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Communication in the Millennium

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Anadolu University (Turkey), and
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The Association of Turkish and American Scholars (ATACS)

The international symposium Communication in the Millennium has been organized since 2003 by scholars in Turkey and the United States, and each year the symposium organizers have noticed increasing interest in this academic event. Because of this interest, the co-founders and the organization committee of this symposium decided to form an association where both countries’ scholars are represented.

The mission of the ATACS is to advance the communication profession in both countries through well-grounded academic research and to foster communication academics’ cooperation. The Communication in the Millennium is the established ATACS project, but the association will be working on different projects to serve its mission in the near future.


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CARTOONS IN WORLD POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DESIGN IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

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Abstract
This paper aims to understand how popular culture and international politics reciprocally construct each other through a visual communication analysis of editorial cartoons. It attempts a comparison of cultural communication over ‘the others of international relations’ throughout editorial cartoons in the USA and Turkey. The subjects of editorial cartoons are limited to Libyan and Mavi Marmara crises. To deconstruct the cartoons into their cultural codes and elements and to search for their community-specific meanings basically means to adopt a cultural studies perspective to visual communication and to study the interaction between the culture and the visual design. This kind of studies have a strong potential to reveal the hidden cultural frameworks and categories such as myths, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies which influence the socio-cultural conceptualization of current international politics.

INTRODUCTION
This paper stands at a point cross-cutting three fields of social research: cultural studies, visual communication, and international relations. It aims to understand how popular culture and international politics reciprocally construct each other through a visual communication analysis of editorial cartoons. More specifically, it focuses on a quite specific area of interculturality and attempts a comparison of cultural communication over ‘the others of international relations’ throughout editorial cartoons in the USA and Turkey. The subjects of editorial cartoons are limited to Libyan and Mavi Marmara crises. To deconstruct the cartoons into their cultural...
codes and elements and to search for their community-specific meanings basically means to adopt a cultural studies perspective to visual communication and to study the interaction between the culture and the visual design. However, this kind of study also has a strong potential to reveal the hidden cultural frameworks and categories such as myths, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies which influence the socio-cultural conceptualization of current international politics. In this sense, we agree to following post-modernist motto: cultural is political.

This work is intercultural not in the sense of communication between two societies but of internal communication within one community about others in international politics, which is, we assume, to be more sincere than the former. And it is comparative in its endeavor to understand how these internal ‘cultural’ communications about the other ‘culture’ differ from each other (comparison of Turkey and USA), a method expected to expose more easily community-specific symbolizations.

On the other hand, the paper’s interdisciplinary approach is far from being revolutionary. Since the end of the cold war, international relations has witnessed the ‘return of culture’ as an object of analysis (Weldes, p.117) and the last decade witnessed how IR research materials could extend to include products of popular culture ranging from novels and painting to music, films, advertisements and comics (Kangas, p.317). Nowadays, it is generally accepted that these ‘low-culture’ artifacts offer more valuable insights (than the elite discourses) for the study of international political phenomena (ibid.). Popular culture is not a true representation of the real world but provide second order representations which may be used effectively as sources of knowledge in political and social research.

However, this research paper is different from the previous works that articulate IR with popular culture. Because the latter perceives popular culture as source of information or data for understanding political norms, values, identities, beliefs or processes (Kangas, pp. 323-324), whereas our intention at this paper is to break out of this ends-means paradigm by shifting the focus on the constructive interplay between popular culture and politics and by using a method which rhetorically deconstruct the visual communication within its political and cultural framework.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CARTOONS

Among the visual mediums of communication, cartoons are especially eligible for cultural studies of visual communication since they reveal features of society that are not usually observable through other sources (Nino & Lesmes; p.3). They reflect cultural accumulation of the past and social reactions of today as well as essential and temporary fluctuations of social consciousness, as expressed by Duus (as cited in Dodds, p.5) in the following passage, which was several times quoted before:

‘Like old photographs or newsreels, cartoons reveal a side of political culture not found in official memoranda, public speeches and newspaper editorials, theoretical tracts, and ideological pamphlets. They provide access to “everyday” reactions to politics that even public opinion polls cannot capture. Cartoons thus constitute a vast archive that reveals not only fundamental shifts in political consciousness but also the ebb and flow of political sentiments among the thousands and millions who read them—sentiments left unvoiced by the silence of other texts and other archives.’
Reasons for the cartoons to be talented cultural communication mediums lie basically at their intrinsic satirical nature which is presumed to be unserious and which gives them considerably more leeway in their analysis than serious traditional news discourse. Their joking nature makes possible expression of so offensive and crude ideas that would be inexcusable in the written or oral communication. In this way, they can express the inexpressible through manifestation of irony, absurdity or unacceptability of situation. That’s why they may be very generous as source of information about the irrational concerns, fears, and hopes of a community and as transmitters of values, attitudes, and beliefs shared by majority (Danjoux, pp.135-136).

