maybe the only logical approach to find a solution for this conflict. When all other means such as negotiations, international intervention and humanitarian assistance are failing, more innocent people on both sides of the wall are dying as I write. The exclusive graffiti rhetoric on this unique wall can function as a non-violent peaceful tool for a better understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and may help the international community to mediate and find common grounds for a just and peaceful solution. The ultimate humane goal is to end an era of exchanged animosity and an endless cycle of violence.

As a starting point, a general review of the history of graffiti in the ancient and modern world will pave the way not only to redefine contemporary graffiti in terms of its different form and function, but also to find other highly interactional similar surfaces

around the world that served a distinctive rhetorical purpose. Chapter two will examine visual art as a perplexing phenomenon particularly examples of political graffiti from New York during the Civil Rights Movement in the seventies in order to demonstrate some conventional forms and functions of early modern political graffiti. In an attempt to trace political graffiti that was centered on injustice and long lost human rights as a result of colonialism, the second departing point is a review of graffiti crossing international geographic borders from the United States to Europe to examine the rhetorics of German political graffiti on the Berlin Wall before its fall in the eighties. Then, from Germany to the Middle-East, this study will follow Banksy who revolutionized contemporary political street art and its spreading in the world reaching Palestine. In order to show a unified human message of graffiti, chapter two will also include a literature review of graffiti traditions in the Arab world and the development of Arabic political graffiti, funneling into a detailed account of the evolvement of graffiti in Palestine that will work as a necessary background for the factors that led to the universality of the wall graffiti.

Chapter three will discuss Banksy's exclusive work on the Palestinian side of the wall and how his art contributes to the understanding of the intended messages of this wall, particularly, his project *Santa's Ghetto* in Bethlehem. This project engaged a large international audience and media in the discussion of the ghettoization concept that will highlight the context and goals of the wall graffiti. Banksy and fourteen international artists who participated in his project, as this study will show, not only demonstrated the world's solidarity with the Palestinians, but will also be used as evidence that graffiti has functioned differently. A brief example here is that Banksy's murals on the wall in

question, revived small businesses in Bethlehem such as souvenir shops that relied on tourists who visited the area and were interested in Banksy's art. Recently, Banksy opened *The Walled Off* hotel in Bethlehem and donated the business to the locals and the profits go to local charity. Different from his graffiti elsewhere in Palestine, a discussion of another nine pieces that were created by Banksy in 2005 in three major Palestinian cities will show that they were meant to be simple, yet they depicted profound messages that attracted multinational audiences and peace activists who may have reacted to the political situation there as this study will ultimately validate.

Through the interpretation of the wall graffiti, the most part of chapter four will discuss the uniqueness of this wall, the international community's reflection on the existence of this Wall, and its negative effects mainly on Palestinian lives. To do so, technical and theoretical analyses of the Wall graffiti will be employed based on analogies of graffiti interpretations in rhetorics and discourse analysis and on analytical tools in the interdisciplinary field of street or visual art. A rhetorical analysis through the lens of Kenneth Burke's (1969) dramatistic and identification concepts are employed in order to show how the wall dramatizes the Palestinian story. In addition to historical, biographical and symbolic approaches, narrative depictions and moral arguments based on local and universal knowledge are also endorsed to show the rhetorical significance and power of this wall graffiti. The analysis in this chapter is organized in three major parts: the first part will discuss the uniqueness and the universality of the wall's subculture. The wall graffiti will also be analyzed as a significant rhetorical genre that includes participants who have identities that are crucial to unfolding the facts the wall suggests. These 'key participants' are introduced either as people or even countries

responsible for the plight, or those who suffer because of the plight. The second part will examine some patterns of discourse detected in the selected graffiti photos, and the third part will discuss the expectations that can be interpreted from the wall graffiti. The intended messages that will be analyzed to answer the third research question propose a collective universal consensus rather than limited specific conventional demands in that the wall discusses a unique case of human rights that differs from other examples of political graffiti.

Being a modest artist and activist, not a politician, the characteristics of the wall graffiti are analyzed from a pure aesthetic, linguistic and rhetorical perspective. From this angle, chapter four will explain why the wall graffiti is not just a temporary medium for venting anger. It will examine some of the graffiti's linguistic patterns such as the variation in grammatical structures that also ties with Halliday's functional grammar and other experts in the field in terms of declarative structures; making statements, interrogative; asking questions and imperative commands. Chapter five will examine the contextuality of the images and the significance of the colors as symbols, location concentration and decorative forms, and how they are conceptualized according to their motives, aphorisms or historic references and/or relevance to religious scriptures are crucial for the analysis and response to the fourth research question. In spite of the fact that the language of the wall graffiti is mostly English not Arabic, other languages such as Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, and Italian that are used to create some graffiti will also be discussed in terms of the similarities and/or differences of the messages that are carried by these multicultural tongues.

Chapter five will also show that graffiti on the wall come from poets, politicians,

activists and writers from all over the world. Beliefs, values and shared knowledge between these graffitists and viewers from different cultures more likely play a very important role in extracting a shared meaning. By studying the connotations of the utterances, sentences or statements on the Palestinian side of the wall, meanings can be extracted by knowledge of the social, political, physical and psychological factors that influence the kind of communication that is established by reading this wall. There are assumptions that writers and readers share the cultural and interpersonal background knowledge about the situation in Palestine that facilitates the interpretation of the wall graffiti. Finally, chapter six will conclude this research with a discussion of the evidence presented earlier in this research to emphasize the theory that visual rhetoric affects social practice. It will discuss the potential positive and/or negative effects political graffiti on the wall may or may not have on Palestinians, Israelis, tourists, activists, general and international audiences and readers, and whether the wall has prompted any action or will prompt or provoke a future critical change on the ground.

CHAPTER 2

GRAFFITI, GRAFFITISTS AND GRAFFITIZATION

Graffiti art is so common as forms of political protest offering commentary on prevailing social or political issues that it is virtually impossible to walk in any city street and not see colorful, painted, or scratched art forms on walls that are largely considered illegal. Most research that was originally carried out on gang graffiti in the United States agree that graffiti in general function as a cooperative discourse genre mainly used for different purposes such as advertising individual members of a subculture, marking territories, mourning the dead, indicating social networks, and as acts of hostility towards rivals, and they all follow explicit norms and conventions (Adams & Winter, 1997, Baird & Taylor, 2011, Ley & Cybriwsky, 2005, Macdonald, 2001, Phillips, 1996, Rahn, 2002, Reisner, 1971). The term graffiti originally derives from *graphire*, the Latin word that means to write, and it is also closely connected to the Italian word *graffito* that stands for design or inscription. Graffiti might be also considered as the concrete manifestations of personal and communal ideologies that are visually striking, insistent, and provocative. It is fair to state that modern graffiti presents the unique expression of the ultimate metropolitan individuality. To be exact, if “Baudelaire was right to define modernity as ‘the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent’, then it follows that graffiti-art is ultimately modern” (Raychaudhuri, n.d., p. 51), basing on the fact that the nature of this form of art is closely connected with its transience. In addition to this, this art may be considered doubly transient since, considering its illegal status in the majority of the countries worldwide, the authorities may regularly remove it.

Under these circumstances, it should be indicated that the response of the audience could be quite limited due to the short period of time they have to check or to take a look at the piece of art right before the bus or the train can start moving. Nevertheless, it should not come as a quite surprise, but graffiti is one of the controversial topics among modern art due to the fact that many individuals, artists, and even politicians consider it illegal, suggesting that it should be banned. The majority of people are sure that street art is wrong, indicating “leaving a visual mark in public urban space is usually technically illegal and often performed as an act of nonviolent civil disobedience” (Heywood, Sandywell, Gardiner, Gunalan, & Soussloff, 2012). Ultimately, there is no one universal definition for modern graffiti, yet it is considered as a distinct artistic rhetorical form of street art that can be read differently in different contexts. Therefore, tracing the development process of graffiti throughout space and time will prove graffiti’s adaptability, flexibility and its important integration into modern public art.

Graffiti developed in its modern sense in the United States in the 1960s. When graffiti first appeared in South Bronx, or New York’s Blacktown Bronx, the birthplace of modern graffiti, underprivileged individuals mainly teenagers started competing by adding effects to their writings on walls mainly to remind the government of its responsibility to take care of them. They used spray cans in making bigger signatures, as it is an easier and quicker method to perform a graffiti without being caught. The trend took off when these individuals realized the notoriety and fame tagging their names on subway cars could bring them. Graffiti then became young artists’ weapon against traditional art systems.

Early graffiti murals in the Bronx were known as the “label”. These graffiti labels were later considered as gang symbols that gradually became personalized artistic creations. The earliest records of individual graffiti artists belong to a man nicknamed “Taki 183”, a messenger who lived on 183rd street in Washington Heights, New York. Taki used to write his name wherever he went using a marker, writing his name all over the places he went to including inside and outside cars and subway train stations. He was known all over the city as a result of his creative writing and mysterious figure (Fleming, 2001, Silver & Chalfant, 1983).

Another celebrated graffiti artist at the time was *Lonny Wood* who used *Phase 2* as his signature and advanced the style from tags to hieroglyphically calligraphic abstractions (Fleming, 2001). Wood developed his style to involve deconstructing letters then transforming them into alphabetical characters that looked like a third eye with geometrical designs, spikes, and Egyptian pharaohs. He was a talented artist dubbed the “Father of Style” (Fleming, 2001), and was the first artist to use arrows in his drawings that brought attention of the hip-hop community in the 1980s. Moreover, Phase 2 was the only documented artist who was able at that time to draw his nickname all over the city in different designs stressing the fact that an issue can be interpreted in different ways; it can be either simple or complex, and people need to show the world they exist and should thrive to make changes whenever they feel they are marginalized (Fleming, 2001). Phase 2 remarkable advancement from one style to another encouraged others to follow him. He played a major role along with hip-hop rap music and dance culture delivering powerful messages and attracting more audiences (Fleming, 2001).

Some graffiti was ultimately considered as a subculture of hip-hop in addition to DJ-ing, emceeing and break dancing. Hip-hop originated from Jamaica as the solid proof for its African roots (Rahn, 2002). The ‘fathers’ of hip-hop who pioneered DJ-ing techniques in street entertainment were accompanied with break-dancers and graffitiists who danced and painted to the music. Hip-hop music then was physically expressed with breakdancing and visually expressed with graffiti (Walde, 2011), to “demarcate gang property and gang space” (Ferrell, 1995). Hip-hop developed as a unique music genre with which African-Americans were identified albeit the argument that advocated the creation of hip-hop seemed to isolate blacks from other races. Graffiti and hip-hop brought about positive changes to different races by virtue of diversity.

However, when graffiti writing originally started, the police harassed those they caught doing it and they were beaten thoroughly. Graffiti writers then took the initiative of publicizing the brutality of police through graffiti until the issue subsidized. Since then, graffiti has become a catalyst to international popularity finding its way to globalization in the mid-1980’s as an overtly politicized rhetorical mass-mediated art form (Armbrust, 2000), illegal in many countries and performed mostly by anonymous individuals, yet it was then, and still maintains its status quo as an alternative outlet for voicing those who are disadvantaged or marginalized.

To understand graffiti art more, it can be interpreted as interplay between a text and an image; it is a rhetorical relationship and a communicative opportunity. Graffiti can be seen as an event and a particular relationship between a surface and a text, an image, an author and audience.

Moreover, “If graffiti is an event which becomes an object, then graffiti turns the object into an event again” (Baird & Taylor, 2011, p. 7). Words are understood as images, and images are well understood as they have meanings; pictorial and textual forms of graffiti occur together. The large corpus of pictorial examples such as human figures, animals or abstract pictures collected from ancient to modern times prove that graffiti provide an image of the social, political and domestic daily lives of not only graffiti artists, but also world population and civilizations. In order to understand graffiti, it is vital to understand the subculture they belong to.

Subcultures share a special identity and definite values, activities, codes, style, and some tattoos to assert distinction and refusal of the common. In terms of conventional gang graffiti, a subculture is defined as that which “constructs, perceives and portrays itself as standing apart from others as an isolated, defined and bounded group” (Macdonald, 2001, p. 152). The ‘sub’ prefix does not mean beneath or under, it is used to emphasize being distinct from other groups within the same culture. Subcultures differ in terms of what they are based on whether it is social class, race, gender or other distinctive religious or political elements. Graffiti is generally stigmatized as a form of resistance to authority systems; therefore, beside a jargon and rules of ethics, dress code such as caps and hoodies worn together, or neon colors matching shoelaces that were a fad in the 80s, there may have been other symbols for resisting authority yet affirming conformity within a subculture (Rahn, 2002). Mainstream individuals generally despise a subculture’s dress code particularly if connotations of radicalism and violence are one-sidedly associated with it such as the case of the Arab headdress in the graffiti photos in particular Arafat’s will be discussed in chapter five.

Graffiti writers, in general terms, could be ordinary people, not necessarily uneducated and of a lower class that belongs to a subculture, but with high expectations and noble demands, and some became world famous artists. They are generally vigilant and work hard to maintain a low profile in order to avoid authorities' persecution. Therefore, most graffiti, past and contemporary, are signed with pseudonyms, a characteristic which obviously follows modern graffiti artists who, for example, by morphing alphabets in a chaotic style excluding outsiders from their subculture, are basically redefining modern graffiti (Ellsworth-Jones, 2013). Some graffiti signatures are recognizable, easy to understand as they have been used before, or have a significant autograph, design or form. Other signatures are volatile and even undecipherable. Graffiti recently evolved and became a complex art form with its own distinguished techniques and a more sophisticated vocabulary than the one of the seventies. Moreover, the subculture's discourse terminology such as *tagging* and *wall banging*, *bombing*, *dissing*, *dogging* and *getting over* became popular among early graffiti artists in the United States. Similar to any other register or any other jargon, such lexicon were basically used to emphasize solidarity between the subculture's members and to mock the incompetence of graffiti police. An ultimate gratification can be reaped particularly if the graffiti happen to impose a social, economic or political change, and a graffiti artist becomes a world famous artist.

A Perplexing Phenomenon

Contemporary graffiti are considered as an important and powerful subculture's element. It is a dynamic art and popular activity that gives insight into minority stereotyping, racial discrimination and social change; it is a "symbol of political dissent"

(Baird & Taylor, 2011, p. 4). For example, in the racial division of the early sixties, African American social and political reform groups such as the *Black Panthers* went to the streets to protest using art (Lewisohn, 2008). The graffiti “Free Huey” which was drawn in response to the arrest of a key Panther leader *Huey Newton*, started to appear all over walls and bridges in the United States. It was one of the most frequently occurring imperative patterns of modern political graffiti bearing a powerful message for the American society, and protesting against the trials of political activists (Nilsen, 1980).

Two driving forces behind graffiti writing later in the seventies were mainly recognition and fame. “You are nobody, you become someone”, graffiti becomes a “moral career” (Macdonald, 2001, Goffman, 1981). Graffitiists’ main objective in their beginnings was to produce abstract or expressive products such as respect and reputation; a graffiti was a creative display of dominance or strength, a virtual provocation. With fame and respect in the back of the minds of graffitiists, a strategic surface, location and design for a graffiti is automatically initiated. A New York graffitiist called *Revs* stated in his handwritten diary in Sutherland’s (2004) *Autograf*, that graffitiists “need to be painting with something to say that will last the test of time- where none of these people in power, [art critics, historians or politicians] can discount your existence” (p. 75). In the 1980s, gangster’s rap that evolved from hip-hop got the attention of different communities and the available media; consequently, graffiti became an ongoing worldwide phenomenon, and a legitimate form of social and political activism that introduced many of the voiceless to the modern world.

For modern audiences, graffiti are frequently interpreted as defacement and socially unaccepted practices; “dirty words on clean walls” (Reisner, 1971, p. 23), and a

“cultural production through destruction” (Phillips, 1996, p. 23). Different theories on the plethora of wall writing suggest that restrooms were originally the place of production for sexually oriented graffiti; the only creative outlet for bragging about unsatisfied human desires. Taboo inscriptions by anonymous graffitiists are ultimately found in restricted or hidden places such as public bathrooms or prisons, hence, it was stigmatized as “toilet graffiti”, “underground” and “visual pollution”. Therefore, graffiti for some, perhaps many, is considered a catalyst for crime according to *New York Times* contributing editor *Heather Mac Donald* who emphasizes her belief that graffiti’s “most salient characteristic is that it is a crime” (Mac Donald, 2014, para. 3). Back in the late sixties, *John Lindsay* the mayor of New York then fought against this kind of graffiti believing that small crimes lead to greater ones, graffiti, as vandalism, is one of them. This notion is known as the “Broken Window Theory” (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, McKee, 2014, Mac Donald, 2014) that was developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and later was proved by a study conducted in the Netherlands. The theory dictates that major crimes are caused by a domino effect of small crimes, and that vandalism is a disease that must be treated before it develops (McKee, 2014, MacDonald, 2014). In the United States, people avoid cities and neighborhoods where graffiti is present such as New York, Philadelphia or Los Angeles where graffiti’s presence is threatening (Walde, 2011), and brings violence to the communities they exist in. Areas that have graffiti tend to lose their real estate market value much more than those who do not (Sampson & Scott, 1999).

Generally speaking, most graffiti are not permanent; they get washed away by nature, covered and painted over by another graffitiist, or erased by an authority. The

United States Department of Justice estimates that taxpayers and organizations spend approximately twelve billion dollars a year to eradicate graffiti nationwide (Sampson & Scott, 1999). Chicago alone had a \$6.5 million budget in 2006, and as far back as 1971, New York had an estimated \$150 million in cleanup costs (Castleman, 1984).

Authorities of the biggest cities in the U.S. have created special “police and citizen surveillance teams armed with two-way radios, home video cameras, remote control infrared video cameras, and night-vision goggles” (Ferrell, 1995) in order to monitor the illegal graffiti painting. In addition to this, they were also sending special anti-graffiti helicopter patrols and securing the “freeway signs and bridges with razor wire and commercial buildings with special graffiti-resistant coatings” (Ferrell, 1995) in order not to allow graffiti artists to draw.

The demolition of the famous *5Pointz* graffiti building in downtown New York City in 2014 is a vivid example on the continuous fight against graffiti. Hundreds of complaints pressured the police division to demolish the building and other graffiti walls there. This demolition threatens not only the building’s existence as an iconic center for graffiti in the financial capital of the world, but it also threatens the rich history of New York City that comes with it and of the people that have clung to this history for decades. Even though the nature of some graffiti determines their likelihood to instigate crime and consequently deserve to be demolished, modern graffiti in America is in fact a democratic art form and a well-practiced freedom of speech right that characterizes the American dream. Allegations about graffiti art there as having little or no attachment to the world of artistry, is socially divisive, and do not promote unity or co-existence, are false.

Once the word “graffiti” has negative connotations associated with it, it brings to mind scrawls and scratches with spray paint on dirty walls in forgotten urban places; usually in poor, crime-ridden, and oppressed neighborhoods in large cities. It also brings to mind “nuisance”, or “eyesore”, or the representation of the work that others will have to put into by painting over it. However, areas with the type of graffiti that is considered vandalism that should be punished (Blankstein & Bloomekatz, 2007), these areas experience crimes with or without graffiti. It is interesting to know that some gang graffiti called to avoid crime. However, the types of graffiti in question may be associated with criminal elements, or an expression of those elements, but not necessarily a root cause for any crime. Crime is one social aspect that was associated with graffiti that was viewed as a sort of vandalism due to the constant police chases in New York City in search of graffiti writers who used this art to express their anger. When graffiti writing originally started, the police harassed those they caught doing it and they were beaten thoroughly. Graffiti writers then took the initiative of publicizing the brutality of police through graffiti until the issue subsided. The former mayor of New York; John Lindsay, stated that graffiti was the leading cause for confrontation since the paintings were all over the town and its trains. Graffiti artists then shifted from painting subway trains onto roofs of buildings. Graffiti in New York had a positive impact on the society within which people lived. In spite the fact that some gang members and vandals abused graffiti into their personal advantage, graffiti became an effective way to publicly protest black power and civil rights; a process that eventually led to a new form of a social order and a social revolution. Some opinion leaders on this controversial issue assert that graffiti carried out with permission may be

art, but if it is done without permission on somebody else's belongings, then it becomes a wrongdoing. The adage that your freedom of expression ends where my property begins is the foundation of that assertion.

