Holocaust Cartoons as Ideographs: Visual and Rhetorical Analysis of Holocaust Cartoons

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Abstract

The Holocaust cartoon competition of 2006 in Iran as an instance of social controversy has the potential to raise social and political arguments over various international and global issues. Through using McGee's theory of ideograph and Edwards and Winkler's theory of representative form, I identify the ideographs used in these cartoons and argue that the Holocaust cartoons function ideographically to portray Jews, Judaism, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, and the Holocaust. I explain how these controversial images function as representative characters and representative anecdotes and create different ideological interpretations of the Holocaust and associated issues, such as Israel–Palestine conflicts and Western freedom of speech. I argue that the cartoons suggest a connection between Nazism and Zionism, or the Nazi and Israeli regimes, by juxtaposing various elements and situations. I explain that the cartoons anecdotally refer to the Holocaust and represent it as myth or hoax used by Jews/Zionists to justify creation of the nation of Israel.

Background

At the height of the worldwide Muhammad cartoon controversy in February 2006,[1] *Hamshahri*, one of Iran's most widely circulated daily newspapers, announced an international cartoon competition, co-sponsored by the Iranian House of Cartoon in Tehran, titled *Holocaust*. The competition had two themes: (a) Where is the border for Western liberty of expression? and (b) Why should the Palestinian people pay for the Holocaust story? (Iran Cartoon, 2006a) The international exhibition was organized in the exhibition hall of the Palestine Museum of Contemporary Arts in Tehran and presented more than 200 cartoons selected from 1,193 drawings from 61 countries. From the 241 cartoons exhibited, the 16 cartoons judged best received an award named after the Holocaust (Iran Cartoon, 2006b).

According to organizers of the Holocaust competition, its purpose was to respond to Muhammad cartoons and pose a challenge to the freedom of expression that was used as a pretext to justify the publication of 12 Muhammad cartoons. One of the co-sponsors of the exhibition, *Hamshahri*, which is published by Tehran's conservative municipality, stated that the newspaper wanted to test the West's tolerance regarding the Holocaust.

This article provides a visual and rhetorical analysis of a sample of the Holocaust cartoons to examine how visual elements and stereotypes are used in the cartoons to present Jews, Judaism, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, and the Holocaust. The main two research questions here are as follows:

Research Question 1: How do the cartoons use visual elements to portray Jews, Judaism, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, and the Holocaust?
Research Question 2: How do the visual elements used in the cartoons function together as representative forms to present Jews, Judaism, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, and the Holocaust?

Cartoon Sampling and Sampling Approach

The cartoons analyzed in this study were chosen through purposive sampling. From a total of 241 cartoons displayed at the *Tehran Palestine Museum* in August 2006 and

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published on the official website of the *Iranian House of Cartoon* in Tehran (Iran Cartoon, 2006b), I selected the 16 cartoons that were chosen by the organizers to win the competition. From these 16 cartoons, I selected 12 that were seen on various websites and that used more concrete images related to the Holocaust and, thus, were less abstract than other cartoons. I selected them for two reasons: First, these cartoons were selected by the secretary of the exhibition and organizers of the competition and published by the official website of *Iranian House of Cartoon*; in addition, the cartoonists were presented by the *Hamshahri* newspaper as well as the *Iranian House of Cartoon* (see Appendices A-C).

Second, as winners of the Holocaust cartoon competition, some of these 12 cartoons were interpreted and published on other websites, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) website, Religious-Freaks, *New York Sun*, and *Hamshahri-online*. Some of these cartoons were also published by *Israel News Agency, Iran Cartoon*, and *Wikipedia* (see Appendix D). Also, several of the cartoon winners (e.g., first and second prize winners) were available on social websites such as *Facebook*. The assumption was that these selected 12 cartoons have larger audiences than other cartoons.

Holocaust Cartoons as Ideographs and Representative Forms

Because visual and rhetorical artifacts are not interpreted by creators and artists, trying to examine the cartoonists' motivations is a futile endeavor. As Foss (1992) argued, images actively reflect beliefs, attitudes, and values of a society rather than exclusively reflecting the views of their creators. Thus, cartoons are not interpreted by cartoonists; rather, they are actively explained by their audiences (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). Therefore, in the case of the Holocaust cartoons, I do not assess the cartoonists' motivations. Undoubtedly, we cannot presume to understand all the ideas behind each cartoon, but we can try to read the messages through the depiction of situations and characters.

Edwards and Winkler (1997) argued that political cartoons often suggest a central ideograph or representative form that functions ideographically to "create and reaffirm the identity of the body politic" (p. 295). They stated that a representative form should fit McGee's (1980) definition of the ideograph. Edwards and Winkler argued that representative form reflects the two concepts of representative anecdote and representative character. They also suggested that cartoons re-appropriate images to create new arguments in a new context.

I first examine the ideographical functions of the Holocaust cartoons and then account for how the cartoons reflect representative characters or representative anecdotes. Then I discuss how the cartoons create new situations through condensation, domestication, opposition, and carnivalization.

In the last discussion of the article, I explain how re-appropriation of the images creates new messages in a new context.

The Holocaust Cartoons as Visual Ideographs

Edwards and Winkler (1997) suggested the theory of representative form of ideograph to analyze the political cartoons of Iwo Jima that follow a central motif or central subject. To build their theory, they did not rely only on the visual theories such as iconography and metaphor that focus on the denotative functions of the image. They believed that iconography cannot be used to explain how cartoons produce new meanings because icons refer to arguments that already exist. In essence, Edwards and Winkler considered icons as embodiments of ideographs that already exist within the public discourse. The theory of representative form focuses more on ideographs that "enact their meanings by expressing an association of cultural ideas and experiences in an ever-evolving and reifying form" (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 297). This theory does not attempt to analyze denotative functions of the image; rather, it describes visual elements and iconic images to focus on the ideology behind cartoons. Although the Holocaust cartoons are best explained with the theory of representative form, even the visual theories on iconography and metaphor are helpful when trying to understand them. The cartoons anecdotally and through characters represent the Holocaust, Jews, Palestinian Muslims, Nazis, and Israel by metaphorically using familiar iconic images to create new messages.

