



A Barthesian Semiotic Analysis of Domination and Opression Myths in Osama Hajjaj's Israel-Palestine Caricatures on Instagram

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Abstract

Political cartoons play a significant role in shaping public meaning because they can convey social criticism and ideology through brief yet powerful visual symbols. As a form of visual discourse, cartoons challenge dominant media narratives and open spaces for interpretation of political events. This study examines how Osama Hajjaj's cartoons represent the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing on the myth of Israel domination and oppression. Although this conflict receives extensive coverage in international media, there remains a gap in understanding the contribution of visual media particularly political cartoons in shaping public perception and ideology. This research employs Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze Osama Hajjaj's cartoons on the Israel-Palestine conflict, uploaded on Instagram between July 2024 and February 2025, with reports from *The Guardian* used as contextual data to interpret visual responses to ongoing discourse. The purpose of this study is to analyze Hajjaj's cartoons using Barthes' semiotics to uncover layers of denotative, connotative, and mythological meaning. The findings indicate consistent visual patterns at the denotative, connotative, and myth levels, revealing how the cartoons relate to empirical media coverage. In doing so, the cartoons are understood not only as symbolic representations but also as critical responses to international media narratives. The study concludes that Hajjaj's cartoons function as a form of visual resistance to media hegemony and hold educational potential in enhancing visual media literacy and critical awareness of the ideologies embedded in digital political representation.

Keywords: Caricature; Domination; Israel-Palestine conflict; Myth; Oppression

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INTRODUCTION

The Israel- Palestine conflict is a global issue that has consistently drawn the attention of international media. Military violence, displacement, and the suffering of Palestinian civilians continue to be represented through various forms of discourse, ranging from news reports and films to visual artworks (Adhy & Rachmawati, 2025). The advancement of technology has increased the public' demand for up-to-date information. However, due to continuous intensity of media coverage, some audiences have become passive or indifferent in responding to the issue (Akmal, 2024). Nevertheless, this conflict has generated waves of global solidarity and debates within digital spaces that influence how the public perceives who the victims are and who should be held accountable. The emerging forms of solidarity appear both tangibly—such as through fundraising efforts—and symbolically, through social media campaigns (Laelasari, 2025). Media, both print and digital, play a crucial role in shaping opinions and influencing public emotions in

responding to the conflict (Kurniawan et al., 2025).

Various types of information can be disseminated through different media such as books, newspapers, magazines, print media, and social media, which are accessible to all groups more quickly, easily, and at relatively low cost (Permana & Abdullah, 2020). Social media has become increasingly important through various platforms that enable two-way communication connecting individuals and groups (Haqi & Khusyairi, 2025). In the realm of social media, waves of pro Palestinian support spread rapidly, particularly through the hashtag #FreePalestine, enabling audiences to strengthen public opinion formation (Abdullah & Sundari, 2025). Calls for action- both through online campaigns and social-media based appeals have been widely carried out by global communities, including boycott movements as a form of advocacy and solidarity (Ningrum & Aminulloh, 2024). In this regard, the role of social media platforms can influence and transform the ways people interact and communicate, thereby playing a crucial role in expressing and shaping opinions regarding the conflict (Irwanto et al., 2025).

All of these aspects become even more engaging when combined with elements relevant to social communication in the millennial era. One of the most effective framing media for voicing criticism of the conflict is the caricature (Chairani & Dwiana, 2025). The distinctive feature of caricature lies in their ability to depict issues and conflicts in a humorous yet meaningful manner (Saputra, Winda, et al., 2025). As a form of visual communication, caricature do not merely serve as entertainment; they characteristically employ satire, criticism, and irony to convey broader social and political commentary (Saputra, Dwiyan, et al., 2025). In exploring implicit meanings, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth examination of the facts behind the caricature (Supriyadi, 2024). Through their hyperbolic and symbolic style, caricature present reality in a simple yet profoundly meaningful form (Shiddiqie et al., 2025). In the context of the Israel–Palestine conflict, caricature serve as a form of symbolic resistance against Israel’s domination and oppression, as well as a medium to raise public awareness.

Osama Hajjaj, a cartoonist from Jordan, consistently raises the issue of Palestine in his works. His artworks frequently depict the suffering of civilians, the military domination of Israel, and the irony of ceasefires that never truly end the violence. Through his Instagram account, @ossamahajjaj, Hajjaj’s cartoons go beyond mere visual representation; they also produce deeper layers of meaning, including the revelation of the ideologies underlying them. These caricature not only represent the conflict but also construct and deconstruct myths. Within Roland Barthes’ semiotic framework, myth is understood as a mode through which ideology operates and is inseparable from signs (Al Karim, 2021). Therefore, caricature can be analyzed to uncover the ideology underlying Israel’s practices of domination and oppression against Palestine.