In this vein, the confusion between gang graffiti and *tagging* is important to clarify. Although both may have been perceived as the same technique, some people considered tagging as the negative form of graffiti often a signature or a symbol that function as a marker of a gang's territory, or a distinguished stylish way of writing a name. Artists known as "taggers", used spray-paint to create art and drawings with their signatures that consisted of a nickname or "tag" that was difficult to read by outsiders. These tags were mainly found in difficult to reach places, and became a tool for fame and recognition (Adams & Winter, 1997). These taggers who were considered outlaws worked in groups called "crews" and referred to their writing as "graffiti". Often used by gang taggers in the seventies in New York City, they might not have been as violent as stereotyped, and may have been paid to write into other neighborhoods, yet these signatures sometimes lead to ferocious confrontations between gang members and ended up in shootings, property damage and police interference. Such acts that were associated with gangs and territorial dominance where civilians and inhabitants in the neighborhood, unfortunately, become targets for violence; graffiti writers were prosecuted and considered outlawed vandals there. Graffiti became the scourge of American cities, an urban epidemic dubbed as the spray paint fungus, and a sign of a city gone out of control. In today's modern and sophisticated world, where almost anything creative can be called art, the argument about whether graffiti or tagging is art or vandalism, and whether graffitists are artists

or vandals, is still unresolved.

Graffiti after all is a rhetorical communicative and expressive art form. In order to understand and analyze the rhetorics of graffiti, they must be “conceived as produced and circulated within a network of social and civic discourse, practices, images and events” (Crowley, 2006, p. 27). Graffiti must intervene in the beliefs and practices of the community it serves, “it becomes a solution to collectively experienced problems” (Macdonald, 2001, p. 45). Therefore, graffiti artists become more active when there is a local or national problem or a subject matter that is of a wide concern, they resolve in visual art to deliver their messages. Visual art that is explored in philosophy as a field known as aesthetics, is defined as a visual experience or object that is consciously created through the skills of expression and imagination involving artistic media such as painting, drawing and sculpturing (Kuittinen, 2015). Graffiti as a visual art is not neutral; it has an important role in social production (Phillips, 1996). Therefore, vandalism only occurs when an individual engages in a malicious or mischievous damaging or destruction of property. The recognition of meaningful graffiti as a communicative form of art may be vital for all parties interested in increasing the awareness as well as the overall understanding of historical or modern trends in a given society.

Generally speaking, graffiti writing or graffitization is an expressive form of art where artists consider the world to be their drawing board. It is art taken to a higher level; the art of creative writings of letters, words, and numbers, drawings of images, slogans and quotes, and even a single word that can create awe in the viewers. “Graffiti are like literature in that the best of them get maximum communication value with a

minimum number of words” (Nilsen, 1980). Moreover, graffiti can be strongly symbolic and make effective claims of a specific interest over space, particularly in distinctive settings. Graffiti, although it always straddled a thin line between art and vandalism, is more of a popular art form that for example, when a political graffiti carries a clear powerful message that is meant to offer effective communication or solutions, would be heard over the roar of governments (Mettler, 2012, Olivero, 2014). Therefore, graffiti may also be seen as “a language in accord with aesthetic imperative that is prevalent in youth communication” (Campos, 2015, p. 18). Graffiti young artists travel a broad range of emotions through a single art form that bears belief to the saying that “a picture can speak a thousand words”. In modern societies, the art of graffitization thrives above other forms of social commentary because it can be done anonymously. One of the advantages of anonymity according to Maddison and Doebeli (2013) is that it “removes most of the effect of prestige-bias which refers to the preferential copying of specific individuals who are authority figures or otherwise have prestige” (p. 302). “Prestige-bias has the potential to complicate cultural unit exchange in the case of live conversation or any instance in which individuals are identified” (Maddison & Doebeli, 2013, p. 302). Ultimately, when means of communication fail, and in situations of social or political oppression, graffitization is an art that proved throughout history that it is an unconventional rhetorical mode for dissent that rings a bell with all classes of society.

Crossing Borders, Intersecting Functions

Graffiti as one of the oldest forms of communication that humans are advantaged with, which developed and evolved with their creators, are well preserved as precious

human heritage art. In different countries, they delivered analogous messages where a chronology of human's history of development and civilization is told through graffiti symbols, figures, pictographs, alphabets and numbers. Graffiti can be traced to as far back as ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome (Phillips, 1996) except that in those cases, the techniques and material used varied widely. Ancient Egyptians engraved walls with hieroglyphic writings to commemorate their pharaohs and maintain their records. Moreover, prehistoric caves in France, Spain and Italy show that Homo sapiens were graffiti artists par excellence, doodling with charcoal, blood or colored clay and drawing realistic details of a mammoth or deer on the walls of the caves, for example, gave primitive hunters the might to hunt the real animal. In ancient Greece, wall art was used as a form of public announcement or covert advertisement. To demonstrate, a graffiti of a handprint alongside a number and a footprint indicated the presence of a brothel in the vicinity. In Medieval Times, graffiti practice was limited to relaying curses as well as to display famous political messages and quotes. Many of these primitive graffiti were realistic, created with original talent, and were universally recognized.

Since prehistoric cave drawings of the early man, to the early Greeks and Romans, and from the Middle Ages to the present time Europe, wall writings are to be considered as the authentic history of man compared to the formal recorded history that is mostly created by a conqueror or a governing power. Compared to modern time graffiti art, the most common type is spray-painted and stenciled graffiti that is more artistic because it provides a wider range of interpretations through applications and colors. The perplexing argument that graffiti holds is that the nature of the messages has remained relatively unchanged as political and social commentary are commonplace in most

graffiti. In prehistoric caves, on clay pots and ancient walls, scribbles and doodling are considered a human heritage art that is well preserved and documented in museums and became subjects in college majors (Reisner, 1971). Ironically, the same messages, but in different times, places and techniques become something entirely different that is termed controversial graffiti, street art, or vandalism.

Interestingly enough, contemporary graffiti that are observed all over Europe as vandalism, continues to contribute in writing histories of different cultures in that continent. The significance of graffiti's form, function and techniques although they may differ, yet there is almost always a unanimous consent on a human urgency. For instance, compared to ancient graffiti, contemporary graffiti may represent more innovative and straightforward ideas but the essence is similar. For example, *D*face*, a graffiti artist from London recently created the "Scars and Stripes" project in Los Angeles which is a series of graffiti paintings that featured portraits of celebrities mainly produced to commemorate pop-culture influential American musicians and singers who died at a young age such as *Jimi Hendrix*, *Tupac Shakur* and *Kurt Cobain*. Another example that feeds into the concept of human urgency comes from England where drunkenness, in particular the consumption of alcoholic gin killed a large number of the population and a large number was actually saved by graffiti warnings of excessive alcohol consumption that surfaced around (Reisner, 1971).

A more recent example that better serves the general objective of this research is from Germany. The political graffiti on the Berlin Wall that was constructed in 1961 to divide the German city of Berlin between the Soviets and the Allies during the Cold War, was a major factor for its destruction. The wall that stretched for an approximate length

of one hundred miles was constructed allegedly as a protection of the socialist East state from the capitalist West, and as a barrier to stop the influx of refugees from the East part to the West part of Germany. As a physical structure, to the West Berliners, the wall was there every day, yet to East Berliners, it was inaccessible, invisible and a taboo. Such conditions allowed graffiti writers to get active, therefore, graffiti was exclusively observed only on the West side of the Berlin Wall. It was difficult at that time to know who the political graffiti writers on the Berlin Wall were after legends that circulated about some graffiti artists who were detained and later disappeared on the western side. Political graffiti on the Berlin Wall in that era was considered a punishable politically aggressive behavior. Therefore, most graffiti there were probably preplanned, short and executed in a hurried and discreet mode.

However, the differences between East and West Berliners provided a different catalyst for political humor and folk-tales (Stein, 1989). Political conditions then dictated the function of humor as a form of relief and resistance. Due to the fact that outlets for freedom of expression are prohibited in circumstances of wars where civil liberties are suppressed, the “hostile joke” thrives in undemocratic conditions and represents a “rebellion against authority” (Freud, 1960, p. 105). East Berliners would create verbal jokes that are context specific, and West Berliners will have the equivalence in funny yet political “graffiti art” on the Wall.

One of the most frequent rapid types of political humorous graffiti on the Berlin Wall was the inversion of acronyms. For example, the acronym for Deutsche Demokratische Republik; DDR, that officially stands for German Democratic Republic was used as a variant for Deutscher Dreck Republik that translates to “German Dirt

Republic” and Deutsche Demokratische Russland translates to “German Democratic Russia” (Stein, 1989). The colors of the flag of both German Democratic Republic and Federal Republic of Germany were gold, red and black were also used in painting graffiti. One interesting graffiti typical of gallows humor had the three colors of the official flag painted with words on each color that read future, present, and past respectively. The message if read inversely would mean that East Berliners will have a black, bloody future (Stein, 1989). Nowadays, the political significance of the Berlin Wall graffiti has disappeared from the memory of Berliners who stroll along what was left of the Berlin Wall borders only to enjoy the landscape and maybe stop at some look-out points where people lost their lives trying to cross to the West side.

The wall was demolished in 1989, yet a remarkable collaboration of 180 artists from twenty-one countries in 1990 created what was considered at that time the largest open-air gallery in East Berlin. One powerful graffiti by *Demitri Vrubel* on the East side of Berlin wall that caused international concern was nicknamed as the “Deadly Kiss” (Henkel, 1993). The graffiti depicted the kiss that *Leonid Brezhnev* and *Erich Honecker* were locked in during their reign as the Soviet Union leader and GDR premier respectively. Realistically, it was not shocking to see the two Communist leaders kissing as a matter of formality. However, these two leaders were overly criticized for their enthusiasm for the lip lock despite showing little or no concern for the needs of their people. The kiss depicts a typical Greek tragedy where lovers are so close to each other leading to their suffocation implying that the poisoned relationship between these two leaders will also compromise their lives if they fail to remedy the collapsing political and economic situation in their countries. This example shows that the need to disseminate

political ideas ranks among the most common goals of using graffiti. Historically, Coffield (1991) claims that a large percentage of writers that focus on producing works of graffiti are individuals that tend to rebel against political regimes and the prejudice of the mass media that exist in their countries. According to Wood (2015), most of the people that engage in painting public or private property are individuals that the society has discriminated against for several years. Consequently, the discriminated persons often lack an alternative way of expressing their dismay thus turning to graffiti as the only means to defend their right to free expression. To them, they engage in self-expression while beautifying their neighborhoods in their own way and reach a wider audience with whom formal interactions have already been cut off.

The Berlin Wall graffiti played a crucial role as evidenced from history that the erection of such a wall was an unforgettable mistake that did not solve any problems. Germans were separated for nearly thirty years by fear and oppression, however, once the wall fell and with it the Iron Curtain that divided Western Europe and the Soviet Eastern Europe, the Germans were reunited as one people. The fall of the wall had a great impact on the way Germany developed afterwards as a strong country and one of the most influential regimes in the world today. The devastating physical structure of the Berlin Wall that was an iconic symbol of the differences between communism and capitalism in the twentieth century did not survive. Its heartbreaking memories as a mental border represented in the powerful graffiti that covered it will probably never be erased not only from the minds of people who survived it, but also from other people minds around the world (Koehler, 1999, Funder, 2004, Taylor, 2007, Wilner, 2016).

Arabs' Graffiti

In the Arab World, although different in time and form or design, graffiti has been an integral part of its landscape for decades. Arabs' graffiti randomly represented the multi-faceted aspects of their culture, beliefs, events, customs and superstitions. The nature of Arabic graffiti before it became to be characterized as political graffiti was a barometer of public life and social relations in Middle-Eastern Arab countries in the early forties of the twentieth century. Using Arabic calligraphy to create a graffito was popular in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Bahrain. Calligraphy and graffiti are "Two daughters of the same parents" (Zoghbi, Stone & Hawley, 2011, p. 31). Both are about the use of letters and alphabets and their central gravity is the beauty of writing. Arabic Calligraphy that is out of the box in terms of its design is the conservative sister that is bound to traditions; graffiti is the sister free from traditions and strict forms of letters (Zoghbi, Stone & Hawley, 2011). These commemorative themes will undergo a radical transformation because of the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

Before 1948, graffiti were created on walls in alleys in rural areas. It was easy to observe that drawings were frequently prevalent on the rear ends of vehicles mainly city trucks. As a symbolic gesture to protect them from a jealous evil eye, owners and truckers creatively combined objects and Arabic calligraphy and created a unique mobile art on their trucks (Zoghbi, Stone & Hawley, 2011). Based on urban folktales and traditional superstitions, popular drawings depicted blue eyes, horseshoes with Quranic verses, poetry stanzas and even saints' names. These drawings established entertaining dialogues of wisdom, love, respect, honor, well being and humor with fellow drivers or commuters especially during traffic jams. Although it was a medium of a male speech

and a way to release tension of everyday life struggles, specialized truck calligraphers promoted this art as a channel not for political reasons at that time, but for social and religious expression that later on started to appear as a form of political graffiti on concrete walls.

Political graffiti surfaced significantly in Arab countries after 1948, the year of the catastrophe or *Nakba* as they refer to it, the year they lost Palestine to the establishment of the state of Israel. In contrast with Western graffiti such as graffiti in the Bronx in New York where graffiti was labeled then as “toilet graffiti” as it contained vulgarity and profanity, Arab homeowners, before 1948, decorated the walls of their homes with colorful calligraphic graffiti for different reasons such as a gesture to appreciate peasants’ lives, to celebrate special occasions such as weddings, to commemorate religious festivities, and to welcome back pilgrims from the Hajj to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Other than rare individual incidents of indecent graffiti or drawings in public spaces, Islamic religious icons such as depictions of Mecca were the most common symbols employed on public walls in major Arab cities especially in the Muslim Quarter in Jerusalem’s Old City as well as in the West Bank and Gaza in Palestine.

When the Palestinians’ struggle for their statehood started more than sixty-five years ago, using walls was an invaluable venting medium for expressing their anger due to the fact that media outlets were inaccessible because of the chaotic political situation due to the Israeli occupation. The social colorful cheerful graffiti evolved to aggressive political rhetoric where all kinds of political messages against the occupation were found on walls in Palestinian villages mainly painted by local Palestinians. In a spontaneous effort to strengthen a collective national identity, during and after the first Palestinian

uprising in 1987, Palestinian graffiti increased as a method to spread messages mainly calling for resisting the Israeli occupation. The meaning of the uprising or the *Intifada* according to *Mordechai Bar-on*, a former twenty-year colonel in the Israeli Defense Army was “an unavoidable eruption of long accumulated anger, frustration and indignation on the part of young Palestinians who grew up under the Israeli occupation” (Bar-on, 1988, p. 46). Palestinian calligraphers then were youths fearless of retribution, trained and praised by political religious factions to create murals with sacred religious texts in traditional Arabic calligraphy whenever they had the chance to do so away from Israeli observation. Compared to other graffiti art in other Arab countries such as Lebanon that is mostly inspired by American or European calligraphy, Zoghbi, Stone and Hawley (2011) affirm, “Palestinian graffiti is a true Arabic urban art invention” (p. 58). Palestinian graffiti maintained the status quo until 2002 when the state of Israel started the construction of a separation wall. Since then, Palestine became an attractive example for political graffiti that became a widespread phenomenon to neighboring countries.

By the end of 2010, Arabic political graffiti picked a crucial role as an effective powerful form of popular protest in the revolutions and uprisings of the *Arab Spring*. Graffiti practices mainly dominated by males, with few female contributions, got very active and offered their revolutionary conversations through their creative visual art in order to urge people to oust their ruling dictatorships and constrict democracy in many Arab countries mainly Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria. In Egypt in particular, political pieces that mirrored the chaotic status quo appeared on national landmarks such as the 6th of October Bridge in Cairo, the capital. Political graffiti delivered influential messages of resistance against their long-term president *Hosni Mubarak*. Protests all over Egypt

demanded the overthrow of their president based on liberal, Islamic, feminist, nationalistic and anti-capitalistic factors, in addition to corruption, unemployment and political freedom. Massive deaths and injuries resulted from the clashes between civilians, the police and Islamic fundamentalists. Graffitiists went to the streets along with demonstrators to deliver their demands in their unique non-violent resistance method of communication, especially in Egypt. Throughout this chaotic situation, no weapons were used and no vandalism occurred, there was only art. A youthful group of protestors called themselves “Freedom Painters” took to the streets lining walls in alleys and suburbs with protest messages such as “vote” or “I need my rights”, and the word “Freedom”, thus the theme of democratization was effectively enhanced. The artistic vision of the Freedom Painters was internationally recognized and earned them a global award (Korany & El-Mahdi, 2012).

One more example of the most dynamic graffiti in Cairo dubbed as the “Wall Battle”, created by a well-known Egyptian graffiti artist there nicknamed as “Ganzeer”, described the violence and horror the country was experiencing at that time. The graffiti that was created in 2011 depicted a young boy riding his bicycle carrying on his head a large tray of bread delivering it to the protesting youth movement with a military tank in the opposite direction representing the tyranny of the ruling government. In 2012, more details were added to the graffiti: blood under the tank representing a group of Coptic Christians run over by military tanks, faceless masked protesters witnessing these graphic incidents, and a giant snake with a general’s face devouring these people. Due to the fact that social media played a big role in mobilizing protestors and spreading the revolutionary spirit, the controversial narrative of the “Bike vs. Tank” was immediately

altered and whitewashed by “professional whiteners” (Abaza, 2013), or loyalists to the government namely *The Badr Battalion 1* who left the tank untouched and posted a YouTube of the deletions calling for Egyptian youth to erase “anarchist imagery” from their city (Abaza, 2013). To conclude, graffiti, as visual art in the Arab World is unique in terms of its content and tone to each of the countries it appeared in. They were predominantly site-event specific conversations, yet they travelled regionally and internationally expanding their medium, space, genre and audiences.

On a distinctive international level, Arabic graffitiists *bombed* Hollywood. An Egyptian crew who were actually casting for the show “Homeland” and served as extras for several scenes, namely *Heba Amin*, *Caram Kapp* and *Stone*, took credit for the Arabic graffiti that appeared in the American show in 2014. Several Arabic graffiti appeared in the series that read “Homeland is not a show”, and “Homeland is racist” in Arabic, “was a subtle protest of false and misleading stereotypes and portrayals of Muslims in the series (Bilefsky & Boshnaq, 2015, Amin, 2015). The powerful subversive political statements these graffitiists made although intended for Arabic speakers did not mean anything to the majority of the people watching the series; however, the graffiti went viral on social media and reached a wider audience in the United States much more than the television show did.

On a local level, the first regional street art project *Women On Walls* (WOW) was launched in 2013 in Cairo, Egypt, by the Cairo based graffiti artists with the objective to create a women’s movement that emphasizes their presence in the public scene of the Arab World culture. Since then, a specific theme is chosen every year for an equal number of female and male artists to create their graffiti based on women’s heated issues

such as female rights and empowerment, sexual harassment and domestic violence. In October 2014, the WOW *Baladek* festival that took place in Amman, Jordan with the theme “Stories from Fear to Freedom” attracted graffiti artists from Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Qatar, and even Sweden. The longest wall of graffiti was created for the first time in Jordan along the festival with street art workshops, open-mic sessions, live music and local food and beverages. Another long graffiti wall that entered the Guinness World Records in 2014 was created in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) thus creating a different kind of graffiti in the Arab World (Guinness World Records, 2014). This graffiti scroll that depicted historical scenes from the UAE culture was not political in anyway, and writers are identified and acknowledged, they were not mysterious, nor were they prosecuted. The only difference between these walls and the graffiti of the wall that is the subject matter of this research is the fact that these walls were officially organized, designed and collectively was facilitated and performed for the sole purpose of publicity. In contrast, the sociopolitical atmosphere under the occupation in the premise of the Israeli wall as we will see later in chapter five, dictates that the kind of graffiti there were performed individually, sporadically, spontaneously, only with antagonism and courage.

It is worthy to note that the idea of the previously mentioned WOW project was developed by *Mia Grondahl* who was a Swedish journalist, photographer and author based in Jerusalem in 1996. During her visits to Gaza Strip to offer photojournalists’ training courses, she was fascinated by the quantity and quality of Palestinian graffiti on the walls there and was able to document these graffiti over the period of seven years. Since political graffiti started in Gaza during the first uprising in 1987, writing on the walls became the only means of communication between the population and the different

political groups that were active there. In an interview online, Grondahl (2010) states that the photographs she collected for her book on Gaza graffiti between 2001 and 2009 are considered a historic document about this period in Gaza. She also remarks that there is a remarkable distinction between the graffiti of the two political rivaling parties there: *Hamas* and *Fatah*. Hamas offered evening classes to teach calligraphy, the art of beautiful writing due to their religious belief that the Arabic language is a language delivered to them from God; therefore, it has to be written in the most beautiful way. Whereas Fatah group did not really care about how it was written; they were concerned about the content of the messages they deliver. There was an equal balance in the quantity of the graffiti between these two parties. There was also a mutual respect for each other's graffiti, and there was no intention to ruin any as some walls were designated for one but not the other group. There was tolerance and a window to express different views when there was a situation that heightened the volume of graffiti writing. Grondahl's graffiti book offers an exciting and unexpected view of the Palestinian's life in Gaza before, during and after Israeli incursions on the strip, not only about the conflict and the mourning of victims, but also about colorful human social issues such as the joy of weddings. Grondahl published several significant books on graffiti art in Gaza and Egypt, and exhibited her photographs in Jordan, Egypt, and in the United Nations in 2013 under the auspice of United Nation's Secretary General Kofi Annan (Grondahl, 2010).