Edwards and Winkler suggested that the set of characteristics of ideographs identified by McGee (1980) can describe how a cartoon has more than denotative visual functions. An *ideograph* is an ordinary term associated with a particular history that is used within the public discourse. It abstracts collective normative goals and guides behaviors and beliefs to present a specific argument limited to a particular culture, namely, a culture-bound argument.

Ordinary Images in Political Discourse

Ideographs are ordinary terms, not necessarily ubiquitous but accessible to the whole population and not just political elites. In other words, ideographs may be equivocal and should be familiar to most people. Ideographs are also flexible in that they allow for a variety of interpretations. Because this analysis deals with images, I use the concept of ordinary image instead of ordinary term.

All 12 cartoons analyzed here fit this characteristic of ideograph. Each cartoon communicates its own specific idea by using common iconic images that are familiar to most people so that most people recognize these ordinary images and can relate them to the main subjects of the cartoons. Iconic images, such as the Star of David, the swastika, the Red Crescent, the flags of Israel and Palestine, the red triangle, stereotypical images of Arabs and Jews, the striped
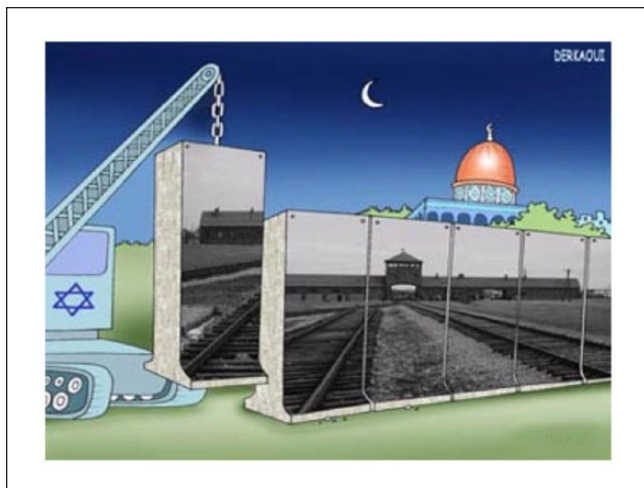
Figure 1. Cartoon created by Derkaoui Abdellah, winner of the first prize, Published by Irancartoon.com. (see also Appendix B)

Figure 2. Cartoon created by Carlos Latuff, winner of the second prize, published by Irancartoon.com. (see also Appendix B)

uniform of Holocaust prisoners, and the familiar images of the Dome of the Rock (Al-Aqsa Mosque) and Auschwitz, are the main ordinary images in this sample of the Holocaust cartoons.

Although the viewers may not be familiar with all the nuances of the symbolic images of Jews, Palestinians, Nazis, Israelis, and the Holocaust, many cultural concepts are related to the subjects in each cartoon. In essence, the iconic images and symbols within the cartoons provide a point that leads viewers toward their meanings. Thus, the viewers at least can relate them to the main subject matter. For example, the cartoon illustrated by Abdellah Derkaoui (Figure 1), a Moroccan artist who was awarded the top prize, shows a crane (marked by the Star of David) constructing the walls around the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. An image of Auschwitz, as a symbol of human cruelty toward fellow human beings in the 20th century, has been painted on the panels of large cement blocks. A railway leading to the gates of Auschwitz–Birkenau appears in this image. Here, the images of Auschwitz and the Al-Aqsa Mosque can be seen as ordinary visual images such as those that McGee (1980) mentioned in the context of political rhetoric. If the 12 cartoons were presented to a viewer, he or she might not understand all the arguments behind such images, but the ordinary iconic images function ideographically and lead the viewer to relate these ideographs to interpretations of the Holocaust and recent events.

The cartoon shows the Israeli security wall built to separate the third holiest site of Muslims, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, from Jerusalem. It suggests a kind of connection between the Nazi concentration camps and the border walls built by Israel. In essence, the combination of Israeli security walls and the image of Auschwitz recall Nazi atrocities toward Jews in concentration camps in World War II and thus, equate the Nazis with the Israeli regime.

The Star of David, or the Jewish Star, depicted on the crane can address both Israel and Judaism because this iconic image generally represents the Jewish community, and it is a national symbol of Israel, which is used in the official flag of the state of Israel. Thus, it seems to be equivocal as this icon is related to both the Israeli state and the Jewish people living in Israel and throughout the world. Thus, the Star of David as used in the cartoons can be perceived as a representative of both Jews and Israel.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque symbolically presents Jerusalem, known as a holy city in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Here, the Dome of the Rock stands for an issue in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and suggests the Israeli West Bank barrier constructed with the goal of protecting Israeli civilians from Palestinian terroristic acts. The black-and-white photo of Nazi Germany's Auschwitz concentration camp reflected on the concrete walls implies a kind of correlation or parallel between the Holocaust during World War II and Israeli actions in Palestine. All the iconic images within the cartoon act ideographically as political signs to express a political message. The cartoon suggests a complete compound through the use of different icons from diverse domains.