Most important for the purposes of this study, cartoons exhibit openly “the interrelationships of people, events, and power” (DeSousa & Medhurst, p. 84). As culture-maintaining and culture-identifying artifacts, political cartoons not only share but also underline, re-affirm, amplify and reinforce the prejudices, biases, scorn, lament and fears of their community against those outsiders. (Speedling, pp.13-14) While “maintain[ing] a sense of self, others, and society” (DeSousa & Medhurst, 1982, p. 90) is an important and widely accepted function of the cartoons, its culture-creating function is not well discussed or searched in the literature. (Speedling, p.12) To clarify our standpoint, there could be times that a political cartoonist also acts like an opinion leader in the society, in contrast to the view that the cartoons do not offer any new lines of argument or challenge any existing bias (Danjoux, 2006). Additionally, the claim that the cartoons reflect public opinion and culture uncritically may mean to generalize and homogenize public opinion and culture too far. So the authors of this paper do not deny that cartoonist may produce an alternative view to the conventionally accepted or express a minority opinion. Lastly, we reject the technical argument that the reliance on visual analogy, i.e. they must analogize and reference beliefs familiar to the reader, makes the cartoon incapable of introducing new insight or analysis (Press 1981 in Danjoux).

This paper’s pre-assumption about the cartoons is that an editorial cartoon exhibits and conveys the cultural and social value judgments and irrationalities in the ‘public opinions’ more sincerely and even hyperbolically than any other communication medium due to its inherent nature. The nature of cartoons as satirical illustrations of real events leads them to focus on the irrational within what is presented or pretended to be rational. This is one of the necessary conditions for the humor and sarcasm that the cartoonist need to attract the readers’ attention and conviction. Humor and sarcasm pursued by cartoonist is reinforced with the use of dramatization and exaggeration.

Cartoons, as sites of dense visual information (Worcester, p. 225), need to convey their message rapidly within a small space through mostly visual signifiers. In order to do that, they use condensation to simplify complexity by the help of symbols, icons, lines, and words. And not to lose meaning in the process of condensation, they frequently draw upon the common sense understandings of a shared readership community. In other words, correct and rapid transmission of the message through a visual medium limited in space is facilitated by referring to the available stock of public knowledge and by reproducing a common sense view of the world. (Dodds, p.7; Greenberg 194) It is easier to convey a particular interpretation if cartoonist draws on established narratives and genres in popular culture (Worcester, p. 225). In this way,

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1 Research on the effect of political cartoons on public opinion is incomplete and inconclusive. Few scholars have studied the extent to which readers’ opinions are influenced by the views expressed by cartoonists (or vice versa) (Speedling)
cartoonist assumes a role of exhibitionist which shows us some current and past scenes from collective consciousness.

FROM IDEOLOGY TO MYTHOLOGY: CULTURAL STUDIES IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Cultural studies perspective provides us with the conceptual foundation and methodological tools necessary for such a delicate task as a multi-disciplinary analysis of editorial cartoons in a comparative way. Above all, cultural studies are unified or centered by an underlying political agenda. Cultural studies is interested in how everyday “forms and practices of culture are related to groups with different cultural values and social interests, and how power relations between such groups shape and are shaped by everyday culture (Aiello, p. 97). Cultural studies’ approach is constructivist since signification is seen as a meaning-making practice that allows us to make sense of and thus also constitutes our reality (Ibid.). According to Stuart Hall, one of the fundamental questions asked in cultural studies is “which kinds of meaning get systematically and regularly constructed around particular events” (as cited at Aiello’s, p. 97).

Editorial cartoons are perfect examples of politics as a practice of popular culture. Therefore it is not surprising that they have been the object of numerous academic analyses since 1980s, which used a variety of methods from rhetoric to semiotics and discourse analysis. At this study we will attempt to develop and use a hybrid methodological tool which brings a number of approaches together, namely cultural studies, visual rhetoric, and semiology. This method tries to deconstruct the cartoons into its stylistic, metaphoric/symbolic, and ideological/mythological layers. The method’s core originates from cultural studies and is founded on connotative and denotative levels of meaning developed by Barthes and Hall. Questions in our mind for each layer are as follows:

- How can culture influence the style and design of cartoonist? What can differences between Turkish and American cartooning style tell us culturally? (denotative level, stylistic layer)
- Into what extent stylistic elements and design-related choices influence the connotative meanings? (denotative level, symbolic layer)
- Which metaphors, symbols, narratives etc. were used in the cartoons? How different are they in the USA and Turkey? Which clues do they give about the each community’s cultural ‘baggage’ embedded in the communal past and within which they were produced? (connotative level, metaphoric/symbolic layer)
- What are the political/cultural references/meanings about the others in politics constructed by metaphoric/symbolic layers in the cartoons of two countries? (connotative level, metaphoric/symbolic layer)
- What is the mythical/ideological message communicated by a combination of stylistic and symbolic layers, which extends beyond the cartoon itself? In other words, how is the political/ideological embedded in the cultural and represented in a depoliticized way? What is the third meaning of the cartoon regarding power relations in international politics as conceived and shared by a particular culture? (connotative level, mythical/ideological layer)

The level of denotation corresponds to the literal meaning of an image, the immediate meaning relating to what is objectively represented the image. The level of connotation corresponds to the symbolic or ideological meaning of an image, which corresponds to the meaning- or a range of possible meanings – inscribed by cultural codes. At the denotative level, we will adopt DeSousa and Medhurst stylistic canon, while at the connotative level, we will use Burke’s
tropes to understand the secondary meanings attached to the symbols (and other visual elements) and concepts of myth and ideology as developed by Barthes and Hall to analyze the third meaning attached to the cartoons. In this way, we aim to reach culturally comparative conclusions through three-layer analysis, while revealing the ideological elements in the cartoons toward the other cultures. In this sense, it may even be claimed that we reach an area of academic debate cross-cutting with critical discourse analysis.