Illegal Wall, Ill/legal Graffiti

Political graffiti in Palestine took a different direction unlike the Arab Spring revolutionary graffiti that had site-event yet divergent political motivations. Based on its location, environment, graffitists and messages, the wall graffiti in Palestine function

differently than other types of graffiti such that of New York, Germany or Egypt. This wall is dubbed as one of the most thought-provoking spaces that became to be a definitive canvas for local graffiti amateurs as well as artists from all over the world. Ironically, it is described by Banksy, the famous guerilla artist from London, as the “ultimate holiday destination for graffitists” (Banksy, 2005).

There have been different names for this wall in different media outlets, yet most names are based on the sociocultural or political views of those describing it. Mild terms such as the allegedly temporary ‘fence’ that makes ‘good neighbors’ mocking the American poet Robert Frost, or the ‘Separation Fence’ that was invented by Yitzhak Rabin the former Israeli prime minister (Rogers & Ben-David, 2005), and the ‘anti-terrorist fence’ or the ‘Security Barrier’, and related terminologies are used by Israeli outlets and pro-Israeli fronts. According to international journalistic conventions in the case of such a conflict, a generic unloaded and neutral term is preferably used to avoid bias. Therefore, the “barrier”, “separation barrier” and the “West Bank Barrier” are widely used by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), the United Nations and Israeli human rights associations.

In the Palestinian Territories and in pro-Palestinian media, a more politically charged terms are used. The wall is prevalently referred to as the ‘Apartheid Wall’ with reference to South Africa’s apartheid system, and the ‘Segregation Wall’ that engulfs the Palestinian territories into Bantustans and ghettos with historical associations to the ghettoization of the Blacks before, during and after the Civil Rights Movement in America in the 60s and 70s. Other terms are used randomly such as the ‘Annexation’, ‘Land-Grab Wall’ or a second ‘Berlin Wall’ similar to the one that was built in Germany

during the Second World War era. For the neutrality of this research, the ‘wall’ will be employed to denote the physical wall, and the capitalized “Wall” term will be used to indicate the historical, rhetorical, temporal and spatial uniqueness of this particular wall.

A Ghettoization Project

In order to meticulously analyze the political graffiti on this Wall, it is crucial to know why Palestinians detest it. Contrary to worldwide news reports, the Wall does not mark the 1967 borders between Israel and the Palestinian territories according to the United Nations 242 resolution, but it is a major confiscation of Palestinian land and further isolation of Palestinian communities. The Wall in Palestine that runs around 365 miles/709 kilometers of the entire length of the West Bank of the River Jordan has been deemed by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice in 2004, with the consent of 125 world countries, as totally illegal and turns Palestine into the world’s largest open-air prison. *B’Tselem* (2012), the Israeli Information *Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories* stated that the ‘Separation Barrier’ that was intended to protect the population of around sixty Israeli settlements, was unjustly erected to restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians from the West Bank to Israel. The Center also stated that only thirteen percent of the city of Bethlehem is accessible for local Palestinians who wholeheartedly detest the Wall (B’Tselem, 2012). They believe it is a ghettoization project *par excellence* that does not fulfill its security objectives, but rather violates not only basic human rights of thousands of local Palestinians and denies them access to their relatives, schools, hospitals and fields (Amnesty International, 2013). Palestinians over the age of twelve need an official permits from the Israeli Civil Administration to cross over through ninety nine fixed Israeli military checkpoints from

their homes on the east side of the Wall to their lands on the west. Most Palestinians are villagers and farmers who depend on marketing their produce for their daily bread. For example, at the notorious Qalandya checkpoint that only allows permit holders to pass from the West Bank to Jerusalem, reports state that truckload of tons of fresh vegetables or fruits such as strawberries would rot on a security gate while an Israeli soldier chats with another female soldier keeping lines of cars and people waiting to cross; a total humiliation and disrupting situation for Palestinians. Moreover, the Wall affected not only the agricultural sector that generates eight percent of Palestinians' income, but also their educational, cultural and social lives. In 2004, the *International Court of Justice* (ICJ) in the Hague in Netherlands, along with one hundred and twenty five countries unanimously ruled that the "Separation Barrier" violates several articles of the United Nations Charter and Geneva Convention. Humanitarian laws that apply to the Occupied Territories considering taking of Palestinians' private properties to construct the barrier is considered as an invasion of privacy and a deprivation of adequate human living standards. The International Court (2004) also found that "the construction of the wall constitutes breaches by Israel of its obligations under the applicable international humanitarian law and human rights instruments" (para. 12). After more than a decade of constructing the wall, an *Israeli Defense Forces* (IDF) colonel, Dr. *Danny Tirza*, who was the chief architect and route planner for the *Security Fence*, once stated that erecting the physical barrier was necessary to protect Israeli lives from Palestinian suicide bombers in spite the fact that two of the most influential Israeli prime ministers, *Ehud Barak* and *Ariel Sharon*, were initially against it for internal political considerations. However, Israel failed in delivering to the international community the security rationale

behind constructing this wall, and it was the major factor to the de-legitimization of Israel. The Wall created a conceptual ugly barrier between two neighboring people who both long for peace and prosperity.

In 2005, *Bil'in*, a village in Palestine started to organize a weekly protest against the wall construction that severs its local population from their agricultural lands mainly olive groves, and from businesses, hospitals and other vital services. A documentary on these weekly demonstrations and confrontations between Israeli soldiers and demonstrators was co-directed by a Palestinian farmer from Bil'in and a Jewish Israeli filmmaker. The Palestinian bought a video camera to record his son's birthday, and over the period of five years recorded his personal daily life account at his home while witnessing a "political trauma" there and capturing flying tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and injured or detained fellow villagers with his five broken cameras (Scott, 2012). The documentary that introduced the suffering of Bil'in to the world won several international film festival awards, the International Emmy Award for Outstanding Documentary and was nominated for the 2013 Oscars Academy Award. For the previously mentioned situations, the Palestinians hate the Wall and use it as a venting outlet for expressing their frustration and hardship.

Rhetorical Interpretations

The main concern of this research is that the rhetorical interpretations of graffiti on this wall will demonstrate that at a time when physical borders are virtually disappearing, this 'fence' in its simplest sense is not making good neighbors. There are external factors that influence the interpretation of graffiti on the Wall such as its structural dimensions: height, façade, depth, and any relevant history or mythology.

The Wall, four times longer and twice higher than the Berlin Wall (11.3 feet/ 3.6 meters) mostly constructed with two sets of barbed wire and concrete blocks climbs up to eight feet or twenty-five meters high in densely populated areas around Jerusalem and Bethlehem (*See Figure 14*, p. 80 & *Figure 27*, p. 103). It is not entirely uniform in height especially in areas where clashes are predictable between Palestinians and Israeli settlers. Some parts of the Wall are barb-wired high metal electrified fences with ground sensors, patrol and tank roads with two meters deep trenches. The camouflaged watchtowers that are equipped with video cameras, thermal imaging techniques and unmanned aerial vehicles, and soldiers inside tinted windows pointing shotguns downwards, do not frighten the Wall graffitiists.

The Wall graffiti have an abundance of challenges to conventional definitions and interpretations of graffiti. For example, graffiti discourse terminology such as *wallbanging* or *bombing* that became popular among graffitiists in the United States were used to emphasize solidarity between the subculture's members and to mock the incompetence of graffiti police. This adds a challenge to document whether this jargon is used or expressed by the Wall graffitiists in the Palestinian setting. Graffitiists in the Wall context whether Palestinians or international artists, are not in a sociolinguistic position to use for instance the jargon that a New York graffiti subculture would use. This jargon is not a trademark to unify graffitiists. The analysis will show that the ultimate humane goal of the Wall graffiti is what unites its graffitiists. Another challenge is that the Wall is an explicitly distinct landmark in an open space. The informality and immediacy of traditional graffiti in terms of their production and perception factors such as visibility, being found in public or unexpected spaces, were initially believed to be created by less

educated individuals or lower classes. Analyzing the Wall graffiti will support the idea that graffitiists come from different nations and have various levels of education.

Nevertheless, graffitiists who they are, or what background they come from, they seem to have a unified voice. The very few recent researches conducted on Palestinian graffiti emphasize the fact, that “Palestinian graffiti is still a key means of communication and an integral voice against Israel’s occupation” (Wiles, 2013, para. 1). Researchers also succeeded in labeling Palestinian graffiti as “*The graffiti of the Intifada*” (Petee, 1996, 2005), “*Tagging resistance*” (Wiles, 2013), and “*The spray can is mightier than the sword*” (Parry, 2011).

On the other side of the coin, some Jewish and Israeli research applaud graffiti that calls for a peaceful future in search of hope, not only how Jews are supposed to respect other Jews, but also how to respect the “Other”, in this case the Palestinian Arabs. According to Jewish traditions, Jews are not allowed to consume any food that is not kosher. A graffiti in *Haifa*, a beautiful coastal city in Israel on the Mediterranean depicts a pig with inclusive lyrics that read: “Hate Equates pig image Not Kosher”. Being critical of Orthodox Jews who lack tolerance, *Naomi Chazan*, a former member of the Israeli *Knesset* stated that the physical survival of the state of Israel depends on the “acceptance of others, democracy and religious tolerance” (Hafez, 2012).

In a nutshell, this chapter focused on the general background of the form and function of graffiti with a brief history starting from ancient times since scribbling and doodling were discovered in caves, throughout history, until modern times when a movement in contemporary graffiti surfaced in the United States. In the sixties and seventies, youngsters in the Bronx in New York created graffiti as a street art that

accompanied hip-hop and rap music as a form of dissent against racial inequalities. A local ghetto art that was the only venting space for the marginalized population was deemed illegal and was considered vandalism that entailed imprisonment. Crossing international geographical borders to Europe to international recognition with hip hop and rap music, graffiti maintained its nature of recording human sufferings and expectations. In Germany, it was the powerful political graffiti on the Berlin Wall that contributed to its destruction in 1989 after thirty years of violence and oppression. Even after its demolition, to the German people, the Berlin Wall functions as a mental reminder of the “Death Strip” or the “Deadly Kiss” of this wall during the *Cold War* and the era of the *Iron Curtain*. From Germany to England, it is Banksy, the British anonymous graffitist who revolutionized graffiti and regained it its merit and prestige worldwide as chapter three will show. Banksy’s ongoing creativity and political activism in many countries and particularly on the separation wall in Palestine, through graffiti, became the inspiration to so many, not only worldwide, but also in the Arab World. In the Middle East, the year of 1948 was a turning point when graffiti evolved from being a social colorful random street art into political calligraphic graffiti in several Arab countries especially during the Arab Spring revolutions in recent years, particularly in Egypt where graffiti played a major role in the ousting of a long-time dictator. In Palestine, the Wall that Israel commenced building in April 2002 started earning its title as the ultimate destination for national and international graffitists.

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GRAFFITISTS

National Palestinian graffitists contribute to the Wall messages as grassroots form of public communication and peaceful protest against the Israeli occupation. Generally speaking, graffiti on walls at a time of political turmoil, where advanced technological forms of communication means such as social media and cell phones are inaccessible, call for national unity, resistance, strikes and boycotts. During enforced curfews at the first *Intifada* or uprising in 1987, many Palestinians were killed, twenty thousand Palestinians were wounded and twenty thousand others imprisoned (Peretz, 1990). At that time, Palestinian graffitists risked their lives and sneaked out in the dead of night to paint strong statements around refugee camps and villages. Writing short and powerful nationalistic strong statements in any font and drawing the Palestinian flag was their main goal. If Israeli Defense soldiers or their collaborators caught graffitists, they would suffer long months of imprisonment if not shot on the spot.

Contemporary Palestinian graffiti is taking different steps due to the continuous changing demographics of Palestinian landscapes. For example, the significant component of most Palestinian graffiti in the refugee camps circled around commemorating and remembering freedom fighters, martyrs and Palestinian villages that were destroyed and depopulated. The graffiti on the walls represented nationally recognized symbols such as the Palestinian flag, the *koufiyeh headdress*, keys and slingshots. A Palestinian artist, *Ayed Arafah* told *Al-Jazeera* network that “Graffiti has become a tradition, particularly within camps”, and “Institutions both inside and outside the camps are now pushing this formal work to keep their public profile” (Wiles, 2013,

para. 8).

Arafah, joining other Palestinian graffitiists who prefer the Wall stay untouched, emphasizes the fact that he will not contribute to the “beautification” of the ugly military-gray wall rendering it acceptable (Lovatt, 2001), an intrusion worse than the wall itself, and unwelcomed intervention (Banksy, 2005). According to dean of research at Bethlehem University, Professor Khader (2017) states that by beautifying the Wall, critics have accused Banksy of “pale-ploitation” or “making profit of Palestinian sufferings”, and “normalizing the occupation” (para. 3). The Wall is becoming a tourists’ attraction similar to the Pyramids in Egypt where tourists come to admire the graffiti on the wall and do not see the outcomes the Wall has on Palestinian lives.

After Oslo Accords in 1993 between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), some civil powers were granted to the interim Palestinian Authority. A temporary truce encouraged international peace activists and supporters of the Palestinian cause to travel to the Palestinian Territories. For example, with the purpose of giving a new meaning to Palestinians and Israelis living peacefully together, project *Face 2 Face* that was dubbed as “Cultural Poaching”, was one of these projects with an artistic technique that used huge black and white posters of Palestinian faces that were pasted on the wall side by side with Israeli faces having the same job and making similar yet funny facial gestures. In 2007, *J.R.*, an internationally acclaimed French artist, came up with the idea of *Face 2 Face* wall art that was displayed in eight Palestinian and Israeli cities. On the one hand, this project sounded “silly” to some Palestinian artists as the posters on the Bethlehem section of the Wall did not have that much of an impact neither on locals nor on their international audience. The posters were considered

sarcastic and meaningless. However, the cooperation between national graffitists and international activists later resulted in a more aesthetic; more artistic, colorful and visually appealing local graffiti as we will see in chapter five in Martin Luther's King's quotes graffiti (*See Figures 17, 18, pp. 90, 91*), and the developed murals and large paintings such as Barghouti's (*See Figure 9, p. 72*). These aesthetic and developed murals outlasted the earlier recycled political handwritten statements that were more popular.

On the other hand, the construction of the separation Wall broadcasted Palestinian graffiti and caused it to take a more public and international role that later became a form of institutional collective projects. The influx of international artists to the Wall with their projects in solidarity with the Palestinians had a transformational effect on Palestinian graffiti that eventually led to a high degree of refinement. Some of these projects were insignificant and went unnoticed, whereas others were highly and internationally endorsed.

Banksy: A Quality Vandal

Through his abundant street art in Palestine, a British graffitist succeeded in putting the plight of the Palestinian people into an international spotlight. The prominent graffitist Banksy, who started as a young street artist from Bristol, was able to maintain his famous yet anonymous identity, just like most graffitists who avoid prosecution, while creating his provocative art that gained him a global reputation. This camera shy graffitist, who never played by New York hip hop spray can graffiti rules, adopted the stenciling technique that replicated the French infamous artist *Blek le Rat* for his rats' street stenciling style in the 1980s (Prou & Adz, 2008).

In the beginning of his career as a graffitist, Banksy was also nicknamed “Banksy the Rat” for his rat graffiti in London. Banksy’s graffiti have true power due to the fact that he creates them in a way that invites a dark sense of humor or satire to pressing social and political issues to show just how ridiculous they are in order to get people's attention. Banksy emphasizes this through the commentary that he writes as a part of his graffiti. He will often have the rat saying something relevant, but with a sense of sarcasm. Banksy wants people to look at what is going on around them and see that something is not alright and that changes need to be made.

The *Parachuting Rat*, for example, is a series of three paintings that were created by Banksy. Each of the three features a purple rat in aviator goggles making an anti-war and anti-capitalism statement with each of these paintings. Banksy’s correlation of his graffiti and rats is based on his belief about rats in that they “exist without permission. They are hated, hunted and persecuted ... if you are dirty, insignificant and unloved then rats are the ultimate role model; that you can win the rat race but you're still a rat" (Banksy, 2005, p. 83). Like rats, his graffiti art is perceived in the same way, he is aware that people do not want to see rats just like they do not want to see his graffiti.

One of Banksy’s most provocative graffiti he executed in England was on the wall of the post office in Oxford Street in London in 2008. The massive graffiti that was several stories high exploited a surveillance camera installed on the wall with a statement painted in large white capital letters that read “One Nation Under CCTV”. A boy wearing a red-hooded jacket was seen under the quote standing on a ladder writing the statement using a paint-roller, and on the bottom left corner of the wall a policeman with his dog was taking a photo of the boy in action. The acronym CCTV stands for “Closed

Circuit TV”, a clear objection on the surveillance government Britain has become. The Westminster City Council considered Banksy’s art as vandalism that was based on anti-government content, and issued an order for its removal (“Council Orders”, 2008).

Banksy’s graffiti was simply more than art without a legal permission.

It is important to note the significance of Banksy and his street art and how it started in London by being considered as vandalism and ended up on the Wall in Palestine so invaluable an art that is greatly charged with powerful political messages. One of Banksy’s satirical and political artwork in Wood Green area North London in May 2012 stirred a storm in 2013. Banksy stenciled “Slave Labor” as a black and white mural that depicted a young boy crouching on a sewing machine sewing a British colored blue, red and white flag intended as a reminder of the sweatshops that manufactured decorations and memorabilia for the royal anniversary of UK’s Queen Elizabeth’s *Diamond Jubilee* celebrations.

The mural was put for sale at an online auction in the U.K. *The New York Times* and the *British Broadcasting Company* (BBC) reported that according to the London-based *Sincura Group*, a concierge specialists who pride themselves in “obtaining the unobtainable”, Banksy’s graffiti that was auctioned online fetched \$1.1 million (Kozin, 2013, BBC, 2013). The mural was ripped off the wall, disappeared from London and resurfaced for sale again in February 2013 in the contemporary Fine Arts Auction Miami (FAAM) in the U.S. The original owners of the building later clarified this situation where the mural first appeared. Apparently, they solely owned the right to dispose of it as they please; they have no legal issues, and were given clearance and no theft claim by Scotland Yard and the FBI. However, the outraged residents of Wood Green and the

massive amount of emails and phone calls to the Miami auction house, forced the artwork sale to be cancelled at the last minute and the mural that represented a free asset gifted to the Wood Green community went back to the UK for new bids (BBC, 2013). Banksy, in an interview about this incident, stated that his art belongs to where he puts it, that he was so embarrassed his art fetched this unpredicted huge amount of money. And, although he is “condemned to a future of painting masterpieces”, he does not endorse his art to be exclusive for the privileged art collectors, nor does he approve the sale of his art out of its context for the valid reason that it was not performed in the first place for a financial gain (Bond, 2013). Nevertheless, Banksy’s stencil “Girl with Balloon” was sold for 73,250 sterling pounds, five times the estimated pre-auction value in an urban auction house (BBC, 2013). It is also worthy to note that Banksy’s works were targeted for theft in several occasions where two pieces were stolen from a gallery in London in 2010, and another piece was ripped off a hotel in Central London, ended for sale on eBay and was never found. Two years earlier, according to the *Daily Mail*, 226 artworks falsely attributed to Banksy. These were reported within the period of eight months in 2008 by the committee that Banksy had formed to identify his original works (Bond, 2013). The analysis of Banksy’s graffiti on the Wall in Palestine will demonstrate that the Wall is worthy of Banksy risking his life travelling secretly into a war zone to make statements against oppression via his authentic and valuable art.