Another cartoon—created by Brazilian cartoonist Carlos Latuff (Figure 2)—shows an upset Arabic man dressed in the uniform of a Holocaust prisoner. The cartoon uses stereotypical Arabic images, such as the traditional Arabic head scarf and the black beard and mustache. The Red Crescent patch on his dress refers to the international symbol of the faith of Islam that here has replaced the red triangle[2] of the Holocaust prisoners' uniform (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. The most obvious sign over Auschwitz prisoner's uniform, Retrieved from www.majdanek.eu

Figure 4. Auschwitz prisoner's uniform, Retrieved from: calpol25.hubpages.com

The cartoon uses Arabic stereotypes and the crescent as the symbol of Islam to replace Auschwitz victims with a Palestinian Muslim. The Auschwitz concentration camp appears in the background of the image. The cartoon replaces Judaism and Jews with Islam and Muslims by substituting a Jewish prisoner with an Arab Muslim. Replacement of Judaism with Islam, Jews with Muslims, and Jewish victims of the Holocaust with Palestinian people suggests that Palestinians are indirect victims of the Holocaust. In essence,
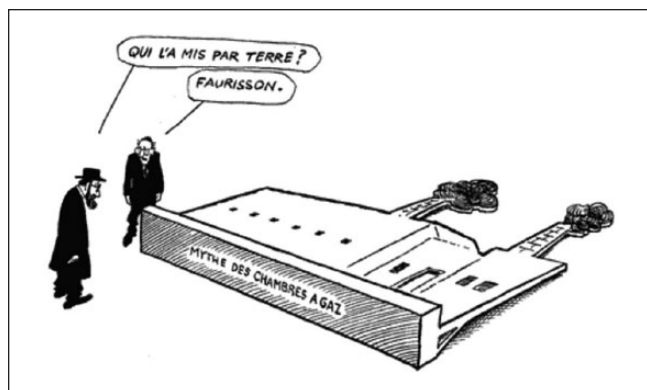

Figure 5. Created by Italian cartoonist, Gatto Alessandro, retrieved from collection of the best selected cartoons. Available on Irancartoon.com (see also Appendix B)

the cartoon parallels Israel with the Nazi regime and Palestinians with Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The same strategy seems to be at work in the cartoon by Gatto Alessandro from Italy. By using Arabic stereotypes, the cartoon presents Palestinian Muslims as indirect victims of the Holocaust (see Figure 5). By juxtaposing different elements that originated in different domains (e.g., the striped prisoner's jacket of the Auschwitz camp and a portrait of an Arab man), the cartoon changes different circumstances related to different times and eventually creates new meaning. By changing the circumstances and replacing oppressors and oppressed (i.e., Israel's regime instead of Nazis and Palestinian people instead of Jewish victims of the Holocaust), the cartoon creates a new situation related to the current discussions on the Israeli–Palestinian conflicts. The cartoon acts ideographically to present Palestinian Arab Muslims as indirect victims of the Holocaust, whereas it anecdotally refers to the Holocaust by using one of the most obvious signs of the Holocaust, the Auschwitz prisoner's uniform.

One important characteristic of the ideographs, as McGee (1980) argued, is "in their concrete history" (p. 10). In this sense, each iconic image used in the cartoons, such as Auschwitz, the swastika, the Star of David, the jacket of prisoners, and all the stereotypes of Arab and Jews, can imply a particular concrete history, namely, the Holocaust during World War II and more recent histories such as the Jerusalem walls and other issues related to Israel and Palestine. The iconic images within these cartoons can be understood as a representation of historical events such as the Holocaust and the identification of a specific culture or group of people.

Figure 6. By French cartoonist, A. chard. Published by Irancartoon.com

Figure 7. By Joe Rosenthal (1945). Retrieved from: iwojima.com

Figure 8. By Richard Morin (1990). Reproduced from Edwards and Winkler (1997)

The stereotypical and iconic images function ideographically to open debate over the different interpretations of the Holocaust. The cartoons invite arguments on the subject that challenge the reality of the Holocaust. Thus, the cartoon drawn by a French cartoonist who was awarded the second prize represents the Holocaust as a fake story (see Figure 6).

This cartoon shows two Jewish men standing beside a facade of Auschwitz (titled "MYTHE DES CHAMBRES A GAZ"—Myth of the Gas Chambers) toppling on the ground. One of the Jews portrayed in the cartoon is asking, "*QUI LA MIS PAR TERRE*?"—Who put it down on the ground? The other man, with an anxious and frightened face, replies "*FAURISSON*." The iconic image within the cartoon can refer to the deniers and researchers of the Holocaust. Moreover, it can be perceived as a sarcastic image to challenge the West's supposed double standard about freedom of speech.[3]

The cartoon represents the Holocaust as a lie and spurious story, which is now revealed by French writer Robert Faurrison,[4] a Holocaust denier. The cartoon shows Jewish stereotypes (such as the special cap and beard style of Jews) that can be a representation of the Jewish community. It represents a historical event by using cultural and historical iconic images, such as the image of Auschwitz and Jews, that everyone recognizes.

This cartoon does not connect the Israeli and Nazi regimes, but it directly aims at the reality of the Holocaust and presents it as hoax. Using and abstracting a symbolic image of the Holocaust (Auschwitz) that originates in actual objects open the debate over the reality of the Holocaust and allow viewers to think about the subject and compare their own interpretation with the artist's interpretation.

Abstracting Collective Normative Goals

As mentioned earlier, McGee (1980) defined ideograph as a high-order abstraction that represents "collective commitment to a particular but ill-defined normative goal" (p. 15).