The domination and oppression carried out by Israel over Palestine are viewed as forms of political and military hegemony (Manshur, 2025). According to Dewantara and Aditya (Dewantara et al., 2023) Israel’s repeated military attacks have resulted in the loss of civilians’ fundamental rights. From a theoretical perspective, this condition aligns with the concept of structural oppression, in which a dominant power utilizes mechanisms of authority to restrict the living space of the oppressed. In line with Gramsci’s categorization of hegemony, one of the five types he identified is the hegemony of power (Firmansyah & Auliya, 2022).

Roland Barthes is known as one of the prominent thinkers in linguistic semiotics. In his study of signs, Barthes introduced the concept of meaning levels, later known as the “Two-Order Signification” (Setiawan, 2020). This two-stage signification model serves as a framework for analyzing signs. The first stage of signification refers to the relationship

between the *signifier* (the form or expression) and the *signified* (the concept or meaning). The unity between the signifier and the signified constitutes what is called a *sign*. The second stage of signification relates to content and carries connotations of certain ideologies. The first level is denotation, while the second level is connotation (Barthes, 2017). In semiotic analysis, the process of signification helps researchers identify how visual and verbal elements work together to construct particular messages within a text, image, or other media.

Denotation represents the first level in the process of signification according to Barthes. At this stage, the meaning produced is literal, direct, and objective, as it appears on the surface of the sign. For instance, in a text or image, denotation describes only what is seen or written without additional interpretation. Denotation is considered a representation of reality or observable facts (Barthes, 1972). In the context of literary works or visual media, denotative analysis focuses on depicting concrete elements such as characters, settings, objects, colors, or actions. This stage serves as the foundation for understanding deeper meanings, as only by recognizing the literal meaning can researchers proceed to the next interpretive stage—the connotative level.

Connotation represents the second level of signification and denotes meanings that are implicit, emotional, and influenced by social and cultural contexts. Barthes (Barthes, 1972) refers to connotation as a secondary system of signification, in which the sign at the denotative level functions as a new signifier that generates additional meaning. Connotation does not rely solely on what is visually presented but also on the values, ideologies, and collective experiences of the society interpreting the sign. In text or caricature analysis, connotation helps researchers understand the symbolism and hidden messages behind visual representations. For example, an image of ruins may connote suffering, loss, or injustice. Therefore, connotation plays an essential role in revealing ideological meanings that are not directly expressed verbally.

Myth, according to Barthes, is the third stage of the signification system, which arises when connotative meanings are naturalized until they appear as self-evident and universal truths. Myth is not a falsehood but rather an ideological form disguised as cultural truth (Barthes, 1972). In Barthes' understanding, myth is not associated with mystical or traditional folklore but rather with the process of signification itself (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Barthes asserts that myth is not merely the content or object of a message but a particular way of conveying it (Palogai, 2021). At this stage, cultural signs are used to sustain specific power structures and worldviews. Myth operates by transforming historical meanings into something that appears natural and unquestionable. For instance, in the context of political caricature about Israel and Palestine, myth may emerge in the form of legitimizing power, oppression, or domination as if they were justified. Through myth analysis, researchers can deconstruct the ideological constructions behind seemingly neutral signs and reveal how media or literary works contribute to shaping social consciousness.

Research employing a semiotic approach has been conducted by several scholars. Sari (Sari, 2024) analyzed the film poster 'Budi Pekerti' and found that visual media functions as a space for representing complex social values, where visual signs construct both moral narratives and hidden ideologies. Meanwhile, a study by Nazwa dan Wenerda (Nazwa & Wenerda, 2024) shows that Barthes' analysis at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth is capable of revealing the hidden meanings embedded in colors, images, and text. The findings affirm that posters do not merely function as a promotional medium, but also as a cultural text containing a specific ideology. These studies demonstrate the relevance of Roland Barthes' Theory in deconstructing symbolic meaning.

However, research on caricatures generally still focuses solely on reading the sign, without linking it to the surrounding social-factual context. This research presents an update by integrating Barthes' semiotic analysis of political caricatures with factual data from news reports, thereby forming a new understanding of how visuals function as a critique of media discourse.

Based on this gap, this research attempts to fill the void by analyzing caricatures that function as a visual answer or symbolic critique of *The Guardian's* international media narrative regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Caricatures are needed not only as a representation of signs but also as a discourse connected to the actual socio-political reality. To date, Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of Hajjaj's caricatures is still rarely conducted, especially in uncovering the myths of oppression and domination. Therefore, this research focuses on the denotative, connotative, and mythological reading of Hajjaj's caricatures and their relationship with *The Guardian* news to reveal the ideological construction in the representation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Based on these objectives, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do the denotative and connotative meanings in Osama Hajjaj's caricatures depict the Israel-Palestine conflict on Instagram?
2. What myth is formed from this visual representation when linked to *The Guardian's* international media narrative?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research method using Roland Barthes' analytical framework. The qualitative approach is applied to examine the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings in Osama Hajjaj's caricatures. This approach is chosen because the focus the research is not merely to describe the visual forms, but to interpret the hidden messages embedded in the caricature representations. The material object of this study is a set of caricatures created by @osamahajjaj and published on his official Instagram account between July 2024 and February 2025. These caricatures were selected because they explicitly present issues related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, which is the central theme of this research. The data criteria are established based on three considerations: 1) the caricatures directly display symbols, figures, or visual narratives related to the Israel-Palestine conflict; 2) the works were published during a period relevant to recent developments in the conflict; 3) corresponding news context is available in international media, particularly *The Guardian*. Accordingly, *The Guardian* functions as a secondary data source that provides the socio-political background necessary for interpreting the signs within the caricatures.