In 2015, after the latest Israeli incursions in the Gaza Strip, Banksy travelled to Gaza from Egypt through illegal tunnels that Palestinians in Gaza constructed during the Israeli siege in order to smuggle food supplies and people in and out of the strip. Carrying a box of spray paint and covered with a hoodie and a mask, Banksy completed

two significant graffiti pieces on the rubble in Gaza. One was stenciled on a demolished wall and depicted a huge sized cat with a pink ribbon playing with a ball made of steel yarn collected from the rubble. Another one depicted the Greek goddess *Diode* or “The Thinker” sitting in a melancholy position on what seemed to be an iron door that remained after the original house was demolished. The news about this piece went viral when a reporter ‘tricked’ a naïve Palestinian to sell his house door for \$175 while the estimated price was hundreds of thousands of dollars (Knell, 2015). The “commodification of local graffiti . . . for transnational consumption” (Lovatt, 2001, p. 44), inscribes the Palestinian cause into a global discourse. On a different wall in Gaza, Banksy wrote, “If we wash our hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless we side with the powerful- we don’t remain neutral” (Knell, 2015).

Banksy’s rising notoriety lately is reflected in both movies and historical center shows worldwide. Banksy is credited with coordinating the 2010 Oscar-designated narrative in the film “Exit through the Gift Shop” which portrays a flourishing, enthusiastic street artist subculture. The film is by all accounts not the only medium through which the graffitist has been recognized (Mettler, 2012). The Historical Center of Contemporary Workmanship in Los Angeles facilitated “Craftsmanship in the Roads” in 2011 as one of the first displays ever to showcase road craftsmanship and graffiti (Mettler, 2012). The show phenomenally drew a bigger number of guests than has any other displays in the gallery's history. Banksy was selected for the *Times Magazine*’s list of the world’s most influential people in 2010. Banksy’s mammoth achievement was that he managed to free street art from elitists’ monopoly and galleries’ confinement.

Santa's Ghetto

The question that arises is whether Banksy's controversy can function only as a publicity stunt, or as an accessible creative political street art that is solemnly devoted to expose human sufferings and injustices of the Palestinians, and is dedicated to effect change. Banksy, with local and international graffitiists and artists completed several projects on the Palestinian Wall that were highly effective, motivated audience participation, and contributed to bringing the Palestinian national narrative and sufferings back into the global spotlight. *Santa's Ghetto*, as an annual art exhibition that Banksy masterminded, started in 2001 in venues such as warehouses and pubs in Oxford Street in London selling art on the religious bases of bringing back the Christmas spirit that Banksy thought was diminishing. The project is not affiliated with any governmental, political or racial institutions, and donates every penny the artists earn to local charities that serve people in need. According to the *Christian Monitor* website, a member of the Bristol city council who visited Banksy's Ghetto art exhibition stated that although they as a council have zero tolerance for graffiti, Banksy is an exception to the rule and his art is the kind of art that needs to stay, not washed off (Fredrick, 2013). In 2008, Banksy decided to abandon his outlaw status and joined the established world of art. He contacted and signed a confidential contract with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, and within nine months, Banksy's art displayed at the museum was according to Fredrick (2013), a "cell-out in every sense" (para. 5), a pun Fredrick used to free Banksy from being apprehended.

In 2007, Banksy decided to move Santa's Ghetto from Oxford to Bethlehem in order to improve the local Palestinian community that was suffering because of the Israeli

enclosures, and to encourage tourists to visit the location. Banksy's collective project there included twenty artists from different Palestinian cities such as Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Gaza in addition to international artists from the United States, England, Italy, France, Portugal and Spain (Parry, 2011).

He launched his project in a former chicken shop at the Manger Square in Bethlehem, across from the *Nativity Church*. There were two waves of international artists who each spent a week in the vicinity of the wall working on creating murals on the controversial Wall and touring the surrounding villages and communities. The murals that Banksy and his team fulfilled along the separation wall were around three stories high, and aimed at offering "the ink-stained hand of friendship to ordinary people in an extraordinary situation" (Schwartz, 2007, para. 4). Within few weeks, Santa's Ghetto in Bethlehem raised and donated one million dollars to *Dar al Kalima* College and the *Wi'am Project for Conflict Resolution* and Banksy's trust fund (Parry, 2011).

Researchers, artists and activists who are concerned with the importance of Palestinian graffiti on the Wall each with their skill attempted to prove that the spray can is mightier than the sword. Graffiti has not stopped aggressive Israeli policies towards the Palestinians, but they became a "formidable weapon in the struggle for hearts, minds and justice" (Parry, 2011, p. 10). One of the many artists who painted their thoughts is the American artist *Ron England* who painted a seventy-foot mural on the Berlin Wall at Point Charlie checkpoint in the mid-eighties. He believes that art can change the world, and the kind of art that focused on the political situation then in Germany, contributed to the sea of change that eventually led to the destruction of the Berlin Wall. As a participant world artist in Santa's Ghetto, Ron's graffiti "Pardon our Oppression" on the

separation wall expresses his distress over the footage of the difficult stages of painting in Bethlehem due to the occupation that were never aired in the United States (Parry, 2011). Ron wanted to show the double-standardness and in-transparency of the pro-Israel American media outlets for not showing the Palestinian hardship around the Wall.

On a local level, the participating artists challenged the Israeli narrative and with the increasing number of tourists, small businesses and taxi owners welcomed the outside world's solidarity. Writings on the Wall with Banksy's name and arrows pointing to Santa's Ghetto direction where Banksy's graffiti can be found are spotted in several places on the Wall in Bethlehem. As a result, the commodification of Banksy's graffiti (Ferrell, 1996) and marketing them as an alternative tourism site encouraged taxi drivers to offer tours to "souvenir hunters" (Henkel, 1993) and to pose for holiday photos.

Banksy's stenciling technique did not include any utterances or writings, yet the rhetorical visual images he produced were technically very powerful and intimidating. As he was painting, Israeli soldiers pointed guns at him and fired bullets in the air to scare him and disperse his spectators. This example of violence from a controlling authority is the natural response to non-violent resistance, a concept that ties with Foucault's *Panopticism* and the "panoptic device" (Foucault, 1975). Palestinian graffitiists are able to "subvert the hegemony of the dominant power by re-appropriating these hostile spaces and transforming them into performative sites where positive meanings are generated based on the affirmation between art and daily life" (Lovatt, 2001, p. 43). Nevertheless, playing on the aesthetic cord, foreign artists, particularly Banksy, "provided local Palestinian artists with a unique insight into the latest techniques and trends, creating a unique form of graffiti that mixes local and global aesthetics"

(Lovatt, 2001, p. 15).

Nine pieces in three major Palestinian cities; Abu Dis, Bethlehem and Ramallah were meant to be simple yet depicted profound messages hoping they could attract tourists and activists who might react to the political situation. Claiming the Wall as a public space for *Enlightment*, Banksy's graffiti proved to be "provocative without being directly polemical" (The Guardian, n.d., para. 6). For example, two of Banksy's most popular murals that depict a life size intriguing three-dimensional opening in the ugly cement gray wall suggest two interpretations. The first mural implies that the opening is a window to a brighter outside world in which the children of Palestine can enjoy a normal life like any other children in the world, experiencing the freedom of playing with sand on a beach. The other interpretation could mean that through this opening, a passerby can see the unfairness of the Wall on the Palestinian side; it depicts an Israeli child on the other side of the Wall enjoying his life on a beautiful day at the beach. Metaphorically speaking, these murals suggest that there is a bright future awaiting conflicting parties if the Wall disappears. The color significance of the blue clear sky in the opening with white sporadic clouds symbolizes freedom and peace. The second similar mural has the same opening but with a militant figure in black outfit carrying a rifle that may be depicting armed resistance or interference as the only means to tear this wall wide open and expose the bright side of the world behind it.

A third Banksy graffiti on the Wall that became popular worldwide as his political signature is the silhouette of a little girl with long braided hair wearing a short skirt and floating upwards in the sky while holding a cluster of balloons. Challenging gravity is one of the options that Banksy implied in this significantly stenciled graffiti as

one of the means to challenge the wall's height. Recently, Banksy, on his website, refashioned his famous iconic balloon girl with a head scarf commemorating three years of the civil war in Syria and standing in solidarity with Syrian children who were caught in the middle of a struggle for human rights and democracy (BBC, 2014).

Another fourth Banksy's creative stenciled graffiti that challenged the Wall's existence and that may be considered his simplest creations was the dotted straight thick black line starting from the top of the Wall, ending in a ninety degrees angle at the bottom, with a scissors suggesting the "cut here" cliché found on coupons. Banksy's creativity was also demonstrated in another graffiti on the Wall that looked like a manifestation of a mythical horse with a nine-meter high long neck trapped behind the wall, peeping from a tiny prison window at the top edge of the wall with its legs visible from another window at the bottom. This graffiti made local Palestinians pause and think about other options to tolerate or conquer this Wall.

The most popular Banksy graffiti is a twist on the famous artist Pablo Picasso's dove of peace that was chosen as the emblem for a peace conference in Paris in 1949. Banksy's huge white dove of peace wearing a bullet-proof vest marked with a bull's eye heart target and flying on a wall in Bethlehem carrying a green olive branch in its beak is still going viral on the web. The *Armored Dove of Peace* became a popular logo for different Palestinian and international activist organizations as it depicts the unstable peace in the region. To further promote Banksy's work and avail it to a broader community, the *Groupon* online retailer discount website offered this graffiti along with several other Banksy's political graffiti replicas on posters and cushions for sale for as low as twenty five US dollars per item.

One of Banksy's works that was misinterpreted by local Palestinians as offensive was the huge black-stenciled rat throwing stones at an Israeli watchtower in Bethlehem. The rat stenciling technique that was Banksy's original creative artwork was read by Palestinians to mean that children throwing stones were just like rats. The first Palestinian uprising in 1987 dubbed as the *Stone Throwers* revolution was applauded then by international media as a non-violent resistance technique. Such self-defense measures employed by young Palestinian children from refugee camps using slingshots in such political conflicts were considered non-life-threatening situations (Kuttab, 1988). In 2015, the Israeli prime minister announced war on stone throwers and authorized mandatory prison and the use of extensive lethal force. In order to confront endangerment, live ammunition is used instead of rubber bullets based on Israeli soldiers' interpretations of a life-threatening situation. It is difficult to predict what happened to such a graffiti and whether it was painted over.

However, the most controversial and misunderstood Banksy's work among his other politically loaded murals in Bethlehem in 2007 depicted an armed Israeli soldier stopping a donkey and checking his identification papers in a gesture portraying the Israeli strict measures to keep suicide bombers away. To some local Palestinians, this was a tremendous insult as they interpreted the donkey as embodying Palestinians for being unwise and lazy. Ironically, Banksy, whose intention was to highlight the Palestinian's plight and daily hardship living in the West Bank, was blamed then for misrepresenting the Palestinians who tried to erase it (*Reuters*, 2007). However, the *Donkey Document* mural was auctioned for a conservative estimate of \$600,000 at

Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills (*The Independent*, 2015). For some other local Palestinians, the satirical donkey mural literally shows the incompetence of the Israeli soldiers checking even donkeys' identities out of exaggerated fear.

Two Banksy murals, the "Wet Dog" that appeared on a bus stop, and the "Stop and Search" depicting a little girl searching an Israeli soldier that appeared on a butcher's shop, both murals disappeared and were auctioned and sold online for thousands of dollars (Saving Banksy, 2017). To Banksy, this art form is unhealthy as "predatory art speculators" make things harder, but as an important art form, it would be "a shame if it was killed by venture capitalism" (Saving Banksy, 2017).

It is worthy to note that Banksy's creative political murals in Palestine did not bear his autograph, the only way to authenticate his murals was to find them posted on his website. Professor *Paul Gough*, from University of the West of England, an academic who studies Banksy, is able to authenticate a stencil if it has all the hallmarks of a genuine Banksy. He can confirm whether a stencil is "very well cut, the quality of the spraying and that unique feathered edge that he [Banksy] is able to achieve when painting white on to black (Gough, 2012).

Ultimately, Banksy's satirical street art loaded with political statements are spreading and getting popular on canvas, in offices as well as in homes as posters and decorative items such as cushions throughout the world. Banksy's murals on the Wall in the West Bank and the Palestinian Occupied Territories not only challenged the Israeli narrative, but also generated mass media attention, and influenced the Western public perception of the Palestinian daily struggle. Banksy along with individual artists who travelled to the Palestinian Occupied Territories were convinced that their protest in

murals and images are invaluable messages to their governments for turning a blind eye on the viciousness of not only the wall, but the cruelty of being under an inhumane occupation in the twenty first century.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE ANALYSES OF THE WALL

Several theoretical approaches for discourse analysis are considered to reach a comprehensive understanding of the wall graffiti in this research. In addition to scrutinizing graffiti semantically, phonologically, and syntactically, I will consider two of the most popular linguistic and discourse approaches that are employed in rhetoric and discourse analyses namely Kenneth Burke's and Michael Halliday's will be consulted. Burke (1969), in *Rhetoric of Motives* follows Aristotle's suggestions that rhetoric's basic function is persuasion that is conditioned by identification which respectively entails sharing the common grounds of substantiality; substance in values, beliefs, background or personality. Persuasion also requires a sense of sharing a similar identity or sociality, the more similarity in substance, the greater identification with the audience and the better rhetoric. Burke's identification theory is compensatory to division. Burke's concept of identification with the audience applies to the graffiti on the Wall such as the writings and utterances suggest connectedness with those who suffered, were imprisoned or lost their lives, and those who entered into the collective memory of the Palestinians.

Halliday (1994) first came up with highly generalized perspectives that he called metafunctions (functional components) which contribute to the structure of grammatical units in language particularly clauses, and provides tools for understanding texts or language in context. His *Systemic Functional Theory* is compiled of three metafunctions that underline the use of language. First, the ideational metafunction (the environment or representation of reality), second, the interpersonal metafunction (establishing and maintaining interaction between a speaker and a listener), and third, the textual

metafunction where the representation of ideational and interpersonal complement each other combined meanings as texts, in particular nominal and verbal groups. Halliday applied his systemic theory to the description of English in the early sixties by showing for example an exchange between a speaker and a listener as having a *Theme* (a psychological subject as a textual function), a *Subject* (a grammatical subject as an interpersonal function), and an *Actor* (a logical subject as an experiential function).

Halliday (1994) contributes to the general understanding the Wall graffiti by introducing his metaphorical modes of expression that are interesting as he goes beyond the clause and identifies two classes of grammatical metaphors: *ideational metaphors* that include metaphors of transitivity, and the *interpersonal metaphors* that include metaphors of mood and modality. Moreover, Halliday's analyses of utterances are based on philosophical and logical considerations in addition to traditional grammatical interpretations. Any discourse analysis he argues must be based on grammar as an attempt to crack its semantic code. He defines functional grammar as a natural grammar where everything in it can be explained by reference to how language is used and how each element is interpreted as functional with respect to the whole.

Along with Halliday, Hanauer's (2011) structured approach analyzes four chains of political discourse that apply to the Wall graffiti: Firstly, it is a discourse of fear of destruction: the Wall functions as a defensive barrier according to the argument that is promoted by Israel. For example, a graffiti that reads "Israel lives" addresses the fear of its destruction, a discourse defiant to the historical Jewish genocide. Palestinian suicidal bombings that are considered anti-Semitic situate the Wall in a defensive discourse mode rather than an oppressive one. Secondly, the human rights argument about the right to

equality constructs the Wall as a human rights violation and an injustice against innocent people. Thirdly, the colonial Israeli occupation of Palestine dictates the anti-Western and anti-colonial sentiments on the Wall. Graffiti utterances of the sort expose the connection between Israel and the USA, the US aid for Israel's expansion of its borders, and the Israeli transfer policy out of Israel against the Palestinians. Fourth, some graffiti supports the idea of the "New Jews", in that the Israeli Jews who metaphorically speaking are David, the Philistines' champion of God and the weaker opponent, used their diaspora and persecution as justification to establish their state; consequently, the Palestinians were persecuted and dispersed. Tables are turned in the rhetoric of the Wall graffiti. Israel became *Goliath*, the much stronger adversary, and the Palestinians are now *David*. The Wall promotes political positions and stands as evidence that holds true as a hindrance for the creation of a self-governing Palestinian state. Hanauer (2011) suggests that either Israelis disappear, or they must accept the logic of creating a Palestinian state.

A prominent researcher on displacement and human rights, Julie Peteet, the chair of the Department of Anthropology at Louisville Kentucky University visited Palestine in 1996 and published her article "The writing on the walls: The graffiti of the intifada" on the graffiti on the walls in the Palestinian town of *Beit Hanina* before the Wall was constructed. Her argument is useful to compare and contrast graffiti as a cultural production, and as another form of resistance in such a political context, at a different time, on a different surface, for different audiences. Peteet's notion that when a graffiti is recorded, the images and messages circulate across time and space, and by photographing and writing about these graffiti, a permanent imprint are fixed on the narratives of resistance, and they are given longevity and deployed to speak to the world. "As items in

an archive, the graffiti also inscribed, however fleetingly, a chapter in Palestinian social history” (Peteet, 1996, p. 146). The Wall graffiti are highly charged with political rhetoric and reading graffiti does not occur in vacuum. Collecting photographs of graffiti is easy compared to reading and accurately interpreting them. Some are simple and to the point that anyone can understand, and others are difficult to decode.

Peteet (1996) argued that “graffiti and the way in which they were read, went far beyond a binary of occupied and occupier” (p. 140), they “intervened in dominant-subordinate relations” (p. 155). She contends that she is interested in what graffiti meant to the Palestinians not the Israelis. To Peteet (1996), these graffiti were not “monolithic voices” but “polysemic”, and elicited multiple meanings and different actions that acted to record history, and to “form and transform relationships”. She presents an interesting analogy of the graffiti to the quick and short television advertisements that aim to attract consumers, and so does the short segment of a graffiti that was hurriedly inscribed to implement specific knowledge on the viewers.

The function of the intifada graffiti was and is still is a reminder of the abnormality of Palestinian lives under occupation. The intifada graffiti functioned as a part of a repertoire of actions of civil disobedience, which encouraged resistance, and challenged Israeli surveillance. Graffiti registered the rejection of the fragmentation of the Palestinian society, honored or mourned martyrs, served as a point of departure for political discussions, and a way of getting the news that invited active response from activists. The semantic context was mainly directed to an internal or local audience, so Arabic literacy was not always necessary. It was a deadly cat and mouse game; inscribing and erasing; a deadly contest between the Palestinians and the Israelis over

who would have the upper hand. Graffiti then, among the Palestinians “affirmed unity of sentiment and identity” (Peteet, 1996, p. 152). Yet, after 1990, the wall graffiti depicted political affiliation, and indexed competition between Palestinian factions, and warned against collaboration with the occupier. Since it was the “stone throwing” uprising, graffitiists wanted wall local home owners to get out of their homes and participate in resistance activities in spite of the high fines for having anti-Israeli writings on their walls. The intifada graffiti also displayed religious diversity and tolerance. The act of graffiti writing in Palestine became to be considered as a rite of passage to underground non-violent resistance.

One of the rhetorical theories that are best suited for analyzing graffiti especially in this case study of the Wall is in Baird and Taylor (2011) who proved to be useful in categorizing the types of graffiti on the Wall as speech acts. A good example of this theory is of an Australian graffitiist called *Arthur Stace* who wrote “eternity” around half a million times in different areas in Australia over thirty five years. While his identity remained unknown, his persisting and inspiring message reached four billion people when his cursive chalked “eternity” appeared at the end of the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2002, “One single practitioner can speak to a cross-section of people about a variety of historical, social and cultural issues” Baird and Taylor (2011, p. 234). So, “Pedestrianism” resembles a kind of speech act.

The “Pedestrianism” concept may be considered an extension to Burke’s identification theory, and ties up with Johnstone’s (2002) concept of relationship among participants. Any communicative event shapes discourse, and vice versa, discourse shapes participants’ communication. She suggests power and solidarity. In discourse

communities, first there is power where one controls the other. Second, there is solidarity; a symmetrical aspect of human relations, and thirdly, there is a hierarchy in social groups. Therefore, discourse communities share norms such as language, jargon, and the use of people's first names which is very relevant to Burke's identification concept and which Johnstone (2002) terms "Social Alignment". This social alignment that is displayed in the messages of the wall graffiti is identical to this concept with different naming for creating common affiliations and solidarity, shared knowledge, discourse patterns, forms of address, and breaking the conventions, where discursive patterns function as signals for group solidarity. To Johnstone (2002), social roles dictate discourse roles. For example, the form of address creates and shapes relationships: a student who addresses a professor with Dr. is making a rhetorical move for a predefined situation. The analyses of the Wall graffiti will show that graffitiists create roles and reinforce the differences in their messages.