This characteristic of ideographs allows for various interpretations of the subject. This trait provides an opportunity for many people to participate in the debates and give their interpretations of the artifact. Edwards and Winkler (1997) in their study of the political cartoons of Iwo Jima argued that Rosenthal's (1945) original photograph (see Figure 7) functions in the cartoons as an ideograph to represent "collective commitment to normative goals that transcend the military environment" (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 300). For example, the cartoon drawn by Richard Morin in 1990, manipulates the original Iwo Jima image to criticize the Gulf War and "belittle(s) the motivation for U.S. involvement in the Gulf War to be one of economic self-interest" (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 302; see Figure 8). In this case, the original photo of Iwo Jima functions as an ideograph that is recognized by many people to criticize recent events (here, military behavior in the Gulf War). Finally, Edwards and Winkler
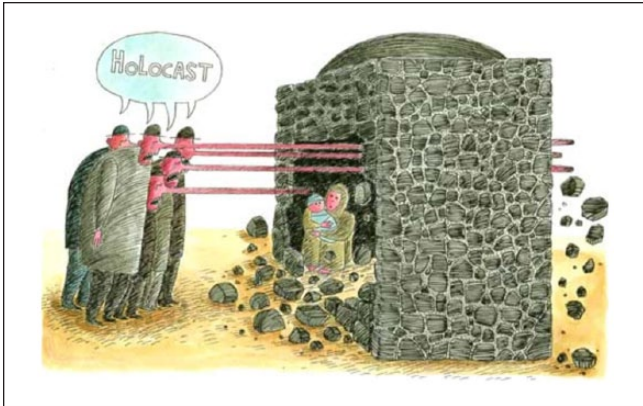
Figure 9. By Mahmoud Nazari. Retrieved from: Irancartoon.com

Figure 10. By Shahram Rezai. Available on Irancartoon.com

concluded that "no single language term sums up the interpretation of the image" (p. 302). In this sense, images are considered ideographs that have the potential to permit different interpretations of social and political norms.

In the Holocaust cartoons analyzed in my sample, the ordinary images act to create an ideograph that "accommodates [its] application to a wide array of [recent] political" issues (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 302). For instance, Mahmoud Nazari, an Iranian cartoonist, presents a satirical image through distorted figures and creates a statement about Jews and Israel's actions in Palestine (see Figure 9). The cartoonist manipulates the visual elements to make an argument regarding the reality of the Holocaust. The ideographs used in the cartoon refer to abstract collective norms held by everyone in the West and East that invasion, attack, and occupation are against international law. The cartoon also displays Israel's treatment of Palestinians as inhumane acts in opposition to international law and human conscience.

The iconic images and visual elements used in this cartoon are familiar and suggestive enough to attract the viewers' attention to the intersection of Jews and Israelis' treatment of Arab Palestinians and human rights laws (here, the cartoon does not specifically address the Israeli regime by using explicit iconic images related to Israel).

The cartoon depicts five Jews, with long noses and stereotypical Jewish hats and coats, saying "HOLOCAST."[5] The cartoon suggests that their lie, symbolized by the long nose of *La Pinocchio*, pierces the cottage of a Palestinian Arab woman with a baby in her arms. In this sense, the cartoon represents Jews as oppressors who violated Palestinian land with a lie titled *Holocaust*. The woman can be generalized to all the Palestinians who were violated by the Israeli regime, and the distorted figures represent Israeli Jews. Therefore, the iconic images and stereotypical elements themselves create a form of ideograph that leaves a kind of ambiguity after the first glance as to whether the distorted figures are the Jews and Israelis. The word *Holocaust* as a caption and rhetorical element is used to connect a new situation, namely,

the violation of the Israeli invasion of Palestine, with the Holocaust. Overall, the cartoon functions as an ideograph that refers to the abstract collective commitment to human rights (here, Palestinian rights) and constructs the Israeli treatment of Palestinian Arab people as inhumane.

In his cartoon, Shahram Rezai uses Nazi symbols and relates them to iconic Israeli images and thereby, frames a new situation to connect Israel and the Nazis (see Figure 10). The cartoon uses familiar symbolic images to animate a new political message related to recent issues such as Israel–Palestine conflicts. This cartoon compares the Nazis with the Israelis by replacing the Star of David with the swastika on the uniform of Israeli soldiers. The cartoon shows the soldiers standing beside a grave and holding bloody paper dolls. The bloody paper dolls created by Israelis soldiers, who are equated with the Nazis, can refer to the large number of Holocaust victims. In this way, the cartoon suggestively undermines the Holocaust victims by presenting them as handmade paper dolls that are easily multiplied by a few cuts and folds. In fact, in this cartoon, ordinary images function together to create an ideograph that presents the dominant normative goals of the Israeli regime's military. The cartoonist juxtaposes different icons and condenses them into a single image to form a new argument. The presence of the symbolic associations between the visual elements creates a new argument related to recent issues.

Cartoons as Guides of Behavior and Beliefs

The further characteristic of ideograph defined by McGee (1980) is controlling public beliefs and behaviors. McGee argued that the ideograph "warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily acceptable and laudable" (p. 15). He suggested that ideographs such as slavery and tyranny as unjust

Figure 11. By Bill Schorr (1993). Reproduced from Edwards and Winkler (1997).

Figure 12. By Eloar Guazzelli from Brazil. Retrieved from: Irancartoon.com

acts function ideographically to criticize tyranny and oppression and guide the behavior and beliefs into an acceptable channel. The Holocaust cartoons comprise this ideographic function. For example, the two cartoons in Figures 9 and 10 function ideographically by branding an inhumane or criminal act, namely, the genocidal actions of the Nazi and Israeli regimes.

Edwards and Winkler (1997) in their study on the Iwo Jima cartoons illuminated this trait of ideographs. In the cartoon drawn by Bill Schorr in 1993, the Iwo Jima image is used as an ideograph to brand an eccentric behavior in the U.S. military, namely, "intolerance for gender diversity" (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 302). The cartoon replaces "raising the flag" with the group of Marines harassing a "female recruit by peering under her skirt" (p. 302). In essence, the cartoon brands an antisocial behavior to guide beliefs and behavior into a correct channel, namely, tolerance for gender diversity (see Figure 11).