Compatibility of rhetoric method with cultural studies may be questioned. However, understanding cartoons as rhetoric does not deny their significant role in maintaining, supporting and promoting a particular ideological position. Cartoons embody and thematize what is present in the community’s sub-consciousness and memory. It is possible to understand some unspoken inter-cultural attitudes and understandings through rhetorical analysis of the cartoons: ‘Images throw light on a ‘latent’ memory that is always being obscured, hidden or displaced. [...] They can be decoded, not as the product of a genial artist [...] but as partisan representations of discursive and pictorial traditions and mentalités.’ (Moyle, p.55).

**Level of Denotation**

Denotation is the direct, specific, or literal meaning we get from a sign. It is a description or representation of the signified. Connotation is meaning that is evoked by the object, that is, what it symbolizes on a subjective level (Moriarity, p. 231). According to Barthes’ theory, there is a first and second level of meaning. The question of representation is answered at the denotative level. Denotation is the starting point; meaning making then shifts to the second level where connotation takes over and delivers a richer experience of the meaning. However, the distinction between literal message and the symbolic message is operational. The literal message appears as the support of the ‘symbolic’ message. (Barthes, p.37) Thus the characteristics of the literal message cannot be substantial but only relational.

At denotative level, we will explore how the visual represents the ‘signified’ in terms of its design. For this purpose, we will use the rhetoric canon of *style* adapted by Medhurst and DeSousa to the visuals. The canon of style has 8 components: line, form, size, caricature, placement, relation of text, visual imagery and rhythmic montage (creative interplay of multiple stylistic elements to enhance humor, persuasion or message). Medhurst and DeSousa adopted the perspective of visual rhetoric to political cartoons and saw the political cartooning as a persuasive art form. They established their approach on Aristotle rhetoric categories (*canons*). They used and adapted six canons to visuals (cartoons): discovery, invention, disposition, style, memory and delivery (Kenney, p.56).

Among them, invention, style and memory are especially relevant for political-cultural studies such as ours since these canons show us how DeSousa and Medhurst actually understand the cartoons as cultural visual products. The canon of invention refers to four topoi: political common place (subject and topic available), literary/cultural allusion, popular perceptions of public figures, transient situations. Cultural allusions as an inventional topos may be any fictive or mythical character, any narrative or form, whether drawn from legend, folklore, literature, or the electronic media (Chasse, p.19). These cultural allusions (metaphoric elements of the cartoons) may aid readers in comprehending the message of a cartoon as far as they are familiar to the readers. (Conners 2005, 485)
While explaining the canon of memory, they lay down the relation between cultural consciousness and cartoons. The cartoonist starts with the universe of discourse---oral, written and pictorial-from which he selects a specific idea and then draws a visual sign to represent that idea. In this way, the cartoonist attempts to compress into a single image the various streams of cultural consciousness from which he has drawn his idea. Readers then are expected to unpack one or more layers of available cultural consciousness that the cartoon has evoked from them by using cultural symbols. (Kenney, p.56) Within this context, the canon of memory may be perceived as the link between the visual rhetoric and cultural studies.

Level of Connotation

We will do our connotative level of analysis at two steps. At the first step, we will try to understand the conventional/symbolic second meanings of the visual as metaphors and symbols. At the second step, we will try to understand the ideological/mythical layer of the meaning. At the first step, we will use four tropes of Burke as a framework to understand the second meanings of visuals. At the second step, we will evaluate the third ideological/mythical meanings of the cartoons through the conceptualizations of Hall and Barthes.

A connotative meaning is the “cultural baggage” attached to or associated with the object. It is derived from past experiences or repeated associations between a sign and its object. The question of hidden meanings in Barthian semiotics is answered at the connotative level (Moriarity, p. 231). This is a layer of latent deep meanings which is superimposed onto the first layer of representational recognition. It is when cartoons use symbolic icons (involving figurative symbolism in the form of literary and cultural allusions).

However, it cannot be claimed that we follow the Barthian semiotic schema authentically. For Barth, connotation reflects cultural meanings, mythologies, and ideologies. For him, connotative level is already ideological level and he adds the myth over his semiotics as a meta-meaning. The categorization we use here is its slightly modified version. We divide the level of connotation into two layers. First layer is symbolic/metaphoric layer at which the conventional/cultural meanings attached to certain signs, symbols and metaphors are analyzed. Although we certainly agree to Barthes in that the ideological meaning for specific communicative elements already exists at this layer, it is still very piecemeal (dispersed) to reach conclusions. Therefore, our ideological reading is postponed to the third layer which is called ‘myth’ by Barthes. The close connection between myth and ideology in Barthian semiotics may justify our modification. For him, myth relates to ideological concepts that are evoked by a certain sign. These correspond to a world view or “a culture’s way of thinking about something, a way of conceptualizing or understanding it” (Aiello, p. 95).