Johnstone (2002) also suggested that discourse is shaped by "Linguistic Politeness" which stands for the ways in which a speaker adapts or not, to their interlocutors as human beings with the same needs, in certain situations where people are often indirect. Lakoff (1973) also discussed three rules of politeness. First, it is the formality or distance maintained so not to impose on others. Secondly, there is a kind of hesitancy or deference over how and if the addressee would respond. And thirdly, there is equality or a camaraderie act that function as if it is equal with the addressee. *Positive or Negative Face* or *Politeness Strategies* such as being direct, phrasing statements, using emotional manipulation, and being indirect, apologizing, being overtly differential can be effective tools to analyze the Wall graffiti. Some graffitized utterances may tend to

converge; be similar to those the viewers identify with, or diverge from those who they do not identify with. The concept of “Linguistic Accommodation” that Johnstone (2002) suggested does not differ much from that of Burke’s identification.

Goffman’s (1981) “Footing” concept in which the role a speaker takes in a discourse shifts for example from being the principal author, to being the speech writer or the story teller or spokesman. This notion that does not exist in Burke’s or Halliday’s, will be illustrated in the detailed discussion of *Figure 13* (p. 79). “Categorization” which is another concept the discourse analysis of the Wall graffiti avoided in most cases was not to let predefined analytical categories such as gender orientation, ethnicity, social identities, and place of birth or color affect the analysis. Moreover, *Face Threatening Acts* such as purposely offending someone were generally avoided, as the photos’ analyses will show except for few rare cases. As if graffitiists knew the social identity of the addressees or the addressed in spite the fact that some graffiti may have been direct criticism and may have offended some viewers.

One of the interesting types of research on political and media contexts that can contribute to our understanding of contexts in which words and images become part of a political struggle -taking the Wall as a case study- would be a multimodal discourse analysis suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). The *Multimodality* they suggest is using a variety of materials to cross boundaries between arts, for example documents that acquired colored illustrations, instead of mono-modality that is when only language is used to speak for linguistics. Multimodal texts such as magazines and newspapers, films or music, costumes, poetry, traffic signs, theaters, fashion all have visual semiotics or images where same meanings can be expressed in different semiotic modes, and so does

the visual semiotics of the Wall graffiti.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) discuss the four domains of practice they call strata in which meanings of a discourse are articulated. They are first discourse that is “socially constructed knowledges of some aspects of reality”, and discourse exists not only in language, but also appears and exists in multiplicity of other sites or modes such as magazines, television programs and graffiti. Secondly, there is a design that uses semiotic resources such as the language of graffiti that will add a different layer of signification. Thirdly, there is the production or the use of the skills or medium involved in a design where the design and production may overlap, and the medium is the material used in the production. And finally, it is the distribution where designers need to create ways to promote or mass distribute their production.

The discourse of the Wall graffiti is articulated in modes other than language, they can be realized through color. Political discourse can also be realized through color considering the Wall as a non-conventional text medium. To Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), color is a mode with well-articulated discursive possibilities of meanings. Color association with social and cultural distinctive aspects would create different experiential effects and meanings; therefore, associations are set up visually rather than verbally. The colors for example of the Palestinian flag or the black background of Martin Luther King quotes on the Wall articulate the rich values that are attached to it.

The Wall as a multimodal object/phenomenon or environment contributes to the potential meanings of color, and ties with Foucault’s (1982) theory of discourse as in the ability to select the discourses “in play” at a particular moment, in a particular text for a particular reason. For example, the authors extensively discuss colors to demonstrate

how color is a multimodal discourse mode in the French magazine *Maison Francaise*. On the front cover, a photo of summer presents white and blue windows, frames, roofing, swimming pool, furniture and crockery. The selection of colors sharply articulates a form of living (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). It is not only the aesthetics or style, but color projects value systems and a valuable discourse is articulated through the use of colors in the Wall graffiti.

The most interesting research on political and media contexts that contributes to our understanding of words and images on the Wall as part of a political struggle are Lakoff's *Moral Politics* (2002) and Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Lakoff's "Moral Reasoning" approach is based on metaphorical reasoning. He argues that we use conceptual metaphors whether consciously or unconsciously for moral reasoning; for example, we use terms of financial transactions such as "I owe you", "I am indebted to you", "I will pay you" in everyday communication. This ties up with Aristotle's three most effective devices for speech, which are metaphors in addition to actualization and antithesis. For example, take Burke's quote "rhetoric . . . would be designed to help us take delight in the human barnyard", here the human barnyard is a metaphor developed by George Orwell's *Animal Farm* satirizing society where humans were compared to farm animals. To add to the high importance of metaphors in political rhetoric, Aristotle's three means of persuasion include ethos and logos in addition to pathos that appeals to emotions by using metaphors. Using a metaphorical approach to analyze the Wall graffiti will show that emotions namely pathos will win over rationality.

CHAPTER 5

ANOTHER BREAK/BRICK IN THE WALL

In time of crisis, language plays a crucial role in communicating to the world what is happening. Therefore, the Wall graffiti as a significant discourse genre engages key participants who have identities that are crucial to unfolding the realities the Wall suggests. Borrowing from Martin and Rose (2007), these “key participants” are introduced either as influential individuals or countries responsible for the plight of the Palestinians, or those who suffer because of the plight. The elements of communication in each of the selected graffiti have an addresser, and addressee, a message, and a rich content. The easiest graffiti to read are the ones depicting characters or utterances of iconic international individuals, movements or musicians who play a role in adding more meanings to the messages of the Wall such as ex-president Obama (*Figure 1*), Martin Luther King and Pink Floyd (*Figure 2*), Nelson Mandela, (*Figure 3*), Malcolm X and Batman (*Figure 4*), Bernie Sanders (*Figure 5*), Frida Kahlo (*Figure 6*), feminism logos (*Figure 7*), and John Lennon (*Figure 8*).



Figure 1. “YES WE CAN”.

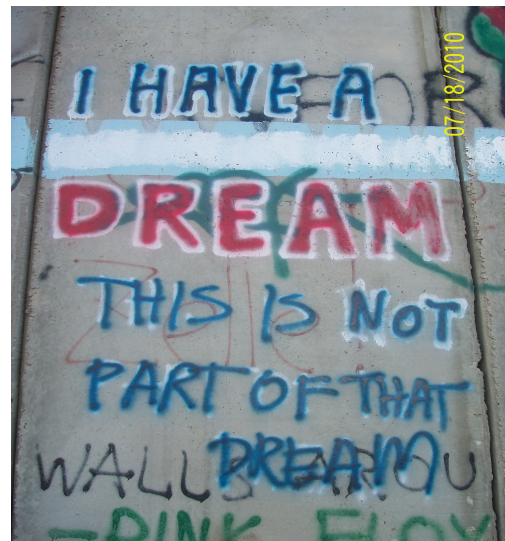


Figure 2. “I HAVE A DREAM”.



Figure 3. "N. MANDELA" 2010.



Figure 4. Malcolm X and Batman" 2017.



Figure 5. "Bernie Sanders" 2017



Figure 6. "Frida Khalo" 2017.

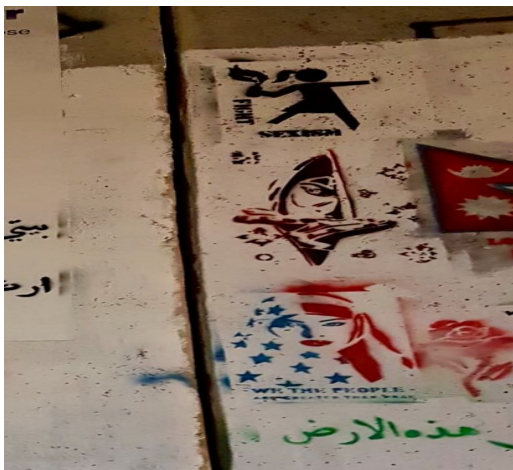


Figure 7 "Feminism Logos" 2017.



Figure 8. "John Lennon" 2013.

The lyrics of John Lennon's 1971 Billboard song "Imagine all the people" (*Figure 8*) proves the fact that it became a ritual to play this song in the wake of a terrible event. This ritual record was played after John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. After 9/11, it was played as a tribute for the fallen. After the devastating Tsunami hit the Indian Ocean in 2004, and recently, it was played on several music stations after the terrorist attack in Paris in 2016. The powerful inspiring lyrics call for a unified world of peace. To some local Palestinians, the song maybe unheard of among those who were denied the opportunity to be educated not only about Lennon's song and its historical context, but also about the American culture that may decrease the cultural misunderstanding that entails animosity towards the unknown. This leaves spectators to speculate whether a foreigner or a local Palestinian performed this verse on the Wall. The first verse of the song written in white caps is unrecognizable as it was painted over with blue paint (See *Figure 8*).

The Wall graffiti function mysteriously in the way it attracts graffiti writers from different walks of life. Still in the world of music, it is interesting to know that the famed Roger Waters, founding member of the Pink Floyd rock band and songwriter of Pink Floyd's famous *The Wall* song, is one of the graffitists of the Wall. Pink Floyd's Wall song that was a major hit in the seventies and ranked as one of the 500 greatest songs of all times refers to the metaphorical self-imposed isolation wall from society that represented Floyd's traumas in his childhood. Every trauma added a brick to the Floyd's wall that an actual wall was erected every time the rock band performed on stage with Waters playing solo guitar wearing a doctor's outfit. Roger Waters narrated a United Nations' film on the Wall commemorating five years for the International Court of

Justice decree to dismantle the Wall that Israel is building in the Palestinian Territories. In the film *Walled Horizons*, Waters (2014) visited Palestine in 2009 and interviewed Israeli officials responsible for building the Wall, and met with Palestinians who actually need permits to live in their own homes behind the Wall. Featured in this film holding a spray can and writing on the Israeli Wall in upper case red paint “NO THOUGHT CONTROL”, Waters extended his wall song to the Palestinian Wall.

Earlier in 2004, Roger Waters and the UK’s *War on Want* organization collaborated to launch a campaign against the Wall. The charitable organization that was established in the UK in 1951 to fight global poverty and oppression, believes in the importance of language to correctly describe the Palestinian situation. The organization also has a distinctive division called *Justice in Palestine* that mainly aims to stop anyone from selling arms to Israel, stop the imprisonment of Palestinians including women and children, and to support the movement for *Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions* (BDS) against Israel. In opposition to the Israeli occupation and part and parcel of the academic and cultural boycott of Israel, Waters relocated his concert that was supposed to take place in Tel Aviv in 2009 claiming that it would give “legitimacy to Israel’s colonial Wall”. Waters urged his peer musicians and artists not to perform in Israel, and to be brave enough to speak out against Israel’s apartheid policies just like America needed artists and musicians to speak out against Vietnam War (“War on Want”, 2006). Waters’ stand bringing the Palestinian’s struggle for freedom into the forefront of global attention and his commitment to speaking out against Israeli in spite the threat to his career was lauded by Palestinians as a gesture of solidarity. On the other hand, he was accused of being a Nazi and anti-Semitic by pro-Israeli observers and commentators. Waters, who

performed on the Berlin site in 1990, used the metaphor of the wall in his early beginnings in the 70s to represent his inner unstableness. Connecting these two high profile sites, his wall to the separation wall, he evolved from a rock star to a global activist advocating Palestinian rights.

A huge outlined heart graffito filled with white bricks on the Wall (*See Figure 5*) that looks identical to Pink Floyd's *The Wall* album cover, probably executed by a Pink Floyd's fan, cements the connection between these two walls. The title of this chapter plays on the title of the song referring to the fact that every graffito on the Wall may somehow add a break to its demolition rather than a brick to its construction.

Piecers, Taggers or Bombers

A graffito of a popular figure, *Marwan Barghouti*, is a significant one on the Wall. Barghouti, quoted in the media as the "Palestinian Mandela", is a political activist who was detained in 2002 and convicted to five life sentences for his activism against the Israeli occupation. In spite local and international outcries to free Barghouti, and of the many prisoners' exchanges between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Barghouti was never released. One Israeli soldier namely *Jilad Shalit* who was freed from Hamas, was worth seventy freed Palestinian prisoners- out of almost eleven thousand in Israeli jails in a prisoners' exchange deal with Israel in 2010. "International human rights organizations estimate that since 1967 more than 630,000 Palestinians (about 20 percent of the total population) in the Occupied Territories have been detained at some time" (Carter, 2006, p. 197), and there are still around eleven thousand Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails including women and children. According to Guinness World Records (2009), *Nael Barghouti* who was detained when he was twenty-one years old began his life sentence in

an Israeli prison in 1978. He broke the world's record for the longest serving political prisoner who marks this year thirty-nine years. Longer than Nelson Mandela, the second world record prisoner breaker was also a Palestinian who served thirty one years and was released in 2008.

It is worthy noting that in recent years, mainly following the *South African 2001 World Conference Against Racism*, advocates of Palestinian human rights developed an analogy in terms of the many similarities and few differences that the Israeli and South African regimes have in common (Jamjoum, 2009). In the conference, Palestinians were defined as victims of racial discrimination, living under an apartheid system and enduring humiliation, imprisonment of activists such as Barghouti, hardship, displacement, and even death especially in Gaza Strip. The comparison was developed due to the relationship between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the South African Liberation Organization, and on the other side, the relations between Israel and the South African Apartheid system. What was applied in South Africa is still being applied in Palestine (Jamjoum, 2009). Burning issues such as segregation and ghettoization of the Palestinians in Bantustans defers the two states solution and confirms the colonial unlawful dominance of one over the other. The Palestinian Mandela, Barghouti's starry-eyed mural stands out; an expressive face on a solid light blue background was left untouched in 2015 (*See Figures 9, 10*).



Figure 9. “FREE BARGHOUTI 2010”.



Figure 10. “FREE BARGHOUTI 2013”.

The Barghouti section of the Wall, in traditional gang graffiti can be called a *burner*; an exceptional masterpiece, created by a *piecer* that no graffitist dares to *diss*. *Dissing*, another gang subculture terminology borrowing, is a short for disrespect; if a writer paints over a piece, he is *dissing*, but if he gets *dissed*, he loses respect (Rahn, 2002). For example, in New York graffiti code of rules, you never paint over another piece without the original graffiti artist’s permission unless you are in the middle of a graffiti war. In the case of the Wall, many utterances are written over in other sections of

the Wall such as the John Lennon lyrics, but such gang graffiti rules are disregarded particularly of Barghouti's graffiti that comes in completing the missing pieces of the puzzle. It was not dissed for two years to emphasize the fact that Israel remains as the foundation for violence especially with its aggressive holding of prisoners. The function of traditional graffiti here intersects with Barghouti's mural in that it is deployed to serve as the argument of long time prisoners and invites readers to entertain certain associations.

Following the conventions of traditional graffiti, two schools of style are observed here. The Barghouti graffiti is not a *throw-up*; a spray-painted freehand graffiti using one or two colors that takes few minutes, and is easy to throw on the wall and be able to run away such as most of New York's subway graffiti. The temporal element is crucial in the production of such a graffiti; painting images, cartoons or anime is considered new school in graffiti style, as it is more time consuming than old school. For example, New York's old school graffiti style that maintains its origins refers to the seventies and eighties' freehand lettering style without using any techniques, stencils or rulers. The graffiti that reads "Free Barghouti" is a typical example of both old school and new school graffiti styles. In the hip-hop subculture, old school graffitiists are called *writers*, whereas image graffitiists are called *artists*. Writers and artists of the Barghouti graffiti could be any of the two groups of graffitiists of the Wall, either local Palestinians or foreign tourists and activists or a collaboration of both. It is a challenging task to investigate the Israeli's attitude during the painting process. At first, when the Wall was constructed, the Israeli soldiers in the watch towers would scare the graffitiists by firing bullets in the air, but later on, they seemed to be careless about whatever is performed on

the Wall as long as it is not on the Israeli side. Nevertheless, whoever performed this mural took his, her, or their time to paint it and was/were confident it will last.

Barghouti's graffiti is tagged several times by different graffitiists; *tags* of some artists are spotted on the painting, and even on the collar of Barghouti. The top right tag and the far left bottom tags seem to belong to the same graffitiist (See *Figure 10*). Signing or *tagging* graffiti is crucial to traditional gang graffiti. Not all graffiti on this part of the Wall are tagged; tagging is compromised in less important graffiti.

The photos of the graffiti segment are performed on the Palestinian side of the Wall where graffitiists drew another image of the late Palestinian president Yasser Arafat depicting the fact that Barghouti is a protagonist as important to the Palestinian cause as much as Arafat. Connotations of the Barghouti painting are barely perceived by foreign viewers who are not politically aware of the link between the two images, and vice versa, locals would not understand the tag next to Barghouti's graffiti not because it is in English, but due to their lack of general knowledge about tagging in the art of graffiti.

It is noteworthy to mention from this angle Aristotle's stand on imagination in that images serve as if they were contents of perception, and images and reason can originate a movement, and a movement is dangerous unless guided by reason. Imagination may reinforce negative or prejudiced opinions, and appeals to imagination were treated in classical theories of rhetoric as appeals for persuasion by the use of *ethos* and *pathos*. Aristotle's concept of image is similar to Kant's in that an image can be perceived through senses and remembered in the imagination. This analysis also ties up with the notion of *provenance* discussed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) that "build upon the idea of imported *signifieds* from another domain, culture, place, time or group

that are associated with the importing group” (p. 72). Looking at the graffiti ‘from episode to episode’, the gaze of Barghouti’s eyes directly address the viewers, and his lifted handcuffed wrists as if stepping out of the Wall signaling resentment of oppression are but examples of Burke’s identification theory and connectedness that entails persuasion, and O’Toole’s (1994) interpersonal modal functions. The facial features of Barghouti express anger and depict information about his character and social status as a frustrated prisoner; a representational modal function where a special relationship is established with the viewer. “Meanings are conveyed as whole discourses that people already know what they mean in spite their vagueness” (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001, p. 74).

The artists are also equipped with modal systems such as the colors of the paint that is used, especially using solid paint in the background isolating an image that subconsciously affects the viewers’ engagement with the Wall cement slabs as a whole. To demonstrate, the colors of the letters in the “US AID” banner graffiti (*See Figure 11*) are the actual colors of the American flag: red, white and blue. The “Americanization” of the Wall as a “shared American-Israeli production” (Hanauer, 2011) makes this graffiti so powerful as it directs the attention to the US support to Israel and sums up the detestation the locals and pro-Palestinians feel towards the US. Based on Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), this graffiti also is not mono-modal where language is the only modal used. It conforms to the strata concept where discourse exists not only in language, but also in the socially constructed knowledge, in the colors and design, and in the skills and medium used in the production. This is an interesting part of the Wall because it took advantage of writing by different people at different times, a jointly constructed graffiti by more than one person. The color significance of the word ‘US’ in black, and the word

‘AID’ in red, ties up with the fact that the United States annual military support to Israel exceeds billions of dollars paid by American tax-payers. The banner poses a demand at the top of the graffiti that reads “QUESTION YOUR LEADERS!!!” then a bold statement that reads “MADE IN THE USA” at the very bottom of the black slate written in white uppercases. An accusation kind of a statement written in red and dark blue on a white backdrop at the very low part of this section reads “PARTNERS WITH ISRAEL IN ETHNIC CLEANSING/APARTHEID IN PALESTINE” (See Figure 11).



Figure 11. “US AID” and “MADE IN THE USA” 2010.

In the same vein, the “YES WE CAN” (See Figure 1) graffiti of a hanging Palestinian flag that is double the size of a medium person, in red, black, white and green illustrated in might take foreigners a longer time or never recognize that it is painted with the official colors of the Palestinian flag, yet it can be instantly identified by the locals. Another controversial and colored example is the red flame of fire on a black cross on the watchtower that encompasses religious Christian views of reconciliation and peace, the official Cross and Flame symbol of the United Methodist Church confuses the local

Muslims, who although they may recognize the simple cross, but they probably do not know which Christian sector it belongs, to or what does it symbolize (See *Figure 12*).



Figure 12. “Symbol of Christianity”.

Religious Christian graffiti symbols and biblical depictions or utterances are close to none in the graffiti of the Wall. The Palestinian Arab Christian identity is totally out of the question in the graffiti on the Wall. While the elementary feature in the Black Freedom Movement was prophetic traditions, the absent yet present religion played a relatively major role in that era; the significance of a Christian cross then was powerful. In comparison with the Palestinian case, for example, Christian activist *Hanan Ashrawi* was harshly critiqued by ordinary Palestinians for not wearing at least a cross pendant when she went on air or to conferences worldwide. Palestinian Christians blamed her for not showing the world that Christian Arab Palestinians do exist in the Occupied Territories. There was a strong belief worldwide even among Muslims in the Arab World that Christians in Palestine were remnants of the Crusaders who came from Europe in the sixteenth century.