Among the Holocaust cartoons, there are several examples that explicitly display this kind of ideographical function. For instance, in the first- and second-prize cartoon winners (see Figures 1 and 2), the cartoonists connect Israel's regime with the Nazis. In essence, the cartoons criticize the governmental actions of Israel by juxtaposing the iconic images and changing the situations. The cartoons use the Nazis' genocidal action, which is perceived as historic outrage, to criticize the Israeli regime's actions against Palestinian Arabs. Here, the iconic images as ideographs serve "as a point of comparison for determining what is acceptable and laudable" (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 302).

Another cartoon that combines Nazi ideology with the Israeli regime is illustrated by Brazilian cartoonist Eloar Guazzelli, who was awarded a special prize (see Figure 12). In this cartoon, Guazzelli criticizes Israel by connecting the Star of David to the swastika, the main symbol of the Nazis.
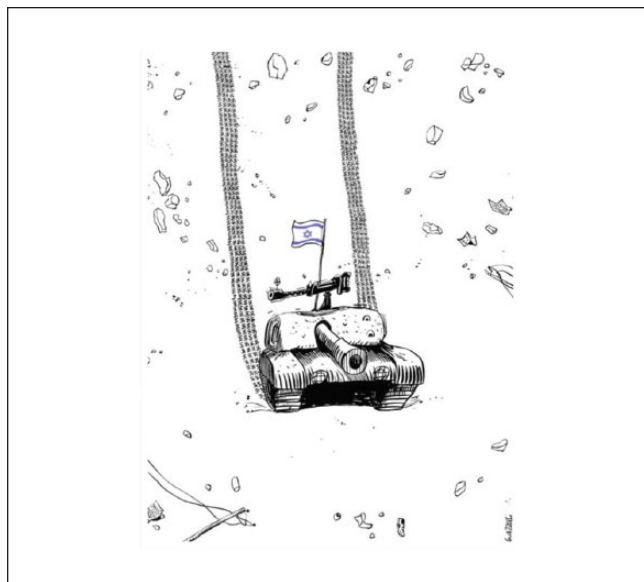
The cartoon shows an Israeli tank backed by a complex set of Nazi swastikas. Here, Nazism represented by swastikas is used to reproach Israel for its treatment of Palestinians. The cartoon acts ideographically in an attempt to ask whether the action of the government of Israel, which is illustrated here as similar to that of the Nazis, is laudable or inhumane (Figure 12).

The cartoon by Jordanian cartoonist Omar-Adnan-Salem-Al-Abdallat criticizes the ideology that supports Israel as a country for Jews, namely, Zionism. The cartoonist presents this ideology as disgraceful and guides viewers' interpretations toward an idea that considers Israel an illegitimate nation (see Figure 13). The cartoon depicts four birds in a hot space that implies a fiery furnace. The caption of the cartoon says, "after burning chickens because of the flu." One of the chickens says, "We want a country like Israel." The cartoon compares Holocaust victims with chickens that were burnt and removed because of the bird flu. This equates burning chickens during the bird flu crisis with burning Jews in the gas chambers during World War II. Such comparison can obviously be perceived as an act of racism. The cartoonist uses one of the familiar stereotypical images of the bird, from the well-known animated cartoon *Angry Birds*, and equates Jews with chickens.

The cartoon functions ideographically to humiliate Holocaust victims and present them as the pretext for the formation of Israel. The cartoonist uses humor to communicate his message. Connecting the Holocaust with an irrelevant issue can be perceived as a humiliating act directed toward Holocaust victims. It can also be considered an anti-Semitic work that directly aims at Jews by replacing a sensitive issue (the Holocaust) with a disjointed issue (burning the

chickens). In essence, the cartoon uses an irrelevant issue that metaphorically refers to the Holocaust to guide viewers' interpretation toward downgrading Holocaust victims to burnt chickens. In this way, the cartoon promotes a belief in the falsity of the Holocaust.

This cartoon creates meaning by juxtaposing two subjects (burning chickens and Jews) and integrating them into a single image. In essence, the cartoon anchors irrelevant meaning units to create a new message (Foss, 1992).

Culture Bound

Another trait of ideographs is that they are bound by culture. This means that the ideographs are conditioned in cultural elements of a particular society (McGee, 1980). In this meaning, the ideographs work in the context in which they are created. Therefore, understanding the cultural context is important to be sufficiently familiar with the ideographs to understand the messages behind the images.

All 12 cartoons in the sample of this study contain this cultural characteristic of ideographs. Thus, the cartoons drawn by Derkaoui and Latuff analyzed above (Figures 2 and 3) exemplify this cultural characteristic of ideographs. The frequent use of iconic images such as the Star of David, the swastika, and the Red Crescent, and symbolic images such as the Dome of the Rock illuminate the cultural aspects of ideographs. In essence, each iconic image that is rooted in its concrete cultural context represents a particular group, community, religion, and eventually specific ideology. For instance, as explained earlier, the Star of David can be assumed to represent Jews and Israel, whereas the Red Crescent and the Dome of the Rock represent a group of Muslim or Palestinian people.