First step: Metaphoric / Symbolic layer

A symbol for Barthes is something that has acquired through convention and use a meaning that enables it to stand for something else (Fiske, p.89). At this step, we will use a framework that Kenneth Burke offers to elucidate how political cartoons persuade. Burke’s approach is suitable to apply for visuals since he argues that “wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is ‘meaning’ there is ‘persuasion’” (Moss, p.241). Burke’s four master tropes of metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy serve to structure messages.
Metaphor is a means of persuasion which allows the viewer to see something in terms of something else by the interaction of both graphic and discursive elements. Metaphor is Burke's foundational trope (Moss, p.241). Forceville has analyzed pictorial metaphor in advertisements and on billboards and defined a visual metaphor in terms of the replacement of an expected visual element by an unexpected one. Forceville argues that in order to speak of a metaphor, there must be no 'pre-existent or conventional connection' between these two elements (as cited by El Referaie, p.80). On the other hand, El Referaie argues that any visual depiction can be seen as an instance of metaphor, provided that its use is intended to occasion a metaphoric thought. Metaphor not only structures our thinking but also has persuasive power to define reality that influences how people frame and conceptualize certain issues. Based on such claim, one of the central tenets derived is that metaphor is ideological (Ying-Yu Lin, p.2).

Irony is the most radical of the four main tropes. As with metaphor, the signifier of the ironic sign seems to signify one thing but we know from another signifier that it actually signifies something very different. Where it means the opposite of what it says (as it usually does) it is based on binary opposition. Irony may thus reflect the opposite of the thoughts or feelings of the speaker or writer (as when you say 'I love it' when you hate it) or the opposite of the truth about external reality (as in 'There's a crowd here' when it's deserted) (Chadler).

Metonymy is an organizational principle that fulfills the function of reduction. This means that a large concept or idea can be effectively conveyed through a reduced single image. Metonymy parallels synecdoche through the ability to assert a message within a single frame (Moss, p.243). Metonymy is a function which involves using one signified to stand for another signified which is directly related to it or closely associated with it in some way. Metonyms are based on various indexical relationships between signifieds, notably the substitution of effect for cause (Chadler). For Barthes, it is metonymy which furnishes the image with greatest numbers of connotators (Barthes, Rhetoric of the Image).

Synecdoche is a rhetorical device where a part is used as representation for the whole while the whole is used for the part, the container for the contained and the cause for the effect. It is possible to connect with an audience through the trope of synecdoche, which formulates an argument as a relationship between the part and the whole (Moss, p. 242). Any attempt to represent reality can be seen as involving synecdoche, since it can only involve selection (and yet such selections serve to guide us in envisaging larger frameworks).

Second Step: Mythological/ Ideological layer

Barthes introduces an additional ideological layer to signification: myth. The combination of denotative and connotative meaning of an image becomes form for a third layer of meaning that is evoked (not symbolized) by the image as a “chain of related concepts”. It is third order of signification. To be able to understand the close relation between myth and ideology, let us check their definitions: myth for Barthes is a means of understanding the universalizing claims of mass culture. It is a narrative that seeks to conceal its own history and pass itself off the natural. On the other hand, ideology is a set of socially constructed meanings or norms that become embedded and naturalized in the cultural fabric, to the extent that they become invisible or common sense. (Aiello, p. 92) Barthes at Rhetoric of the Images states: ‘Ideology holds all its signifieds in common. The same signifieds are to be found in the written press, the image, or the actor's gestures. This common domain of the signifieds of connotations is that of ideology which cannot but be single for a given society and history. To the general
ideology, that is, correspond signifiers of connotation which are specified according to the chosen substance. These signifiers will be connotators and the set of connotators a rhetoric, rhetoric thus appearing as the signifying aspect of ideology.’

On the other hand, the function of a mythical sign is not to represent, nor to hide or make disappear something. Its function is to distort by naturalizing an historical and cultural concept and by transforming history into nature. Myth is experienced as innocent and eternal speech, because its intentions are naturalized. Myth is read as a factual system, whereas it is but a semiological system, i.e. a system of values. Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them. Myth is speech justified in excess. It abolishes the complexity of human acts, it just simplifies and purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification. It does away with all dialectics, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth. It gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact (Barthes, 1984).

Such conceptualization of myth comes very close to Hall’s concept of ideology. If a sign is withdrawn from conflict, it simply becomes part of the taken for granted association between meanings and signs, which in Hall’s way of thinking constitutes an ideology (Hall 1982, p. 77). Thus a culture is most alive when it is the subject of conflict. Generally, the dominant definition of a word is achieved when powerful individuals or groups give credibility to the association of sign and meaning and when the association is repeated by others over time, as in the media. These repeated meanings become part of the sedimented memory of the collective and form a reservoir of themes and premises from which participants may draw. The sedimented meanings refer to that they are taken for granted: we use them without even thinking. This taken-for-grantedness is part of what makes signs, symbols, and culture in general ideological (ibid.).