Also, there was always a sort of a conspiracy theory on national and international media outlets not to show the world that Palestine had an Arab Christian community whose pain also lead them to join a movement that was not a religious one; it was a movement against a ferocious occupation.

Beliefs, values and shared knowledge between graffitists and viewers from different cultures more likely play a very important role in extracting a shared meaning. By studying the connotations of the utterances, sentences or statements on the Wall, meanings can be extracted by knowledge of the social, physical and psychological factors that influence the kind of communication that is established by reading the Wall. Three sorts of contexts are observed here (Cutting, 2002), first, what the writers or speakers know about what they see around them. Secondly, the background knowledge context of what the readers and writers know about each other, and thirdly, the co-textual context that is based on what the speakers know about what they are saying. There are assumptions that writers and readers share; probably cultural and interpersonal background knowledge about the situation in Palestine that the writers and readers carry in their minds and facilitates the interpretation of most of the Wall graffiti.

Patterns of the Wall graffiti

Several linguistic patterns of graffiti are recognized from the analyzed photographs. Graffiti patterns can be analyzed linguistically from a phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic approach. Most of the Wall “utterances”, to borrow from Adams and Winter (1997), are either recycled universal quotes mostly applicable to social or political struggles such as “ONLY FREE MEN CAN NEGOTIATE’ borrowed from Nelson Mandela (*Figure 3*), or in Reisner’s (1997) terms, a “conceit”, an elaborate analogy or a borrowed literary device. A poetic phonological device may be spotted in one utterance such as alliteration or sound repetition in “THE OPPRESSED BECOMES THE OPPRESSOR” (*Figure 13*). Other graffiti patterns are written in one word such as “Disposed” written in red underneath Obama (marked on the photo with a black arrow), or a complete sentence with words that rhyme as in “There is no security on this earth, only opportunity” (*Figure 14*).



Figure 13. “THE OPPRESSED BECOME THE OPPRESSOR” 2010.



Figure 14. “Disposed,” and “There is no security on this earth only opportunity” 2010.

There are relatively few crossed-out graffiti but not in the gang sense of “crossing out” (Adams & Winter, 1997). A crossing is a sign of hostility that creates enmity towards a subculture and could be analyzed as a call for violence in traditional gangs’ graffiti. The “YES WE CAN” part of the Wall photographed in 2010 was decorated with different patterns of graffiti; some were immature scribbles, and undecipherable symbols, whereas others were beyond analysis such as MR iX in light blue (Figure 15). A quote written in dark blue English letters at the very bottom reads, “Victory is to win without a fight”. Another utterance reads “ain’t no winners in wars” and “ain’t no losers”, someone seems to have added the letters ‘coz’ in the middle between the two parts of the utterance where the final utterance would read “ain’t losers coz war ain’t over”. The use of the contraction ‘ain’t’ indicates informality, and for being down to earth written so low on

the Wall identifies with the undermined subculture. In the case of the Wall, and in spite of the massive height, width and size of the concrete slabs compared to the size of two female adults sitting down on the concrete floor, the majority of graffiti are concentrated on the accessible lowest longitudinal part of the Wall (See *Figure 15*).



Figure 15. “MR iX” 2010.

Echoes of the Civil Rights Movement

The literature on the Civil Rights Movement, rich with great stories of ordinary people who believed in their cause, rings a loud bell. In order to analyze some graffiti photos on the wall that are relevant to the Civil Rights Movement in America, it is important to make the analogy between blacks and Palestinians and how the two people relate in terms of their struggle for freedom and human rights. On the historic day of April 4th 1986, Rev. Samuel "Billy" Kyles was honored that Dr. Martin Luther King with his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) aides were planning to come over for dinner while King was in Memphis backing up striking sanitary workers. Kyles (qtd. in Madison, 2008) said

I don't think there will be a time when we can say, ‘Now King's dream has been realized . . . [t] he dream evolved, it's not just for black people, it's universal. People everywhere can dream and want to dream about freedom and equality and

they use Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement as a model all over the world. (para. 16)

This quote will trace echoes of the American civil rights movement far beyond the Atlantic to the Middle East, to Palestine in particular or what is currently known as the *Occupied Territories* or the West Bank of the River Jordan. It is crucial to know that with all the ink that was used to write about the great American Civil Rights Movement, not a single drop was used to write about blacks in Palestine. Sources on this particular issue are extremely rare; however, the immense literature on the Palestinian dilemma suggests that Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories proudly qualify to be called inoffensively “niggers” and “blacks” of that area with all the positive and noble meanings that these two specific taboo words could bear. It is important to understand why some Palestinians believe they strongly relate to blacks.

Oppressed people throughout history act similarly under certain circumstances. There are more similarities than differences in terms of social, political and religious rhetoric between what will be defined in this research as the “Palestinian Freedom Movement” compared to the “Black Freedom Movement”. Several factors such as ideologies and beliefs, charismatic leaders and resistance strategies have a great effect on fulfilling a dream of freedom that is represented in the Wall graffiti. For more than sixty years, the Palestinians have been dreaming about almost the same dream of freedom, justice and equality that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated for. On May 15th, the day of *al Nakba* or the catastrophe in 1948, the state of Israel was created at the expense of the Palestinian people.

During the sixties and the seventies when America was hunting blacks,

Palestinians were also being hunted. In 1967, Israel and the Arab countries were engaged in a war that resulted in Israel's usurping more land, the West Bank and Gaza. About seventy eight percent of Palestine, Sinai of Egypt, southern borders of Lebanon and the Golan Heights in Syria were occupied. Arabs were not well organized; Israel was well armed and determined to fight for the new state. In exile, Yasser Arafat, a young nationalist Palestinian established the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1969, a form of a political-social organization. Influenced by Castro, Che Guevara and the Vietnam War, communism, socialism, nationalism and the fight for freedom, another symbol of this mix of doctrines, Arafat became popular worldwide, in particular for his military attire.

Arafat's *koufiyeh*; a black and white-checked head cover or scarf that is part of the Palestinian traditional costume, was worn by men during the harvest season to protect farmers' heads from direct sun, and to keep them warm in winter gained more popularity than its bearer (*Figure 16*). Mainstream individuals generally despise a subculture's dress code particularly if connotations of radicalism and violence are one-sidedly associated with it. However, the *koufiyeh* became an international controversial fashion statement, a craze and "a la militaire" style that symbolizes freedom and solidarity for some, but symbolic of Muslim extremism and terrorism for others. In 2008, a Dunkin Donuts televised advertisement featuring the Food Network chef Rachael Ray promoting iced coffee wearing a *koufiyeh* scarf was pulled out from all media outlets in the US based on complaints that it distracts from the ad and promotes violence (Associated Press, 2008).



Figure 16. "Arafat's Koufiyeh", 2010.

Nevertheless, the PLO was internationally recognized in the United Nations as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, it was a government acknowledged in exile. In his address to the U.N. General Assembly in New York, November 1974, Arafat wearing the koufiyeh and holding an olive branch said, "I come bearing an olive branch in one hand, and the freedom fighter's gun in the other. Don't let the olive branch fall from my hand". The olive branch in the beak of a white pigeon became recognized as a powerful symbol of peace, and was the theme of one of Banksy's most powerful murals in Palestine. This influential image of Arafat and the olive branch that circulated for a long period of time gained the Palestinians the international community's respect and sympathy at that time, but not for long.

To Palestinians, the Jewish state was established to pave the way for the Second Coming of Christ or Christian apocalypticism. The dominant voices of the American Jewish lobby, the support of the conservative evangelical Christians or the Christian Right fundamentalism in America for Israel mandates Israel's politics (Crowley, 2006). Israeli lives become precious whereas Palestinian lives became of no value, and a Palestinian identity becomes a threat and a matter of life and death.

At a certain point in time, Palestinians started what could be labeled as a semi nonviolent resistance to the occupation; *intifada* or *uprising* (an outbreak of violence) twice, in 1987 and in 2002. This intifada that was highly graffitized, took the form of throwing stones on the Israeli armed forces whenever they raid Palestinian villages and cities. The intifada, according to Ashrawi (1995) “transformed the concept and practice of Palestinian resistance from armed struggle to popular and largely civil, disobedience” Ashrawi saw that the intifada also helped shifting the focus from a Palestinian “leadership in exile to a people under occupation” (p. 10). The intertextuality of the picture of the young boy challenging an Israeli tank with a stone that was recycled and graffitized in different locations temporarily mobilized so many in the world, and brought the international community to sympathize and aid the Palestinians. By confiscating homes and properties, getting people arrested, unemployment, oppression, racism and deprivation of basic human rights mainly opening schools, leaves nothing to those frustrated hopeless Palestinians but to blow up themselves. Innocent people are being killed on both sides. Unless both people, Palestinians and Israelis feel safe and secure, a final solution will always be farfetched. Palestinian graffiti in general demonstrates that the Palestinians are in the worst situation they have ever experienced throughout their struggle.

Although nonviolent resistance was attempted at the very beginnings of the struggle, faced with continuous incursions, confiscation of land by Israel and failure of diplomatic means, underground freedom fighters’ groups like the *National Front for Liberating Palestine* and the *Black September* organization including women freedom fighters among them, attempted to hijack planes back in the early seventies. *Leila*

Khaled, who was the first woman who hijacked a TWA Boeing plane that was on its way from Rome to Tel Aviv in 1969, has her graffiti and posters carrying a gun and wearing a *koufiyeh* were on the Wall too and all over Palestine. These freedom fighters were able to attract the attention of the world to what was going on in Palestine to the point that the Japanese Red Army had a branch dedicated for the Palestinian cause. Later on, in the course of this movement, tactics of collective punishment, destruction of infrastructure, siege, and around six hundred checkpoints prohibiting humanitarian aids to Palestinian towns, astonished the whole world; how could this people survive under such inhumane conditions.

Several attempts by Palestinians and international activists to march against demolishing homes and villages, cutting off thousands of olive trees, continuous land confiscation and imprisonment of activists were met with rubber bullets and gas bombs. On the other hand, Israeli settlers have modern twisted highways that are curved to avoid Palestinian neighborhoods similar to the Alabama Birmingham interstate expressway in the 50s. Palestinians living in Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem or Hebron experience unbearable discrimination in services, taxes and home ownership or rental measures. Palestinians need permits to cross through uncountable checkpoints every day. Jewish settlers, who were imported to Palestine from all over the world to fill up the new settlements, are financially supported by the Israeli government; they enjoy their swimming pools and even have the right to carry arms. Some of these settlers, who have the right as Jews anywhere to obtain Israeli citizenship, were around eighty thousand *Falasha* Ethiopian black Jews who were airlifted to Palestine since 1991, are suffering from unemployment and religious discrimination (BBC News, 2014). Moreover, the

most densely populated land in the world; Gaza strip, which is controlled by Israel, marked the highest increase in unemployment, poverty (79.4 % living below poverty line of \$ 2/day) and deaths according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2012). In November, 2012, with F-16 fighters' aerial bombardment of Gaza left neighborhoods in rubbles and fatalities among civilians mounted to eighty two deaths, mostly women and children, and injured 750 people, six of them were journalists when their *Al-Quds* media station was hit. Palestinians, Muslims, Christians and even Jews “were a people linked to a geographical area defined by the ill-fated British Mandate and bound together by the shared experience of expulsion and occupation” (Lybarger, 2007, p. 34), yet the conflict continues.

The ghettoizing of Palestinian cities, the continuous incursions, assaults, abuse and even incidents of raping of girls by Israeli soldiers in front of their fathers and molesting women reported in the Red Cross and Israeli archives were appalling and inhuman crimes (Pappé, 2006), and to a great extent, resonate with the plight of the blacks before and during the Civil Rights Movement. As a non-violent gesture to show their anger, on May 15th 2008, Palestinians tied messages of peace and freedom written by Palestinian children to 21,915 black balloons that were released into the sky in Bethlehem to mark every day passed since their exile in 1948. Environmental awareness becomes a priority when peoples' lives are not at stake, yet the blackness that symbolizes oppression ties up with the Civil Rights Movement along with other aspects of this historical struggle such as the graffiti in this study. One of the most important achievements of the Black Freedom Movement was the decrease and slowly the disappearance of terror in spite of the fact that The Black Lives Matter movement may

disagree. In comparison with Palestinians, Blacks could nowadays to a certain extent, live without fear of losing their lives or jobs. The racial tension between blacks and whites in the US, and the white supremacy system was wrong, so the tension between Palestinians and Israelis should be interpreted as wrongful too. Without endorsing a mutual respect and long-term cease-fire, accepting a two-state solution and meeting the international community's approval, a just and lasting solution is farfetched and the region will remain a time bomb. Mapping the understated nonviolent history of the Palestinians' struggle for their freedom and simple human rights on the nonviolent history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States might prove to those who believe in violence that non-violence is the only solution. Graffiti was a catalyst for violence in the United States, yet it comes in handy as a rhetorical mode for non-violence in Palestine.

Although graffiti and hip hop were inseparable unique social practices in the early sixties in the United States, they are considered as unique and social in Palestine. Hip hop is performed independently away from the wall as a non-violent rhetorical form of protest against oppression in the Occupied Territories due to Israeli restrictions of movement and military checkpoints. In spite of depression and deprivation of basic human needs, mainly peace and education, young Palestinian performers, living on daily basis, were able to defy all odds. They were brave enough to come up with hip-hop groups that are still looked at within the Palestinian culture as odd and imported from the West. To numerous Arabs and Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories in particular, these groups are not yet accepted into their culture, such trends are intruding and strange and even considered as part of a global conspiracy of *Americanizing* other cultures. For

example, the first Arab Palestinian MCs group (DAM) released its first album in 1998. DAM's music is a unique fusion of both the East and West, combined Arabic percussion rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies and urban Hip hop. The lyrics of DAM are influenced by the continuing Israeli - Palestinian conflict as well as by the Palestinian struggle for freedom and equality. DAM also draws their influence from such controversial issues as terrorism, drugs and women's rights. Musically, they take their inspiration from both hip-hop artists such as Nas, 2Pack, Mos Def, IAM, MBS, and some Arabic music. Lyrics posted on the web sites of hip-hop groups display a lot of highly identifiable terms with original hip-hop that exhibits reference to slavery and freedom, depicts narratives, tropes and valid arguments of the harsh reality ordinary Palestinians live. Graffiti is strongly symbolic and effective. While Israelis have found ways to confiscate houses from Palestinians, Palestinians assert claims over space with graffiti and hip-hop in spite the fact that spray painting, especially in Jerusalem, could be provocative for Israeli settlers, and soldiers as well, and runs risk of imprisonment and torture.

The influence of the Civil Rights Movement, hip-hop and graffiti and other aspects of the Black Freedom Movement in America that gave birth to great leaders, intellectuals and advocates for justice, equality and freedom, is noticeable in Palestine. This influence appears in several graffiti photos of the Wall that will be discussed later in this chapter. In the *Middle East* (a colonial term that I personally refuse to use, since colonialism deprived peoples of the region of their freedom for centuries) Martin Luther King Jr. is well known particularly in Palestine as an influential and charismatic leader who died for his people, who is celebrated in the US and the day of his murder became a national holiday.

Mutual demands of graffitists on the Wall, whether Palestinians or others, are justice, freedom and human rights as the graffiti statements suggest. Direct associations with the Civil Rights Movement can be observed from certain graffiti that belong to Martin Luther King Jr. reminding viewers that injustice, racism and violence still exist. One of Martin Luther King's popular quotes on a black background reads "THIS LIE CANNOT LIVE", signed by MLK (*Figure 17*). The lie, metaphorically that ties up with Lakoff's (1980) concept of metaphors, refers to the Wall that Israel allegedly erected for its own security while it limits Palestinian's freedom of movement and usurps more of their lands.



Figure 17. "THIS LIE CANNOT LIVE MLK" 2013.

Excerpted from MLK's "I have a dream" speech delivered in Washington in 1963, another powerful stenciled graffiti appeared in 2013 in upper case, painted by those graffitists who theoretically, whether intentionally or not, applied Burke's identification and connectedness concept, identifying the Palestinian plight with those of the civil rights movement. The mural reads "UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS LIKE WATER, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM". Borrowed from Amos 5:24 in the Hebrew bible, this graffiti is one of all graffiti in that segment that cannot be ignored by passersby due to its size and content. Easy to be read, about twelve to fourteen feet

wide, five to six feet high, and the colors of the Palestinian flag are used to paint this graffiti on a solid black background metaphorically signifying darkness, evil, injustice and Blacks and the Civil Rights Movement (*See Figure 18*).



Figure 18. “UNTIL JUSTICE ROLLS LIKE WATER”, 2013.

According to Miller (2012), this quote was one of MLK’s favorite biblical verses. King quoted this version in three of his most important speeches; the Montgomery bus boycott speech, the “I’ve been to the mountain top” and “I have a dream” speeches. The importance of this quote comes from the notion that Miller suggests of the ongoing drama of the exodus that MLK exploited in his last speech, in this case, it refers to the exodus of the Palestinians. It is thought-provoking to speculate that the intended audience of this particular graffiti are mostly unlikely the uneducated local Palestinians who might have never heard of the Civil Rights Movement, but rather Westerners, activists or visitors and in particular Americans who are familiar with MLK’s speeches and their biblical or political references. On the top left of this powerful graffiti above the word “UNTIL”, a black circle with a small black arrow and two words that read “through here”, written in lowercase indicate plain sarcasm as the image suggests that it only takes a tiny hole, a break in the Wall for injustice to roll out like water.

Different Ideologies, Different Graffiti

Graffiti patterns and characteristics are distinctly diverse in Palestine based on the party they belong to. There were never any cooperation, coordination between artists in both parties in terms of political graffiti on the Wall (Grondahl, 2010). Therefore, understanding the division between the two parties explains the rarity of any mention of Hamas ideologies in the graffiti of the Wall in Bethlehem. A question that is always asked in the Occupied Territories is: Are you from Ramallah (a member of Fatah), or you are with Allah (a member of Hamas party). The political card game that Israel managed to play by imposing an economic siege on Gaza warranted Palestinian Occupied Territories to be divided into two independent entities for a long period of time; Fatah and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and Hamas in Gaza Strip.

Israel continues to control Palestinian lives in both areas. Hamas is being identified as a terrorist outlawed and fundamentalist group legitimizes its dehumanization despite the fact that Hamas was elected by the majority of the Palestinians and the Ex-president Jimmy Carter personally witnessed the elections in 2006 and assured that these elections were fair and legal (2006). Hamas provokes Israel's violent retaliation by firing handmade aimless rockets on Israeli cities and settlements, and Israel; the number four nation on the list of the most powerful warfare-equipped countries on Earth, with airborne F-16 jet fighters firing missiles on Palestinian homes in Gaza and tanks incursions into the Palestinian streets, nonviolence is unquestionable. For every Israeli wounded, several dead Palestinians are buried on a daily basis. Palestinian lives are wasted in vain. A summary of this situation can be depicted from the graffiti in Gaza Strip but not on the Wall in Bethlehem.

Hamas group that was sieged in Gaza strip chose an aggressive kind of struggle, their motto is “what is taken by force cannot be regained back except by force” and “power comes from the barrel of a gun”; the only way to keep reminding the world that they are under occupation. Women in *Hijab* (head-to-toe cover), Muslim clerics, and people holding Qur’an and shouting *Allahu Akbar* (a Muslim slogan to glorify God), and children with green head bands (Hamas color) were all what the world would see during demonstrations and after every Israeli raid or incursion. Therefore, political graffiti in Gaza is characterized to bear different features than that of the Wall graffiti because it was monopolized and controlled by Hamas. The Palestinian president Yasser Arafat as a representative of the Fatah faction rarely exists in the political graffiti in Gaza. After adopting the Palestinian cause for more than thirty years, he became a fragile symbol for resisting the Israeli occupation. He was confined for three years in his headquarters in Ramallah and was allegedly poisoned and died in a French hospital in 2006. For more than six decades, Israel imposed all kinds of oppression on the Palestinian people yet; Palestinian Christians and Muslims were always united under Arafat’s leadership and stood like an iron wall in the face of their oppressor.

However, in recent years, Israel succeeded in using religion to destroy the Palestinian Freedom Movement from within. Religion, not only is dividing the Palestinian people into Christians and Muslims, but ironically, it is Muslim factions namely all Muslims Hamas versus Fatah that has a Christian minority members that are dramatically being torn apart, and consequently puts Palestinian Arab Christians out of the national and international vision even in the Wall’s graffiti. Although all parties live under the same occupation, different patterns and characteristics are observed in terms of

political graffiti due to the local political status quo.