In his cartoon, Maziyar Bizhani illustrates specific cultural visual elements and compares the Nazi regime with the Israeli regime through juxtaposition of Nazi and Israeli
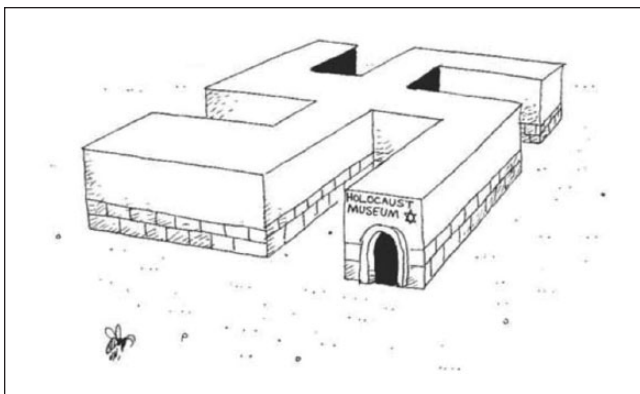
elements (see Figure 14). The cartoonist depicts a museum called "Holocaust" that is built based on the shape of the swastika. He juxtaposes different icons from different domains and condenses them into a composite with a new ideology that conveys a kind of connection of Nazi ideology and Israel. The iconic Star of David, as an obvious symbol of Jews and Israel, reflected on the museum entrance, can convey that Israelis and Jews are creators of the Holocaust. In other words, the cartoon illustrates the Holocaust like a museum that is built by Israel or Jews.[6] In short, the cartoon compares Nazi genocides with Israeli genocides through the parallel elements of both regimes.

The Holocaust Cartoons as Representative Anecdote and Representative Character

To suggest the theory of representative form, Edwards and Winkler (1997) referred to the two concepts of representative anecdote and representative character described by Kenneth Burke (Burke 1969, cited in Edwards and Winkler 1997, p.295) and S.Paige Baty (Baty 1995, cited in Edwards and Winkler 1997, p. 295). They stated that cartoonists use a representative anecdote or story to aim at collective understanding so as to create meaning beyond the particular story or events they evoke. In the cartoons analyzed here, the cartoonists use the anecdote of the Holocaust as a filter to re-construct discourse and create new situations and meanings related to the current events. Representative character as a concentrated image, which is originated in actuality, refers to a human motif, and at the larger level, it presents a public image (Edwards & Winkler, 1997).

For instance, in the first winning cartoon (Figure 1), both the realistic photograph of the Auschwitz concentration camp and the image of block walls anecdotally recall particular stories (the historical event of the Holocaust and construction of Israeli security walls) that occurred in different times. These anecdotal images go beyond the relevant events they evoke. In essence, by recalling the particular events, the cartoonist frames a new situation related to the recent events, that is, the

Figure 15. By Mohammadreza Doustmohammadi. Available on Irancartoon.com

Israeli–Palestinian conflicts. The cartoon as a concentrated image originated in reality also can be considered a representative character of Israeli regime and a representative anecdote of the Holocaust. It uses the Star of David and the historical image of Auschwitz to provide an expression of recent events and subsequently, a new idea. For instance, the image of the Dome of the Rock can represent the image of Palestinian Muslims. Overall, the cartoon functions as a representative form that provides an opportunity to compare the cartoonist's interpretation to the original memory of the original events.

Among the Holocaust cartoons in our sample, a cartoon by Iranian cartoonist Mohammadreza Doustmohammadi uses the Holocaust and the little match girl story[7] to create a new message regarding the West's view of the Holocaust (see Figure 15). In fact, he uses metaphorically one of the saddest and most melodramatic stories in European culture, the little match girl, and compares it with the Holocaust event. The cartoonist juxtaposes the two stories and shows that Western people are weeping for the Holocaust so that they have forgotten the match girl. This cartoon describes the Holocaust as an unrealistic and exaggerated story. The cartoon shows a Jewish man weeping for the Holocaust, with Western/European people gathered around him, while they leave the match girl alone. In essence, the cartoon suggests a kind of exaggeration of the Holocaust by the West. The artist here uses different visual elements from different domains in a single image to create a new situation in the present time.

The figure of the Jewish man characteristically represents the Jewish community, and the group of people associated with the old European cultural stereotypes shows Western people. The cartoon anecdotally refers to the Holocaust and the little match girl story. This story is metaphorically used to imply that there are important issues that are more tragic than the Holocaust but have been forgotten in the West. The parodied context of this representative form provides an opportunity for viewers to compare the cartoonist's interpretation with their own perceptions.

Figure 16. By Naji Benaji. Available on Irancartoon.com

Condensation, Opposition, Domestication, and Carnivalization

As Morris (1993) stated, cartoons condense multiple and different elements and contentions into a single image to provide a perfect composite that communicates a new message. Another method applied in cartoons is the opposition procedure by which cartoonists create a new idea by juxtaposing two opposite images. Thus, in the first cartoon analyzed here (Figure 1), Al-Aqsa as a holy site is juxtaposed with the infamous site of Auschwitz, which is known as a symbol of brutality and horror. In this way, the cartoonist disobeys the time rules through juxtaposition of opposite subjects and the use of different subjects and phenomena from different times. He breaks time and location by connecting the two different events, the Auschwitz camp in Germany related to World War II and the recent construction of Israel's security fence in the West Bank. In this way, the artist connects past events with recent situations and circumstances to position problems within the context of everyday life (Greenberg, 2002).

Another example that clearly illuminates opposition is the cartoon drawn by Latuff (Figure 2). In this cartoon, the artist applies opposition by creating juxtapositions such as Arab Jewish or Muslim Jewish by combining Muslim iconic images with the symbols of the Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz.