This mythological/ideological layer refers to meta-reading of the selected editorial cartoons for the depoliticized and naturalized “myths” and “ideology” in cultural connotations of international politics. At this last step of analyses, we will try to present a general view (a third meaning) that is evoked (not symbolized) by the cartoons and to reach some conclusions about the interaction between politics and culture in the selected topics.
In this first cartoon, we see some political leaders and actors sitting around a table at denotative level. In terms of size, none of the figures are bigger or smaller than each other, except UK which is not drawn in person but as a petrol platform with a plate of BP-Libya contract. In terms of form, leader figures are static with detailed drawing of face expressions, while Obama and Clinton are more active in terms of both actions and speech. Concerning caricature, all the facial characteristics of each leader are exaggerated and caricaturized, some of whom are costumed and accessorized. Concerning placement, petrol platform is in the middle of the visual, as the central element of the denotative meaning. UK (petrol platform) as a dividing line, on the right side we see Turkey and Arab league and on the left side, we see France and USA. Relation of the text to the visual is explanatory. Caption says: coalition of the clueless. Description helps us to understand that these political actors around the table are supposed to form a coalition and that’s why they came together. However it also refers to a problematic coalition. The second text is Obama’s talk about Gadhafi. Special elements of rhythmic montage are especially the content smiling of Erdogan and Sarkozy; Obama’s bodily movement with his leaning body towards the others and with his fist over the table (for persuasion and pressure on others) prevented by Hilary Clinton by holding his ear, the Arab over the camel showing two opposite sides with her arms.

At connotative level/ symbolic layer, there are several symbolic elements at the cartoon. One important metaphor is the symbolization of UK as petrol platform with a private company which is BP. It may mean the hegemony of MNCs over the states or how the economic interests determine the political position of UK. Another metaphorical scene is Clinton’s pull-off Obama’s ear. That is quite metaphoric in the sense that Clinton punishes or warns Obama for doing and saying something wrong. And she wants Obama not to pursue an anti-Gaddafi policy. Another metaphor is Napoleonic figuration of Sarkozy which seems to have two connotations: First, the strong will of French for military intervention, the second is the connotation related to famous Napoleon phrase ‘money, money, money’. French initiative for military intervention is shaped by its monetary interests in oil.

2 25 March 2011, Chip Bok, bokbluster.com, it is shadowed because of copyright reasons
There are also metonymic elements in the cartoon such as the crown and the throne of the Arab which refers to absolute monarchy common in the Arab League. Another synecdoche is the black moustache and hairs of Turkish leader, a typical example of stereotyping. The spots which look like the petrol drops refer to the petrol from the oil well which itself synecdochally represents the interests in oil. In overall, the deeper meaning is the table/coalition tainted by the petrol interests. For Obama – Hilary couple, Obama’s peace symbol pendant from 60s indicates to his idealism in world politics and strengthened by his normative phrase against Gadafi.

Arabic king showing two opposite directions at the same time is quite ironic which symbolizes the confusion of Arab League about what to do about Libya and confusing political messages they gave about the intervention. The camel of the Arab League which neatly separates the Arabs from the others at the table is also ironic and refers to deep cultural difference conceived between Arabs and the rest. Another irony arises from Turkey holding Gadafi peace price in his hands at a coalition table against Gadafi (which refers to an ironic reality). The most ironic part of the cartoon is its caption, however: Coalition of clueless. This is the basic message of the cartoon and indicates a cooperation effort for an issue about which the partners have no clue and common sense even.

In overall, at the connotative symbolic layer, the cartoon shows us the split in the coalition for intervention in Libya: on the right side Turkey and Arab league who are more hesitant and have given conflicting messages about interventionist policy and on the left side US, France and UK taking the lead for the intervention. However, this coalition of clueless lacks both the internal coherency and sufficiently clear plan/objectives concerning intervention in Libya. A second and significant meaning of the cartoon comes from the oil well which is the central figure in visual and connotes that the oil interests of UK play an influential role in contradiction to apparently idealistic American approach.

At the mythological/ideological layer, the cartoon’s ideological message is the simple opposition of liberalism in terms of humanitarian concerns with real-politick in terms of self-interest (monetary and energy interests, in this specific case) in world politics, which results always with the latter’s overcome the former. Although the cartoon presents it critically, it still becomes part of the underlying mythology. Because what makes this idea mythological is not that opposition but its accepted necessity and its expected result. In this way, the idea that humanitarian or altruist actions or policies in the international relations always contradict with the self-interests are normalized, and presented as a reality: but in Barthes’ words: a distorted reality. Another normalization of distortion is the hegemony of real-politick approach in international relations. However, what looks like political idealism may also lead to self-interested results with inhuman means. Lastly the myth of post-colonization has the origins in the colonial actions of the past which is untold or not expressed. For example Arab League attitude in Libyan case has origins both in the Western/American policy in the post-first world war period and afterwards.
At this cartoon, there are political leaders of Middle Eastern/Arabic Countries and Obama standing in front of a wall on which there is a wanted poster for Gaddafi. Obama has a longer and slimmer posture with a bigger head comparing to Arabian leaders. He stands closer to the viewer as the main character / leader of the story. His face mimics are angry and tense whereas other leaders are relaxed and smiley. The Mid-Eastern leaders stand together, almost shoulder to shoulder and indicating the same direction with their fingers. On the other hand, Obama is drawn as facing the viewer and ready to move any direction, except his eyes looking at the indicated direction, which may be interpreted as a sign of suspicion. His face and costume are more caricaturized comparing to others. There are three texts in the cartoon. Shared speech balloon of the leaders is ‘that way’, wanted poster of Gaddafi is wanted for the crimes against democracy, and Obama’s hat has ‘Glabal Cop’. All the texts are linked to each other meaningfully. Rythmic montage is founded on a dialogue created by both the visuals and texts and by placing Gaddafi Poster between Obama and the other leaders. This not only reveals the relation between political actors but also their attitude towards Gaddafi.