Pragmatic and Cooperative Utterances

Universal characteristics across cultures are detected in the linguistic expressions on the Wall paves the way for social relationships. An interesting pattern observed on the Wall graffiti is the pragmatic concepts of politeness analyzed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as some utterances are signs of positive politeness showing awareness of a positive face; speakers or writers take into account the feelings of their readers by being polite, by not imposing on others, and rather showing the need to be accepted, shared and treated as a member of the group or situation in question. A worthy example of this notion is a 2013 graffiti signed by a female graffitist named Fatima that reads “PLEASE OPEN” (See Figure 19). This graffiti can also be considered as a clear example of one of the most popular characteristics of conventional hip-hop graffiti where shadowing, the three-dimensional effects and overlapping letters are significant. The utterance “PLEASE OPEN” is colored using red, black, white and green, the colors of the Palestinian flag depicting that this demand is a Palestinian demand. Whereas the black key and key-hole is colored in white and blue which depicts the colors of the Israeli flag implying that the key to open the water supply is in the hands of the Israelis.



Figure 19. “PLEASE OPEN” 2013.

Some Wall graffiti are Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) that impose a threat (Johnstone, 2002), and “unavoidable, speakers can redress the threat with a negative face, the need to be independent, have freedom of action, and not be imposed by others” (Cutting, 2002, p. 45). Such graffiti utterances can also be analyzed as imperative, direct or indirect communicative speech acts that follow the cooperative principles of Grice’s maxims of quantity and quality by openly expressing their needs and asking for help written in uppercase as in “TURN ON THE WATER!” (*Figure 20*).



Figure 20. “TURN ON THE WATER!” 2010

Some other common graffiti patterns on the Wall are sarcastic questions such as “Seriously, Obama? You’re O.K. with this” (*Figure 21*). This graffiti is analyzed based on the relevance to the “Linguistic Politeness” (Johnstone, 2002), and Lakoff’s (1973) rule of politeness in a camaraderie act where the addresser’s utterances function as if equal with the addressed. It is noteworthy to mention here that the Arab majority in the United States voted for Obama because they felt that he could be the long awaited “savior” who would bring a just solution to the Palestinian question. The thought that he would sympathize and act accordingly, just because he comes from a Muslim

background, was disappointing to the Arab world. Moreover, during his first term in office, Obama visited Egypt in 2009, his speech “A New Beginning” delivered at Cairo University, was highly applauded and was considered by the Arabs as historic and very promising. He stated that the stateless Palestinian situation is “intolerable” (New York Times, 2009), and that he will personally pursue the objective that the Israelis’ and Palestinians’ aspirations will be met through two states, and that he will work closely to restore negotiations, peace and security in the region by solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In contrast, the graphitized utterances on the wall blame the United States for turning a blind eye on what is going on in Palestine, and single-words in upper cases written in green and followed by a question mark question the JUSTICE?, and PEACE function as a reminder of the broken promise Obama had vowed to fulfill (*Figure 21*).

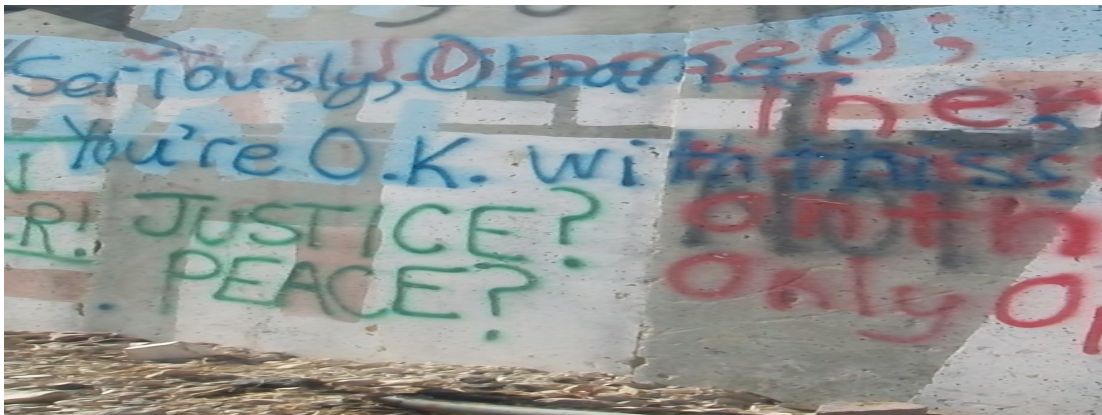


Figure 21. “Seriously Obama: You’re O.K. with this?”, “JUSTICE? PEACE?”2010

Four years later, during Obama’s visit to the Palestinian Territories and Bethlehem in 2013, signs and posters that filled the angry and pessimistic streets around the presidential compound denoting “Obama, you promised hope and change, you gave us colonies and apartheid”; were a clear reminder that the United States must take an even-handed brokering role in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict particularly

concerning the case of building new settlements. Obama travelled on a helicopter bypassing the concrete Wall during his four-hour visit to Ramallah to meet with the Palestinian president. He is the only American president who secured the highest number of meetings with an Israeli prime minister. Obama may have brokered some important deals, but regrettably not for the sake of Palestinians.

Some patterns of the Wall graffiti work as cues to speculate on the identity of the graffitiists. Grammatically correct punctuation in these graphitized utterances such as the use of opening quotation marks and exclamation marks, not only demonstrate grammatical punctuation competence, but also denote personal emotional feelings of the graffitiists. These graffitiists are people who took their time to punctuate. Therefore, a background of a specific situation is already constructed, and the reader is left to predict more information about the graffitiists as well as the graffiti. It is highly unlikely to find graffiti in Arabic that has this much of punctuation awareness which may indicate that Palestinians, or those who write in Arabic, have less time and feel less secure while writing on the wall. Foreigners who contribute to the story of the Wall are luckier in that they have more time, feel safer to draw on the Wall, and they are far from being prosecuted by the Israelis if caught on the spot. Ultimately, the Wall graffiti, quotes and utterances in particular if connected, a story unfolds as the flow of information in small waves become more evident into larger waves that match Halliday's "notion of waves in his functional linguistics" (As cited in Pike, 1982, p. 193). The Wall comes to life to complain about the miserable situation in the Palestinian territories. The more graffiti are interpreted, the more informational content is revealed.

It is worthy to note that there is a variation in grammatical structures that also ties

with Halliday's functional grammar such as declarative structures; making statements, interrogative; asking questions and imperative such as commands. "The interrogative mood positions the addressee as the one who knows the answer, the authority in the situation" (As cited in Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 25). Other interesting graffiti written in green ink reads, "ISRAEL is THIS WHAT YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED BY? Handprints stenciled in white paint over the green writing are stamped next to a swearword was written with careful punctuation and the use of demonstrative references (See Figure 18). Addressing Israel in upper cases, a font that is significantly observed on the Wall is commonly used in text messaging to indicate yelling in an irritated manner also noticed in "QUESTION YOUR LEADERS!!!", and "PARTNERS WITH ISRAEL IN ETHNIC CLEANSING/APARTHEID IN PALESTINE" (See Figure 11, p. 75).



Figure 22. "ISRAEL IS THIS HOW YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED BY?"

In several graffiti, there are examples of a communicative discourse that is an interaction that obligates a response. An exchange mapped on Martin Luther King's famous speech "I have a dream" also referring to the Civil Rights Movement, transmitting the infamous cliché "I HAVE A DREAM" comes with a powerful response

“THIS IS NOT PART OF THIS DREAM” (See Figure 23). The words in the graffiti are all uppercase painted in a single red, white and blue line without any decorative characteristics of conventional graffiti such as shadowing, bubbling or overlapping letters. In the case of such graffiti, clear and straightforward responses are generally found adjacent to the questions or demands. It is difficult to guess whether the same graffitiists wrote these two statements at the same time or someone else did that at a later date and time. What is obvious is that there is a dialogue here that also follows *Grice’s Cooperative Principles* even if the speakers do not know each other. The graffitiists’ clauses are sequenced and there is a transition from what is preceded. Readers find themselves in a knowledge or action kind of exchange that ties with Baird and Taylor’s (2011) concept of “Pedestrianism” where pedestrians are in a situation walking and negotiating the graffiti they observe. The Wall graffiti invites passers-by to either participate in the discussion by adding a response, or they are given the option to express their feelings non-verbally, or just walk away. To passers-by who believe graffiti is vandalism if performed on legal walls or properties, how can graffiti on the Wall be stigmatized as illegal if the Wall itself was deemed illegal by the international community?



Figure 23. “An Exchange”.

Opposite to gang graffiti that is predominantly difficult to read as it is aimed at members of the subculture they belong to, most of the Wall graffiti are relatively clear and straight forward because of the didactic messages they deliver to outsiders. For example, next to Barghouti's mural; a white scroll reads "Free Barghouti" in three languages Arabic, Hebrew, and French, respectively using one solid brownish color on a white background written by one person or more, but most likely graffitiists who are fluent in these three languages (*See Figure 24*). Although English is the dominant language of the Wall graffiti because it has the global language status, the message here is intended for speakers of these three tongues, of non-English speaking population. At the bottom segment of the scroll graffiti, a message in Arabic is demanding "freedom for all prisoners". The metaphorical significance of using the scroll relates to the Dead Sea Scrolls, or manuscripts of the Hebrew bible that Israel takes pride in having excavated them in 1946. Freeing prisoners is as important to the Palestinians as the importance of ancient scrolls. In order to deliver an accurate message, multilingualism or code switching and metaphors are shrewdly utilized in this particular photographed segment of the Wall. The last line in the scroll that reads "Part 2 2010" in English suggests that there might be part one of the scroll with different demands or it is just a tag (*See Figure 24*).

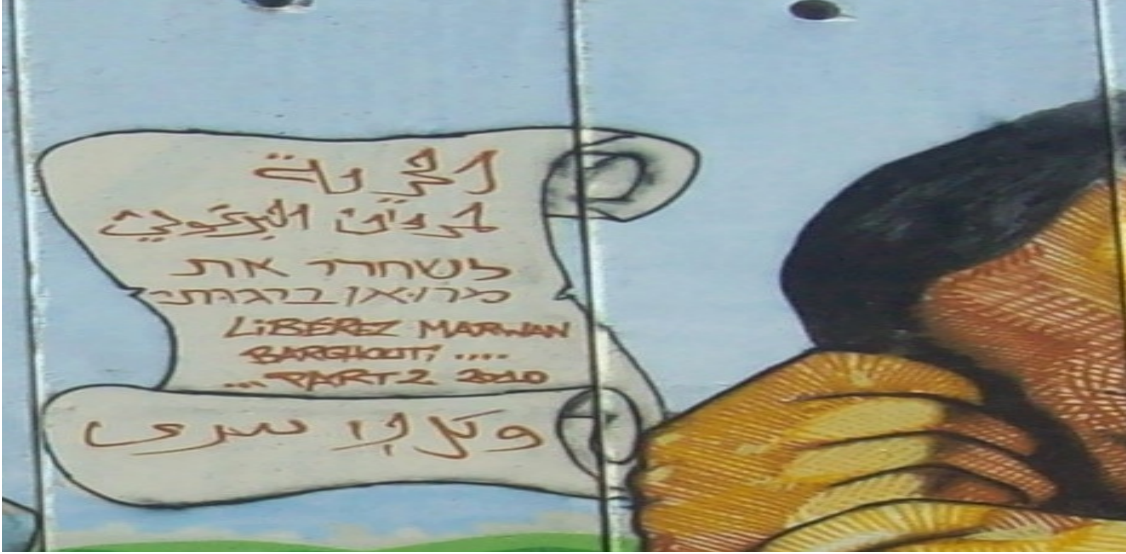


Figure 24. “Multilingual Message” 2010.

Most graffiti are written or painted in English due to the fact that English is globalized, yet other languages are also manipulated such as German, Spanish, Italian and even Chinese and Japanese in 2013 calling to free Palestine (See Figure 25). The objective of graffiti in multi-tongues is to reach out to as much of a global population as possible; it is the universality concept of the wall graffiti that is in the spotlight.



Figure 25. “Palestine Free Land” in Chinese and Japanese.

One of the massive pieces photographed in 2010 was difficult to understand although the expressive light blue three-dimensional English letters that were used for

some part of this piece can be read as “KING”, but with the rest of it, it is unreadable as a whole. What is more important is that in 2013, this wide graffito was crossed out by a lot of other graffiti and utterances that makes more sense to the locals as well as other viewers. The most obvious is the word “HOPE” with letters painted in white over a black background (See *Figures 26, 27*).

Interpreting discourse in any given instance of communication requires foregrounding of the content in order for participants to have a mutual understanding of the message of the graffiti. For example, on a white slate painted on the undecipherable graffito in 2013 below the last three letters of the capitalized words FREE PALESTINE (*Figure 26*), there is an utterance in Spanish that reads “BRIGADA FLOTILLA PALESTINA 2009”.

This was written in upper case and stands as a reminder of the humanitarian aid flotilla that was en route in the Mediterranean to reach out for the Gaza Strip when it was under the Israeli siege. According to Ravid (2010), the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported that Israeli naval commandoes raided that flotilla; three naval soldiers and nine on board were killed, some other forty were injured, and the flotilla's three ships were guided to an Israeli port to prevent it from breaking the blockade on Gaza. Three Spanish activists on board the ship filed a lawsuit against Israel for illegally arresting and subjecting them to hardship during the raid, then deporting them to their country (Ravid, 2010). To the right of the “BRIGADA FLOTILA” graffito is a drawing of the Spanish flag with its horizontally stripped colors in red and yellow.

Looking at Spanish solidarity utterances and symbols in the Wall's graffiti, there is the word “ANDALUSIA” in uppercase green handwritten below the bubbled white

letter “G” in “KING” (See *Figure 26*). *Andalusia* is the Arabic nickname of Spain when it was under the Islamic rule for almost seven hundred years. The word Andalusia may be interpreted from two different perspectives: one that simply implies Spanish solidarity with the Palestinians. The other is that Andalusia stands there as an analogy and a reminder of the notion that an occupying system may collapse even after hundreds of years.



Figure 26. “BRIGADA FLOTILLA PALESTINA 2009”.



Figure 27. “Undecipherable Graffiti in 2010, Crossed-out in 2013”.

Another pattern of the Wall graffiti in 2010 is a reproduction of the popular *Handhala* caricature that was created by *Naji Al Ali*, a prominent Palestinian political cartoonist who resisted the Israeli occupation with his powerful caricatures. His satirical caricatures portrayed the bitter struggle and misery of his people and campaigned against the absence of democracy and inequality. *Handhala*, which means "bitterness" in Arabic, pauses as a barefooted young boy facing all the drawings of his creator, his back is turned to the world, his hands behind his back, a patch signifying poverty on his back shoulder, and seems to be observing current events with bitterness and disapproval (*See Figure 28*). Al Ali was exiled with his family and hundreds of thousands Palestinians in 1948 to a refugee camp in Lebanon. There, he discovered his passion for art so he would draw on the walls of the camp. On his website, Al Ali (2006) stated that he started to draw his cartoons as a form of political expression while in Lebanese jails when he was detained by the Lebanese intelligence forces. It was the Lebanese government's policy then to restrain political activities in the Palestinian camps during the sixties. Naji Al Ali quickly became known as an influential political cartoonist, he was also called the "people's silent voice" in the Arab world. His satirical drawings portrayed the struggle and misery of his people, and the conspiracies that led to the ramifications for the Palestinians, the double standardness of the United States, and also campaigned for the absence of democracy. The kind of corruption and inequality he exposed in his caricatures gave Westerners an insight into Arabs' public opinion. He was convinced he could become important as a Palestinian Arab cartoonist, and that his works would help contribute to the liberation of his people. His *Handhala* became an identity marker, and was extended to books, T-shirts, necklaces and tattoos (Lovatt, 2001). Similar to Banksy's stencils, the

majority of Al Ali's cartoons are understood and interpreted without even any words or language. He was posthumously awarded the annual Golden Pen award of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ) in 1988. This award is given to recognize outstanding actions in favor of freedom of expression; the jury was composed of publishers from twenty-eight member countries. One of his powerful political caricatures was the reason he was assassinated for in 1987. Al Ali became a national hero in the Arab World, and his symbol Handhala became part of the Palestinian's identity and a pride for Arab graffitists to paint wherever possible.



Figure 28. "Handhala" 2010.

The Wall contains a combination of genres other than graffiti writings or paintings. Above the eight feet high Handhala in white paint with black outlining, black and white photos of different forms of injustices against peoples from different parts of the world were pasted, glued at a height that needed a ladder and plenty of time and courage. Some of these posters were still hanging on the Wall in 2013 (Figures 27, 28).

In the traditional subculture of gang graffiti, there is a hierarchy among its members in terms of respect and status. The amateur, who practices first on paper, is an observer who becomes a tagger who signs a graffiti, then develops to be a writer, then an artist. After long years of professionalism and survival, the amateur becomes a King; a highly skilled graffitist who challenges authorities with bold graffiti in places that are life threatening. Whether there is a graffiti king or not among graffitists of the Wall, a “KING” graffiti in blue stands out above the Arabic words “FREE PALESTINE” (See Figure 29) painted in white Arabic 3D bubbled calligraphy.



Figure 29. “KING”.

The KING graffiti was clearly tagged several times in the photographs taken in 2010. In 2013, the same KING graffiti was whitewashed but was kept transparent for viewers to see through it the words free Palestine painted in Arabic bubbled white paint (See Figure 30), as well as “KING” in Figure 29. The lower bottom part of the Wall is crowded with tens of amateur graffiti written in plain letters in English and Arabic such as “SOON WILL FALL” and “NOT AT MY COST”. Part of Roger’s brick heart on that part of the Wall got whitewashed in 2013 and was replaced by the Palestinian flag. A

Palestinian driving in his car by the Wall is minding his business as the graffiti on the Wall becomes normalized and it is just there as part of the Palestinians' daily life routines.



Figure 30. "Whitewashed King in 2013".

Ironically, in June 2015, a Palestinian artist, *Khalid Jarrar*, stirred a controversy when he travelled to the Qalandya checkpoint part of the wall and painted a rainbow flag next to Barghouti's mural. To Jarrar, the rainbow mural meant freedom of expression, so with the help of an anonymous assistant, he painted six solid bright colors on the concrete slabs without using any language or references to anything the wall had previously discussed. Within three hours of completing the painting, the colored slabs were completely covered with white paint. Jarrar's intentions were to draw more attention to the political situation of the wall, the occupation, the apartheid wall and the oppression of the Palestinian people. Instead, the rainbow mural was interpreted as a solidarity move with the LGBT demonstrations that were circulating around the world at the same time demanding gay rights and same sex marriage legalization. Homosexuality is a taboo that is highly sensitive and completely against the social and cultural traditions of the Palestinian society as well as the Arab and Muslim community in general, yet it sparked

an unprecedented discussion of an issue that is strange to the Palestinian narrative and the wall original function. Some even accused the artist of painting over the deceased Palestinian Yasser Arafat's mural as a gesture to ask viewers to think outside the box and focus on more current issues that are distracting the world from paying more attention to the Palestinian problem.

It is also worth noting here that in comparison with the size of such a unique concrete canvas, a few very rare graffiti of obscenities or swear words such as the use of the F-word, typical to gang graffiti, were spotted on the Wall. This is due to two reasons: first, using socially unacceptable impolite utterances does not serve the politically charged atmosphere there, and secondly, it is against the culture and religions of Palestine to overtly touch on such taboo concepts in public. One or two offensive and tagged graffiti photos taken in 2010 included the F-word were used against Israel and Zionism, and one single reference belonged to Nazism (*See Figures 31, 32*).



Figure 31. "Socially Unaccepted".



Figure 32. "Culturally Rejected".

The aesthetics, multimodality and multilingualism of the graffiti photos discussed in this chapter indicate the universality and trans-nationality of the graffitists and the messages they imprint on this Wall.

A detailed account of the resemblance and differences between the Black Freedom Movement and the Palestinian Freedom Movement was essential in understanding the background for some of the graffiti on the wall. Several rhetorical and discourse analysis theories were employed to reach detailed and significant analyses of the photos. The multimodal discourse analysis suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) was useful to show that the Wall graffitiists succeeded in promoting their production based on Kress and van Leeuwen strata where not only language, but the whole strata package of design, color, medium and the socially constructed knowledge were employed to represent the Wall's powerful messages. Multimodality not only examined the texts, but also the visual components. Burke's identification theory suggests that connectedness with those who suffered as illustrated in Barghouti's graffiti, establishes common grounds with the viewers and suggests a strong persuasive rhetorical technique. Compared to Barghouti's, the Jarrar's mural was discussed to demonstrate that it could not establish connectedness with local Palestinians or identify with their beliefs and traditions; therefore, it was neither effective nor persuasive enough to live long on the wall.