The third characteristic of cartoons is domestication by which cartoonists familiarize abstract ideas and unfamiliar subjects by using more common visual elements (i.e., known symbols, stereotypes). For example, in his cartoon, Naji Benaji includes the common visual elements of Israel's and Palestine's flags to domesticate the abstract forms that are unfamiliar to people (such as the bottles and skulls; see Figure 16). The cartoonist uses common visual elements to domesticate the subject. He also manipulates previous icons

Figure 17. By Vahid Khodayar. Reproduced from Irancartoon.com

such as the Israel flag by replacing the Star of David with the word Holocaust. Use of the flags of Israel and Palestine characteristically functions as a representative form of the Israelis and Palestinians. The cartoon here acts as a visual ideograph to present specific ideology that considers the Holocaust to be a myth or hoax perpetrated by Israel to justify the murder of Palestinian people.

This cartoon compares Palestinians with Jewish Holocaust victims. The official flags of Israel and Palestine are depicted on two bottles. The word *Holocaust* reflected on the Israeli flag instead of the Star of David suggests that the Holocaust was used as a "pretext" to create Israel. In this sense, the cartoon quite fits the purpose of the competition: "Why should the Palestinian people pay for the Holocaust story?" (Iran Cartoon, 2006a). The skulls depicted inside the bottle labeled by the Palestinian flag represent the Palestinian victims. The few skulls trying to get inside the empty left bottle represent Holocaust victims. This illustrates the Holocaust as an absurd and fictional story that the Israeli regime created by force. Overall, this cartoon denies the Holocaust victims or underestimates them in comparing them with the Palestinians murdered by Israel.

Carnivalization is another strategy for political cartoons. In this process, cartoonists replace a sacred thing with a profane thing by distorting figures and situations through caricature (Morris, 1993). For instance, the cartoon by Iranian cartoonist Vahid Khodayar illustrates a satirical story through distorted figures that represent the Jews (Figure 17). In this cartoon, a woman with a belt labeled with the word *Holocaust* is dancing around a fire. The woman is putting on a show, and a large number of Jews are gathering around her to watch. The people around the circle of this carnival, with hook noses and the Star of David reflected on their hats, represent Jews. Wars and conflicts outside this circle show the Jews as indifferent to what is going on around them. The cartoon presents the Holocaust as a ridiculous and humorous

show created and displayed by Jews. In essence, the cartoonist presents the Holocaust as a funny story created by Jews to entertain people and distract them from the important issues.

In his cartoon, Khodayar uses iconic images such as the stereotypical hat and coat that symbolize the Jewish people. In essence, the cartoonist uses the technique of carnivalization by replacing the Holocaust (assumed to be a holy story for the West and Jews) with a funny show. The word *Holocaust* with the fire image in the center of the cartoon anecdotally represents the Holocaust. Overall, the cartoon as a satirical image can be considered a representative form that communicates an idea (which is not so new) related to the Holocaust.

In short, detailing all the cartoons here is beyond the scope of this article, but overall, the cartoons in this sample use these four techniques to communicate their messages.

The Appropriation and Re-Contextualization of the Circumstances

Edwards and Winkler (1997) argued that the theory of representative form refers to the appropriation and re-contextualization of image. They stated that cartoonists create their ideological messages by "choosing the situational context for the use of the image" (p. 305). In this sense, cartoonists manipulate the context of images within the cartoons to create new arguments. For instance, one of the Iwo Jima cartoons refers to

humanitarian relief in Somalia . . . [during] World War II . . . [through] transforming the flag [which is seen in the original photo of Iwo Jima] into a spoon feeding . . . a hungry [child]. (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 300)

Here, the cartoon re-appropriates the Iwo Jima image and disobeys time and place to create a new ideological argument in a new context.

Analysis of the Holocaust cartoons readily certifies that the cartoons in many cases include this appropriation; for instance, in the first and second cartoons by Derkaoui and Latuff (Figures 1 and 2), the manipulation of the Auschwitz image creates a new ideological argument related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Another example that illuminates this trait is the cartoon created by Moroccan cartoonist Naji Benaji (Figure 16). In this cartoon, he manipulates the flag of Israel by replacing the Star of David in the center of the flag with the word *Holocaust*. In fact, the cartoonist equates Israel's regime to the issue of the Holocaust and creates a new ideological argument related to the reality of the Holocaust. The manipulation of Israel's flag and labeling the empty bottle with it identify a specific circumstance that inspires the cartoonist's ideology (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). All 12 cartoons move around a central subject (the Holocaust) and appropriate it to communicate messages related to current issues, such as Israel–Palestine conflicts and current debates

on the Holocaust. In other words, the cartoons appropriate the Holocaust as a central subject to create new arguments related to current issues in new contexts.

Conclusion

Relying on the theory of representative form, I have described how the cartoons in my sample create their ideological arguments about the Holocaust and relevant issues such as Jews, Muslims, Israel, and Palestine. The Holocaust cartoons analyzed in this chapter fulfill the qualities of ideographs. In many cases, the cartoons connect the symbols and icons of the Nazis to Israel, thereby equating Israel's treatment of Palestinian Muslims to the Nazi's treatment of Jews during World War II. In some cases, they present the Holocaust as a false story created and manipulated by Israelis and Jews to justify the occupation of Palestine. A few cartoons directly address the Jews by depicting common anti-Semitic stereotypes such as the hook nose and greedy face and using metaphorical images that represent Jews as occupiers and oppressors.

I have examined visual and ideographic functions of the cartoons through the method derived from the theories of ideograph and representative form. By using this method, I examined cartoons for various uses of visual elements that make a representative form to present the Holocaust and associated issues. The cartoons were examined from different aspects: using ordinary images, abstracting collective norms, guides of behavior and beliefs, cultural bounds, representative anecdotes, and characters. The cartoons were also examined for some common processes in making cartoons, such as condensation, opposition, domestication, and carnivalization, plus re-appropriation and re-contextualization.