Connotative symbolic/metaphoric layer: One important metaphoric element is the global cop costume of Obama. With a police metaphor, it refers to American interventionist superpower role in the world politics. Global cop is metonymic as well since it refers to America as a military power with personification in Obama. This is accompanied by justice-police coupling with a defined crime poster. Crimes against democracy recall crimes against humanity in international law terminology and this metaphoric connection strengthens the presentation of USA as law-enforcement officer. However, there is something quite ironic here as well since the phrase is not crimes against humanity but crimes against democracy. This ironically implies the American motto in international relations especially during the presidency of George Bush:

3 Matt Wuerker, 6 April 2011, politico.com
bringing democracy to other countries. Another metaphoric representation is people in the birdcage. This symbolizes inhumanity of the dictatorships against their people in the Middle-Eastern countries. People in the birdcage are especially drawn much smaller than any leader in order to symbolize their powerlessness and helplessness. The leader who holds the cage hides it behind, away from Obama’s view. This detail transmits the main metaphoric message of the whole cartoon: the leaders try to hide, or convert the attention away from, their dictatorships and feel happy (readable at their smiling faces) that USA accuses only Gaddafi for being antidemocratic. This hiding motive is emphasized also by the darkness of the corner at which they stand very closely as if they are stepping back and going out of the frame slowly. This half-framing is also a typical synecdoche because it may also connote to the meaning that these leaders are only some of the dictators in the Middle-East/ or even in the world (part of a whole) but they represent every leader similar to them. In a way in a place out of the frame we do not see all the leaders of this kind standing with them.

Their grouping and showing the way to find Gaddafi is like the children accusing one child (he did it! Not us! We are innocent!) for a mistake they did all together. On the other hand, the relation between Obama and them is not a trust relation it seems. It is expressed by Obama’s reaction to Arab leaders. He did not turn to the direction they show but stays alert while looking at right suspiciously. He looks like wanting to control everything with his legs and arms (even fingers) open.

At mythical/ideological level, the ideological idea is that American interventionist foreign policy shaped according to the ideals of democracy in the Middle East. While the cartoon reveals and criticizes the inherent contradictions of this policy, it at the same time deconstructs a relatively unsuccessful myth: democratic justifications of military intervention. Dictatorships are actually a reality in Middle East countries for years and we haven’t seen any Western effort to change politically stable and western friendly non-democracies and dictatorships until 2010-11 Middle East crises. Intervention comes with a threatening possibility of government or regime change which may contradict with global capitalism and with Western interests in oil.
Level of denotation: Six men are waiting for the Israel soldier to land onto the flotilla and they are holding baseball bats. Each man represents a political actor except one: Gaza aid, UN, Hamas, Turkey and Media and a man with white t-shirt. They are on the deck of Mavi Marmara (Freedom Flotilla). Generally individual figures are same size, but Gaza aid and Hamas are fatter than the others. Their faces or bodies are not caricaturized in excessive way. Most evidently caricaturized face is Israel soldier’s face with an expression of puzzlement. Israel soldier is the central figure in the cartoon, whereas others are shown in two groups. Flotilla’s name is textually given, as well as the actors’ name that people represent in the cartoon. The special element of rhythmic montage is the baseball sticks and Israel soldier’s body and face gestures. Also the colors at the cartoon play a very important role at transmitting the meaning. However we will discuss symbolism in color at the connotative level.

Symbolic/metaphoric level: freedom flotilla at denotative level refers to Gaza freedom flotilla, even Mavi Marmara and to global political scene at connotative level. In this sense, it is quite metaphoric. This metaphoric thought is strengthened by the six men in the cartoon waiting for the Israel soldier because, according to the IDF, one of the first soldiers to descend was attacked and severely beaten by at least six activists. However, these six men are some influential political actors at the global scene who get prepared to beat Israel for operation (Israeli Operation) which is metonymically represented by Israeli Soldier.

It is quite ironical that six men wait with baseball bats in the cartoon. While it is not metaphoric on the one hand because this was one of the weapons found by IDF on Gaza Flotilla, this is also a metaphor of militant/aggressive reaction and offensive criticism against Israel. Most importantly it is ironical in the sense that a soldier with a weapon is shown in a weaker position than the civilians with baseball bats. This is to show the harshness of the criticism directed against Israel by almost all political actors. Another irony is the puzzlement of Israeli soldier and his almost innocent body movement (he curls up). However it is quite possible that cartoonist does not see it as an irony but a reality in Israeli perspective.

Freedom flotilla is written with white letters on red background reminds/symbolizes Turkish flag and symbolizes the leading role of Turkey in organization of Gaza aid. It also refers that Israeli raid was against a Turkish ship (Mavi Marmara) which resisted to IDF. We do not see the face of Gaza Aid because it represents everybody who contributed to the aid. However he wears a black jacket which reminds a bullet-proof jacket and which implies that Gaza Aid is not just a peaceful aid organization. The jacket is black most probably to signify even the people who contributed to the aid are not innocent. The level of baseball bats may give hints about the political attitude of the actors. For example, Gaza aid is the only one who holds the bat on his shoulder. This is a sign of good intentions at least less aggressive attitude. On the other hand, we see that UN wears a green shirt and grey jacket like a soldier and with a helmet in his head. This ironically opposes to U.N.’s classical role which is peace-promoting and keeping. It is an argument that UN took the others’ side and lost its objectivity with its defense of the Gaza aid like a soldier.\(^5\)