This chapter focused also on analyzing photos of graffiti taken in two different visits to the Palestinian side of the Wall in July 2010, and June 2013. Some discourse analysis and approaches were employed for the technical analyses of some graffiti. It was necessary to explain in details the background behind some messages in the selected photos from a Palestinian perspective in particular the similarities between the Civil Rights Movement and its influence and inspirational motives for some graffitiists. National and patriotic Palestinian symbols such as the koufiyeh, old key, and Handhala

are loaded with powerful connotations and may have a stronger impact on viewers once it is clear how, why and where they originated. A detailed account of the religious atmosphere in Palestine was also necessary to show the neutrality of the Wall graffiti. The absence of Palestinian Christian graffiti on the Wall in spite of its proximity to the holy city of Bethlehem was due to the poor Christian presence on the political arena. Moreover, the absence of any Hamas related graffiti on this segment of the Wall was due to the fact that this segment falls in an area controlled by the Palestinian Authority or Fatah group. Therefore, the division between these two religious yet political factions affects the occurrences and patterns of graffiti that is photographed on the Wall. Depictions of obscenity in the Wall graffiti writings are very rare.

To summarize, this chapter wraps up this rhetorical and linguistic discourse analysis project with practical steps that can be applied to analyze any other graffiti on a different medium. First, a social and historical context was established in terms of country, place, time and people. Second, the data collection implemented in the photos was an important feature that included a rich corpus of cultural references that were identified. Third, the methodology and approaches employed for the analysis were based on identifying rhetorical features such as metaphors or symbols, direct speech, or the use of modalities that serve to call for action that serve the entire arguments of this research and invite readers to entertain certain associations with it. After all, the ultimate objective of the rhetorical analysis aims for a greater understanding and appreciation of human relations. Also, identifying linguistic features such as the mechanism and strategies used to create minimum utterances with maximum interpretations. The grammatical features such as capitalization or punctuation, frequently used adjectives or

words, using active not passive voice all were crucial in order not to delete the actors or obscure the relationship behind the text. Graffiti are artifacts that inform and instruct and the medium matters.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The graffiti on the Wall makes it a unique piece of art created by diverse graffiti amateurs or artists of a shared discourse. For the most part, the Wall graffiti emphasizes a complicated situation that calls for an immediate solution. The Wall as a landmark functions as a unique media outlet that passes to the world in a visual rhetorical form what a community in deprived circumstances wishes to convey. The exclusivity of the graffiti on the Wall in terms of graffitists, language, context, patterns, space and time differs from any other contemporary graffiti. Not only it troubles viewers as well as the occupiers of the land, but it also legalizes graffiti as a rhetorical tool for non-violent resistance. It is a Wall of solidarity not violence as the different patterns of graffiti on the Wall demonstrate. With comparison to traditional or other conventional and international gang graffiti, most of these Wall graffiti are not hostile, as they do not call for any physical violence. They do not mark territories or challenge other gangs, but they do cry in colors of the Palestinian flag and call for freedom of their prisoners.

Style, which is a central component of a contemporary graffitist's design, is no longer an added bonus in the case of this Wall. In spite the fact that detailing such as shadowing, fading, three-dimensional effects, back grounding and overlapping letters are some of the characteristics of conventional hip-hop graffiti that were also identified on the Wall, there are neither copyrights nor pride in the proficiency or the techniques, skills or quality of graffiti that was prominent in the late seventies graffiti culture of New York.

Graffiti on this Wall as a form of non-violent resistance is not some kind of a 'hit-back mechanism' within a subculture. Although it could be spontaneous and unplanned,

yet it is a creative phenomenon purposely executed to show off the power of creating and protecting an identity by including the outside world. Local Palestinian graffitists go to this Wall to reach out to those they cannot reach, mainly the international community. The duality of their identities, being able to live a real life as normal people, married with families under an occupation and being illegal graffitists, is a valuable project for future consideration. For Palestinian graffitists, it is “a chance to go beyond ‘real life’ and be who you want to be without inaccessible material resources like money or a career” (Macdonald, 2001, p. 228). In contrast with the stigma that brands graffiti as vandalism and defacement, to borrow also from Macdonald (2001), the “bombing” of this Wall speaks louder than any physical bomb. Bombing the Wall differs from bombing a train as in traditional New York gang graffiti where the graffiti is said to be on wheels and travels to and forth destinations. Graffiti on this Wall and the messages they provide travelled throughout the world. In Belfast in Ireland, a wall graffiti in 2012, written in uppercase red color read “END THE WAR ON GAZA” and “FREE GAZA” with reference to the Israeli incursions and siege of the Gaza strip in the Palestinian Territories was impressive to see in several media outlets. The Wall is immobile, yet Martin Luther King’s graffiti, for example, had influential messages that traveled all over the world.

This Wall that constitutes a discursive powerful attractive site for graffitists, an illegally established location yet highly visible, does not have a short life span like any other graffiti venues that are cleaned off by authorities, even though, in graffiti jargon, some graffiti may get *buffed* by other graffitists, but the wall remains as an interactive dynamic communicative mode of discourse. The Barghouti mural, for example, was untouched for three years as the photographs in 2010 and 2013 demonstrate, and it

survived until 2015 as the rainbow mural shows. The high scale of the Wall structure and its graffiti associated with concepts of freedom, oppression and human rights captured the attention of worldwide media; the cold bold wall was given life.

It is noticeable that at times, the Wall would moderately have limited audience, as passers-by are mainly Palestinians crossing from one side of the Wall to the other, and tourists or peace activists who come purposely to evaluate, appreciate or demonstrate against the ugliness of the Wall. However, according to Legal Walls website (2017), there are 1537 walls around the world that are legalized by international graffitiists to practice their art there. The website offers an interactive Google map with accurate directions and instructions on how to get to any of these walls. The Wall was tagged in 2014 as the “Israeli Apartheid Wall in the occupied West Bank” with a warning that a graffitiist going there might get harassed by the Israelis. The popularity of the Wall is represented in several documentaries and films about its illegality and ugliness. A short documentary of an Irish graffitiist, *Conor Harrington* accompanied with his filmmaker *Andy Telling* travelled to Tel Aviv/Israel and Bethlehem in Palestine to demonstrate his art that “deals with conflict and tension” (Harrington, 2010). In the documentary, an interview with a Palestinian young man said that he appreciates these graffitiists coming to Palestine to support them, “they make the Wall more beautiful”. Another Palestinian interviewed emphasized the fact that the Wall is a hindrance that prevents the two people from communicating, listening to and understanding each other in spite of their differences. He also added that the graffiti on the Wall is their only means to resolve these differences. For them, to borrow from Martin Luther King, it is a matter of “non-violence or non-existence”.

With associations to the Civil Rights Movement, the prominent poet and activist Alice Walker visited the Palestinian Territories and was appalled by the segregation imposed on the Palestinian people by the gigantic Wall that she describes as the “most offensive symbol of apartheid”. In an interview on Democracy Now (2012), Walker stated that the Palestinian condition is “more brutal than in US south fifty years ago” (para. 3). In *Overcoming Speechlessness* (2010), Walker stated that Hitler learned from the Jews how to cleanse Germany of Jews and how to stuff mattresses with Jews’ hair similar to the same situation of Indians in the US who were massacred and their hair and skin were used not because they were savages, only because European settlers wanted their land “as much as Israel wants the land of Palestine” (Walker, 2010, p. 45). Walker also states that being indoctrinated against the Palestinians for centuries from reading the Bible where the Philistines (Goliath) were causing trouble to God’s children the Hebrews (David) so Israel is always in the right no matter what it does and that justifies the use of violence towards Palestinians. Moreover, “Rolling into Gaza”, Walker (2010) had a feeling it was like a “homecoming”, the flavor of the Ghetto, the Bantustan, the rez, the “colored section where everyone you see has an awareness of the struggle and resistance” (p. 43). Analogic images to the civil rights struggle, Walker enjoys it as she explains how she travelled in a Greyhound bus in 1963 to participate in the march on Washington with Jews in the bus. The same situation reoccurred with her on a bus going to Gaza also with Jews on board in 2010 simply because these Jews do not tolerate racism, injustice and terrorism, objecting on the Jews’ behavior not religion. She talks about the dehumanizing treatment while crossing the borders to go into Gaza for a nearly five-hour delay.

At other times, the Wall's audience would increase when Palestinians and activists join hands to organize peaceful demonstrations against the Wall, a scene that troubles the Israelis especially if the media is called to the scene. The "transnationalization" of the Wall brings national and international organizations that support human rights, which in turn try to pressure the Israeli government to change its policies (Hanauer, 2011). On April 11th, 2014, the *Palestinian Welfare Association* and in partnership with the *Palestinian Olympic Committee* organized a marathon for the second year in a row with 3,000 participating runners from forty countries. In spite of the demographic obstructions, the marathon loop of about twenty kilometers started from the *Nativity Church* in Bethlehem along the separation Wall through two Palestinian refugee camps and an Israeli military checkpoint. The main objective of the annual marathon is to highlight the ugliness of the Wall that restricts the freedom of movement of almost four million Palestinians.

On a different level, the Wall was exploited for different uses as the case with the Palestinians who try to live with whatever means that are available to them. According to *Aljazeera America*, Zonszein (2014) stated that Bethlehem residents used the Wall as a wide screen to project a live broadcast of their president Mahmoud Abbas addressing the United Nations and requesting the General Assembly to Grant the State of Palestine an observer status that was later passed with 139 votes in favor. The Wall was also used to project the Arabic version of the American Idol entertainment program final episode when a Palestinian young singer from Gaza won the Arab Idol title. The winner *Mohammed Assaf* was appointed as the first Palestinian Regional Goodwill Youth Ambassador for the United Nations and was invited by the FIFA World Cup committee

to perform and sing in the opening ceremony in Sao Paolo in 2013 (UNRWA, 2013).

Still in the vein of the effects of the Wall on local Palestinians, the Walled Off Hotel is Banksy's recent project in Bethlehem. The hotel, which is a pun on the British Waldorf Astoria hotel, and is located about five hundred meters away from the Israeli military checkpoint to Jerusalem, is totally dedicated to the biography of the Wall (Banksy, 2017). The hotel is totally financed by Banksy and is not affiliated with any political party. Banksy handed over the management of the hotel to local businesses that aim to put profits into local projects. The ten million dollars hotel was discretely constructed within eighteen months. Elton John was invited and participated with a song at the opening night via satellite.

The hotel has ten scenic rooms that overlook the Wall, where guests literally reside surrounded by exclusive work of art; Banksy's graffiti inside, the Wall graffiti outside. The lobby, which is designed as a British gentleman's club, has a replica of Count Balfour to mark the centennial of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 by the British Mandate who blindly gifted Palestine to the Zionists movement to establish their state. The hotel is a "powerful anticolonial statement about British imperialism, the Zionist colonial project, Israeli occupation and apartheid politics in Palestine" (Khader, 2017).

There is no swimming pool on the roof due to the proximity of the hotel to the Wall where no one is allowed to go on the roof without an official permit from the Israelis. The hotel is open to visitors as well as residents. Visitors can enjoy the artifact museum, which contains collectible artifacts from Israeli barracks, a piano bar, an art gallery and a museum that has one of the five broken cameras from the director of the Oscar nominated documentary (Banksy, 2017). CCTV cameras and alarm systems are

installed all over the structure to protect the invaluable art works inside. Residents are required to deposit \$1000 using a credit card in case anyone was found attempting to steal from or deface the property, will be surrendered to the police authority and prosecuted in Ramallah. The staff are all local Palestinian males and females, and the hotel wall themed food such as the Walled Off salad that is a hummus plate is prepared by local chefs and decorated with pita bread that look like the concrete slabs. Guests can also enjoy the Wall**Mart* that is a graffiti supply shop next door where they can purchase the tools they need to contribute to the Wall graffiti. Guests and visitors from around the world are welcomed, Israelis are the only ones who cannot visit the hotel because the Israeli government does not encourage or permit them to visit the Occupied Territories (Banksy, 2017).

In spite the fact that some Israeli citizens have never seen the wall due to alternative routes and major highways that were created to ease the tension and secure the Israeli settlements, others use the Wall for different purposes. In 2004 during Tel Aviv's fashion week, the Israeli fashion house "*Comme Il Faut*" used the wall to do a series of fashion shoots to symbolize women challenging boundaries and breaking loose from a male dominated world. On the other hand, the Israeli side of the Wall is blank due to high security measures adopted at the checkpoints. Palestinians crossing the checkpoints are subject to inspection and cannot risk carrying, a ladder, and paint or spray cans. Approaching the Wall on the Israeli side is a costly matter of life and death. In 1973, New York spent 2.7 million dollars as the cost for graffiti cleaning in the city (Rahn, 2002), the irony lies in the millions of dollars that were spent not to clean this Wall, but to build it not considering the lives of Palestinians that are threatened everyday by its

existence. Israelis pride themselves in keeping their side of the Wall secure and clean of graffiti. For some observers, this is a misleading indication of civilization that discounts the existence of the Palestinians living under the occupation.

Painting or writing in a public space delivers a myriad of messages. Often, there is a dialogue and an exchange but not a face-to-face one. Graffiti, the Wall's form as a visual art, and functions as a rhetorical discourse mode that brings to life the silenced voice of "the Other"; the Palestinians, because that 'Other', according to the Wall subculture's members, deserves to be heard by and from an outsider, the world. The insider's voice has been neglected for a long time; the Wall's subculture members believe that it is up to the graffitists to make it heard and seen.

The meanings negotiated by the artists, the text and the viewers of the Wall graffiti based on O'Toole (1994), "offers a mode of discourse that enables us to focus on semiosis" which is the "process whereby meanings are negotiated by the painter, the painting (text), and the viewer" (p. 30), that work together to create a dialogue that reaffirms the anonymous retelling of the Palestinian story. For example, the graffiti in *Figure 12* depicts an old man like Arafat also wearing a koufiyeh and holding the key to his home. Commemorating 1948, the *Nakba* year of catastrophe in Palestinian history when he along with thousands of Palestinians were dispersed out of their homes and villages for the establishment of the state of Israel. This ties up with the Goffman's (1981) "Footing" concept where the principal author or graffitist becomes the storyteller. Another boy wearing a koufiyeh launching a slingshot shooting a red heart symbolizes his modest means of resistance may also be a depiction of some kind of violence (*See Figures 16, 28*). Yet, the wordings next to this image read: "From Palestine with love".

In the first uprising in 1987, slingshots were used by young Palestinian children to throw stones on the Israeli armed soldiers during incursions. Traditional antique keys and slingshots along with Handhala and the koufiyeh became metaphorical artifacts that decorate Palestinian homes and function as identity markers that mainly signify their right to return to their homeland and to resist the occupation.

Typical to most types of art or graffiti, intended messages can be interpreted differently based on the writers or viewers cultural background, political affiliations, beliefs and interests. In most photographs, the content of the messages in the selected graffiti can be characterized as being referential, adequately foregrounded and contextualized, therefore, the detailed background information for some graffiti worked as a necessary instruction manual to establish the maximum rapport with the readers to universalize the wall.

To add more evidence to the universality of the Wall is a good example of the ties between South Africa's blacks and the Palestinians. The largest piece of graffiti on the Wall is planned and designed to be a letter that will cover 2,500 meters of the concrete wall, and scheduled to be painted on the Wall in September 2016 by Palestinian and Dutch activists (Liphshiz, 2016). The two thousand word open letter is written by *Farid Esack*, a South African Muslim writer and activist who was the gender equity commissioner during Nelson Mandela's time. Along with the Dutch online site *Sendamessage* that is dedicated to paint messages on the Wall for tourists, had created 850 messages worth thirty three thousand dollars that were donated to Palestinian charitable organizations after discounting the cost of spraying. The estimated cost of the letter is around 12,500 Euros and is considered academically professional, not cheap

propaganda, non-provocative, nor anti-Semitic (Liphshiz, 2016).

This adds a challenge to document whether another linguistic feature such as jargon is used or expressed by the Wall graffitists in the Palestinian setting. Graffitists in the Wall context, whether Palestinians or foreigners, are not in a sociolinguistic position to use for instance the jargon that a New York graffiti subculture would use. This jargon is not a trademark to unify graffitists. The ultimate goal of the Wall graffiti is what unites these graffitists. The wall is not a mere canvas to display some artwork, the fluid nature of the graffiti on this wall make it an ideal outlet to construct the identity and ideology of the misrepresented Palestinians. While emphasizing identities and its affiliations as Palestinians marking their existence and identifying with human dignity, the Wall people take their stand on the Wall, there is a silenced truth in the messages, and graffiti become the medium.

Graffiti had a crucial part in the revolutions and uprisings of the Arab Spring in recent years. Graffiti writers got very active and offered their revolutionary conversations through their creative visual art in order to urge people to oust their ruling dictatorships and constrict democracy in some Arab countries. Graffiti as visual art in the Arab World is unique in terms of its content and tone to each of the countries it appeared in. In Egypt, they were site/event specific conversations. Unlike the Arab Spring revolutionary graffiti that had divergent political motivations, the graffiti writers on the Wall have mutually institutionalized messages.

The Wall graffiti reaffirms the anonymous retelling of a story about bravery, consciousness, and dedication; a non-violent discourse mode spontaneously performed for an urging sociopolitical change. The Wall as a particular medium gained social

importance so it became a mode. The location of the Wall is a very important part of the messages the graffiti entail. Graffiti on the Wall is a mix of the past and present, absurdity and wisdom, reality and dreams, sarcasm and realism. Graffiti in Palestine started as calligraphy writing. Calligraphy is limited to space, a few millimeter to a couple of meters, if it gets bigger, then it is graffiti, graffiti on the Wall has no limits.

This Wall is different in that when it is compared to other graffiti elsewhere, there are rare cases where graffiti succeeded in attracting as much solidarity and sympathy as the case with the graffiti on this Wall. Palestinian graffitiists before the construction of the Wall were sidelined or secluded to areas with little or no population or flow of people making their messages local, mostly pointless, infective or futile. However, the Wall had graffiti that were solid proof of the solidarity with the Palestinian people as demonstrated in the previous chapter in the analyzed Spanish flotilla graffito (*Figure 26*, p. 102).

Different genres of gang graffiti are almost always a typical discourse mode of communicating needs, expectations and solidarity with their subculture. The interesting function of the graffiti on this unique surface and high profile site is that they promoted their demoralized, unprivileged sub-culture into a universal multicultural community.

Graffiti on the Wall must to be recorded and interpreted from a Palestinian point of view and what they mean to Palestinians. The graffiti on the Wall recorded polysemic rather than monolithic voices that not only functioned as a historical record or insight into a folk culture, but rather as a change maker. Typical to discourse, almost any statement is controversial, and typical to most types of art or graffiti, some intended messages on the Wall were challenging and controversial as well as they may be interpreted differently based on the writers or viewers' cultural backgrounds, political affiliations,

beliefs and interests. Since 1948, political graffiti existed to record the unrecorded history of the Palestinians, most of these graffiti disappeared without being documented. A part of history of the daily struggles will be lost if the graffiti on the Wall is not documented. Graffiti is the only way to be real and see reality in the own eyes of those who live it.

This paper argued that the graffiti on the Wall makes this wall a piece of art created by diverse graffiti artists of a shared discourse for the most part that emphasize a shared situation that calls for a just solution. The mutual interests of graffiti artists on this Wall are highly international demands of freedom and human rights not fame or status. Artwork that is only about becoming famous will never make anyone famous. The fame status here is reserved for the messages not the artists. The ultimate question that remains is whether the graffiti on the Wall would evoke or provoke a serious response from the viewers that can impose a change on the ground that would translate to a peaceful solution for a long due peace. The international community is wearied from reading and listening to stories about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that corporate media recycles. Graffiti on the Wall provides a different visual angle of the conflict. Further studies to document and legalize graffiti as an unconventional non-violent rhetorical mode in such a unique setting are recommended.

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BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Sylvia H. Dahdal, a Palestinian American, received a bachelor's degree in English/Arabic Translation from Ajman University for Science and Technology (AUST) in the United Arab Emirates in 2004, a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from Arizona State University (ASU) in 2007, and a doctorate degree in Writing, Rhetorics and Literacies from the Liberal Arts and Sciences College at ASU in 2017. As a kindergarten teacher at twenty-one years old, her passion for teaching English continued and evolved to become a tutor and educator in academic institutions in the United States and overseas. As an academic linguist, she is trilingual and her field of research concentrates on the analyses of unconventional modes of discourse and political rhetoric.