By applying this method, the main ordinary images used in the cartoons were identified as the following: the image of Auschwitz, al-Aqsa Mosque (Dome of the Rock), Star of David (Jewish Star), Red Crescent, uniform of Auschwitz prisoners, Jewish cap and beard style, the swastika, and the flags of Israel and Palestine. These ordinary images in the cartoons (a) replace Judaism and Jews with Islam and Muslims, (b) compare Palestinians with Jewish victims of the Holocaust, (c) present Palestinians as indirect victims of the Holocaust, and (d) equate Israel and Zionism with Nazis.

The cartoons analyzed fulfill the qualities of the ideograph. In several cases, the cartoons connect iconic images of Nazis to Israel and equate Israel's treatment of Palestinian Muslims to the Nazi's treatment of Jews during World War II. By changing the situations, the cartoons replace the oppressed and oppressor to compare Israel's regime with the Nazis and Palestinian people with Jews. The cartoons analyzed in my sample function as ideographs and criticize Israel's treatment of Palestinians. The cultural visual elements used in the cartoons also suggest a kind of connection between Nazism and Zionism, or Nazis and the Israeli regime. The cartoons also connect the Nazi ideology with the ideology of Zionism by juxtaposing different elements and situations.

Some cartoons directly address the Jews by using anti-Semitic stereotypes and represent them as occupiers and oppressors. The cartoons anecdotally refer to the Holocaust by using ordinary images such as Auschwitz and the uniform of prisoners of the Holocaust. Most of the cartoons present the Holocaust as a myth or a lie used as a pretext to establish the nation of Israel. The cartoons disobey the rules of time and location by connecting two events—the Holocaust and the Israel–Palestine conflicts. The cartoons question and in some cases, deny an unwritten social/cultural norm in the Jewish community and in the West—honoring the memory of the Holocaust—that lately has even become a legal norm inscribed in some Western countries' legislation.[8]

Appendix A

The collection of the Holocaust cartoons exhibited on the *Tehran Palestinian Museum* and *Iranian House of Cartoon*. Retrieved from http://www.irancartoon.ir/gallery/album48

Appendix B

The result of the Holocaust cartoon contest by *Hamshahri*. Retrieved from http://irancartoon.com/120/holocaust/index.htm

Appendix C

List of the websites publishing and talking about the cartoon winners

> http://www.360east.com/?p=604
> http://www.adl.org/main_Arab_World/cartoon_contest.htm
> http://scienceblogs.com/insolence/2006/11/iran_announces_the_winner_of_the_holocau_1.php
> http://religiousfreaks.com/hamshahri-holocaust-cartoons-and-caricatures/
> http://www.nysun.com/foreign/holocaust-cartoon-wins-a-prize-in-iran/42837/
>
> http://flapsblog.com/2006/03/13/iran-holocaust-cartoon-watch-irans-hamshahri-newspaper-holds-cartoon-contest/
> http://www.israelnewsagency.com/iranholocaustcartoonsisraelseo48480207.html
> http://www.facebook.com/pages/Iran-Holocaust-Cartoon-Contest/144025182274718?rf=135274826507077
>
> http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/more-anger-as-holocaust-cartoon-winners-unveiled/2006/11/02/1162339989025.html

http://drinkingfromhome.blogspot.se/2006/11/iran-holocaust-cartoon-winners.html

http://politicsforum.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=67401

http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/?p=5570

http://www.clubvibes.com/forum/topic.aspx?id=432537

http://www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message327819/pg1

http://hotair.com/archives/2006/11/01/iran-names-winner-of-holocaust-cartoon-contest/

http://gettingtruth.wordpress.com/2007/07/26/iranian-holocaust-cartoon-contest/

http://mideastreality.blogspot.se/2006/11/winner-of-holocaust-cartoon-contest.html

http://plancksconstant.org/blog1/2006/11/iranian_holocaust_ca.html

Blogs

http://creekside1.blogspot.se/2007/01/holocaust-cartoon-winner.html

http://religiousfreaks.com/2006/11/01/moroccan-wins-iran-holocaust-cartoon-contest/

http://www.hhjj.mihanblog.com/post/tag/

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. On September 30, 2005, *Jyllands-Posten* had published 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. Flemming Rose, cultural editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, published the cartoon caricatures of Islam's prophet to test his hypothesis that "the threat of Islamic terrorism had limited the freedom [of] expression in Denmark" (Battaglia, 2008, p. 20).
2. "Striped uniforms, with the camp number and a red triangle with the letter P, meant a political prisoner of Polish nationality" (State Museum at Majdanek, 2006).
3. According to legislation known as the Gayssot Act passed in July, 1990, in France, any expressed doubts about the Holocaust, including doubts about Jews as victims in World War II, the existence of the gas chambers, and the figure of six million Jews killed, are considered a crime. Anyone violating this rule will be punished by prison and a fine. This law has also been enacted in many other European countries, including Germany, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and Luxembourg to prosecute Holocaust deniers (Lechtholz-Zey, 2010).
4. Robert Faurisson, a Holocaust denier who challenged "the laws banning Holocaust denial" (Lechtholz-Zey, 2010, p. 3).
5. Here, the word *Holocaust*, which was altered to HOLOCAST (HOLO-CAST), can be perceived as a strategy intentionally used by the cartoonist to present a false story.
6. The Star of David as a historical and cultural visual element can represent both the Israeli regime and Jews.
7. *The Little Match Girl* written by Danish poet Hans Christian Anderson.
8. According to this legislation (Gayssot Act), which was passed in July, 1990, in France, any expressed doubt about the Holocaust is considered a crime. Anyone violating this rule will be prosecuted. Similar laws were also enacted in several other European countries (Lechtholz-Zey, 2010).

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