\(^4\) Lisa Benson, Washington Post WG, 1 June 2010

\(^5\) The U.N. Human Rights Council report accused Israeli commandos of summarily executing six passengers aboard the MV Mavi Marmara, and claimed to have found no medical evidence of IDF commandos being shot. The report recommended that Israel pay reparations, and also described Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip as “totally intolerable and unacceptable in the 21st
Hamas is wearing a black mask completely hiding its face with an ‘Islamic’ green band decorated by Arabic letters. This mask and band seem to symbolize metonymically a Muslim terrorist and indirectly the Islamic terror, thereby non-recognition of Hamas as legitimate government of Palestine by Israel. To express its inclination to violence and fighting, his muscles are drawn most developed among all the men in the cartoon. The man behind Hamas represents Turkey with a Turkish flag t-shirt. He has a white hat which may represent the AKP (in translation to English, white party) because it was the AKP who took the lead and gave full support for the organization of freedom flotilla. It is quite remarkable that men who represent Hamas and Turkey stand adherently together which may metaphorically show the solidarity between them and that this metaphor is supported by the parallel movement of their bodies. To give a separate place for Turkey in the cartoon, instead of including it into Gaza Aid, symbolizes that Turkey played a separate special role in the event and to put him adherent to Hamas metaphorically refers that Turkey adopted an approach as hostile as Hamas. The man who represents media on the side of Hamas and Turkey but he is not adjacent to them, yet at a short distance. Anyway, that he is ready to beat, metaphorically shows ruthless critical attitude of Media towards Israel concerning Freedom Flotilla.

Lastly there is a man with a white t-shirt between Gaza Aid and UN without any text or sign telling us who he is. However his white t-shirt, black trousers and the red line of freedom flotilla together makes the colors of the Nazis flag and strongly symbolizes anti-semitism. That also explains why his baseball bat is the highest one and he looks most eager to beat the Israeli soldier. He is the one who can beat the soldier from his back, which metaphorically may refer to an enemy hard to identify, more to be an abstract power which affects the word opinion as placed in the cartoon beside the UN.

Mythological/Ideological layer: the mythical/ideological idea is that Israel’s self-defensive and justified actions are criticized globally in a biased way due to world-wide anti-Semitism. This is a very common interpretation of Mavi Marmara in many American cartoons, for example Hellen Thomas portrayed as an anti-Semitic betrayer. The myth is that all the critiques to Israel are shaped by hidden racist and religious prejudices instead of rational reasoning.

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century”. UN fact-finding mission found that the IDF broke international law, and that there was evidence sufficient to initiate prosecutions for breaches of the Geneva Convention. In particular, the mission found clear evidence for prosecution for the war crimes of “willful killing; torture or inhuman treatment; willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health” under Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention
At this caricature, a thin, long, old man with clothing from American flag sitting on an American bar stool while he holds on his knees an Israeli soldier who is much smaller than him. Two motions are given at one frame: American man laughs at and then scolds the soldier. Both the man and the Israeli soldier are very much caricaturized, especially in their faces. Israeli soldier has blood over his face and his clothes and also blood drops from his gun. There are two texts: Laughter of American Man and again his words to Israeli soldier: ‘that should be the last one, ok.’ Rhythmic montage is especially created by the motion given to American man by framing two different moments at the same time as if two pictures were overlapped on each other.

Metaphoric/symbolic layer: here the main metaphor is that the Israeli is treated like a child by USA. USA is symbolized by Uncle Sam that is a famous figure since 19th century to symbolize USA (iconography). Israel is symbolized by an Israeli soldier, yet drawn like a kid (his size comparing to Uncle Sam, his face expression, his body posture and where he sits all strengthen this meaning). When we look at the cartoon as a whole, it is like a dialogue between a grandfather and grandchild. The main metaphor of the cartoon is supported with many sub-meanings and connotations. First of all, presentation of Uncle Sam’s two motions, laughter and scolding, at the same frame is an irony which indicates incoherent treatment or confusing messages given to the kid. Irony is strengthened by completely opposite facial expressions of Uncle Sam and by hands (one hand with index finger shake, the other on soldier’s shoulder.) That is also quite metaphorical since it recalls a well-known warning for parents: do not give mixed messages, otherwise your kid will be spoiled. Scolding is reinforced by the index finger (forefinger) shake. That is also indexical to scolding, in this sense it is a metonymy.

Uncle Sam says: this should be the last, ok? That is an expression frequently used by parents speaking to kids: it means do not do it again. This scolding and warning losses its convincing

6 Ercan Akyol, Milliyet Newspaper, 06.06.2010
power due to the laughter in the beginning and bodily tender. What does bar stool symbolize? This may indicate that this dialogue will not last long. Bar stools are not comfortable to sit for a long time. Additionally Uncle Sam (USA) sits on it as if he will just stand up soon. This creates a theatric scene, more like a playing a game, rather than a real warning. Lastly when we compare the style of texts for laughter and scolding speech, laughter is placed above the scolding with bolder and bigger fonts while scolding text is smaller and placed under it. This signifies the laughter (approval of what Israeli kid did) is dominant feeling in the dialogue.

On the other hand, Israeli soldier is sitting on the knee of Uncle Sam and body language of Uncle Sam is tender and protective towards him (he is surrounded by his arms and legs. His hand is over soldier’s shoulder.). It shows a synecdoche: i.e. a scene from a relation of protectorship. Israeli soldier has both a gun and a bomb. There is smoke coming from the gun which metonymically (indexical) refers that the gun has been used a very short time ago. And the blood on the soldier and the blood dropping from his gun metonymically refers to a hot conflict. These metonymies are a part of a larger metaphoric connotation for Israel raid to Freedom Flotilla just happened two days before the publishing date of cartoon.

The blood is also splashing over Uncle Sam’s shoes, metaphorically refers to the contamination of USA and American image by the bloody actions of Israel. In a deeper sense it refers to American collaboration with Israel in its armed conflicts. Israeli soldier’s face and hands are especially tainted by the blood and symbolically he is visualized as a murderer. His facial expression is like a spoiled kid with a large smile who knows that he did something wrong but praised for that.

The mythological/ideological level: the ideological idea is that Israel-US relation is emotional almost like a family relationship which contains unconditional support. Emotional understanding of international relations in Turkey on the basis of love, hate, friendship, and kinship has historical roots originating from the history of Ottoman Empire and ideologically blended with nationalism and Islamism. This mythical approach becomes dominant in the public opinion in the foreign affairs, which sometimes hides more rational factors affecting the international events and which is vulnerable to abuse by domestic political actors.
These two cartoons look quite similar and can be evaluated together. First cartoon shows four missiles coming over one protestor on the street. Protestor has one placard on which freedom is written. The protestor is in the centre of the frame surrounded by four missiles. In the other cartoon, there is only one missile directed towards a city. It is written democracy on the missile.

Metaphorical /symbolic layer: At the first cartoon, each missile has a flag over them: French, USA, NATO and Libya. Libyan flag is an important sign because it gives us the main topic: this cartoon is about Libya and protestor is a Libyan citizen. The Libyan protestor symbolizes all Libyan protestors and citizens synecdochally. His placard for freedom symbolizes their shared demand metaphorically. Following this visual logic, a central irony transmits connotative meaning of the cartoon: the missiles coming over to protestor refers that they are bombed/attacked by a number of political powers although all they wanted to have freedom. The facial expression of the protestor is caricaturized to give the feeling of astonishment by the protestors. What also sharpens the irony is that one of the missiles carries Libyan flag which metaphorically refers to the fact that Gaddafi bombed his own nationals to suppress the rebels. So the connotative meaning of the cartoon turns into: Libyan protestors are bombed/attacked by a number of political powers including their own state although all they wanted to have freedom.

Yet it is also possible to read the cartoon from the view-point of the attacking forces to reveal another connotative meaning it visualizes. The cartoon makes no distinction between Libyan government (Gaddafi) and the Western political powers such as USA, NATO or France by placing the missiles into the cartoon in same way, size and level. In other words, with a metaphor of four similar missiles, the message turns into that NATO military intervention in Libya is as bad/brutal/anti-democratic/problematic/inhuman as Gaddafi’s bombing of his own nationals. Another ironic connotation may be that a Western military intervention which aims to protect the civil people ironically damages/kills civilians/protestors instead of saving them from the brutality of Gaddafi. Ironically, it fortifies the result that it aims to prevent.

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7 Two caricatures by Emre Özdemir in Zaman Newspaper
At the second cartoon, we have only one missile and a silhouette of a beautiful city with dim outlines of mosques, palm trees, and houses (a typical Mid-Eastern country). With a label of Democracy and American flag, the missile is falling into the middle of this beautiful city. City is beautifully and peacefully represented to increase the contradiction with the missile coming over. The smoke coming from the missile indexically and metonymically gives the impression that it is falling. The missile itself is quite ironic since it combines an instrument of violence with the concept of democracy and metaphoric as well since American flag refers to the American foreign strategy to bring democracy into other countries especially in the Middle East. However ‘to bring democracy through a missile’ gives a critical stand to the cartoon by underlining the irony of this foreign strategy because this foreign policy aim is generally combined with military means and civilian damages. It is not possible to understand which is bombed in this way from the cartoon. Lack of any sign about the place is intentional and in order to strengthen the metaphoric message that this has become a common way for the USA to bring democracy.

At mythological/ideological layer, the cartoon deconstructs the myth of humanitarian intervention for idealistic objectives, by emphasizing its inhuman means which do not distinguish the civilians from military and innocents from aggressors and by questioning the idealism of objectives which produces opposite results in practice.

CONCLUSION

Although our comparisons are limited to a few cartoons due to limited space, we may reach some conclusions about editorial cartoons published in Turkey and the USA. First of all, cartoons in Turkey are more direct and focused with one or two messages, while American cartoons are multi-messaged and multi-centered, in a way more complex. Turkish cartoons are mainly ironic, whereas American cartoons are mainly metaphoric. While the use of symbols is very frequent in American cartoons, Turkish cartoons connote meanings as deep as their American counterparts. Both of them are quite critical and not nationally-biased. One exception to this seems to be the issue of Israeli-Palestine relations. While this study proves that the method developed for cultural analysis of cartoons in international relations work efficiently for capturing the deeper meaning in the visuals, In order to reach further conclusions, wider analyses are needed with more cartoons.

REFERENCES