Data Collection

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through digital observation and screenshots to archive the caricature media from @osamahajjaj's Instagram posts, with a focus on caricatures depicting the Israel-Palestine conflict. Each caricature was then stored in a research data folder along with notes on the upload date, number of public comments, number of likes, and number of shares. The research instruments consisted of two tools: a data extraction form and a codebook containing coding categories based on Barthes's three levels of signification denotation, connotation, and myth.

Data Analysis

In the process of semiotic sign analysis, what is examined is not merely the visual objects within the image but also the meanings embedded in each visual element (Efendi et al., 2024). The analyzed images generate multiple patterns of interrelation between

semiology and media through the analytical framework pioneered by Barthes (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Through visual representations, readers are able to grasp deeper meanings beyond textual interpretation, making them less susceptible to symbolic manipulation (Amri et al., 2025). Researchers believe that semiotic analysis is highly relevant for examining signs and helps readers interpret other visual works within the framework of semiotics (Pambudi, 2023).

Data analysis was carried out through several stages: 1) identifying visual signs, including figures, colors, objects, and text; 2) interpreting the connotative meanings that emerge through symbols and their social context; 3) examining myths, namely the extraction of ideological meanings embedded within the visual structure. In this third stage, the interpretations of the caricatures were compared with *The Guardian's* news narratives published during the same period in order to identify how the visual critique relates to the media's representation of the conflict.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The caricatures created by Osama Hajjaj and uploaded to this official Instagram account between July 2024 and February 2025 serve as the primary data of this study. These caricatures were selected because they visually highlight issues of domination within the Israel-Palestine conflict. The analysis is conducted using Roland Barthes' three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth supported by contextual information from *The Guardian's* coverage during the same period.

Table 1. Denotation, Connotation, Myth, and The Guardian Context

No	Cartoon (Publication Date)	Denotation	Connotation	Myth	<i>The Guardian</i> Context
1	Caricature 1 (14 February 2025)	The caricature displays seemingly simple visual elements: two figures, a game board, and facial expressions	The caricature suggests that the "game" is not merely a metaphor but a critique of political domination practices	The caricature dismantles the ideology that normalizes Israel's occupation and control over Palestine	This caricature relates to The Guardian reports on 10 and 12 February 2025, covering Hamas' announcement of an indefinite suspension of hostage releases and the destabilizing Israel-Gaza ceasefire, as well as Hamas' rejection of U.S. Israel threats regarding the situation in Gaza
2	Caricature 2 (17 July 2024)	The caricature depicts a Palestinian family surrounded by a circle of IDF bombs or rockets	The bombs or rockets symbolize Israel's military power encircling and pressuring Palestinian civilians	The caricature exposes the myth that Israel's military operations are merely acts of self-defense, revealing that dominant ideology that	This caricature corresponds to The Guardian coverage on the IDF's alleged use of the "Hannibal Directive" during the 7 October Hamas attack,

No	Cartoon (Publication Date)	Denotation	Connotation	Myth	<i>The Guardian</i> Context
3	Caricature 3 (11 February 2025)	The caricature shows two male figures Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu sunbathing on a beach mat illustrated with the labeled map “West Bank”	The beach setting, typically associated with leisure, symbolizes the indifference of U.S – Israel political elites toward the suffering in the Israel-Palestine conflict	normalizes violence against Palestinians The caricature reveals the myth that Israel’s colonization of Gaza and the West Bank is natural, acceptable, and unproblematic	which reportedly endangered civilians This caricature aligns with The Guardian reporting on UN concerns over the allegedly “unlawful” use of lethal force by Israel troops in Jenin, West Bank

These caricatures reveal a consistent pattern, in which visual signs function as critiques of the discursive structures of international media. Thus, the caricatures operate not merely as artistic expressions, but as visual responses to biased global media narratives. The following section provides a more detailed explanation of each caricature based on Roland Barthes’ three levels of meaning, linked to the contextual reporting of *The Guardian*.

The caricature by Osama Hajjaj, published on his Instagram account @osamahajjaj on February 14, 2025, received 1,264 likes, 21 comments, and 312 shares. This indicates a high level of public attention toward the political issue of the Palestine conflict. The caricature presents the ongoing political context between Palestine and Israel, depicted through two political figures from Israel and the United States, while Palestine is illustrated within a Monopoly game. At the denotative level, the visual elements are simple: characters, a map, and facial expressions. The caricature shows two men sitting and playing a Monopoly board game. The first figure (left) is an older man with gray hair, identified as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while the second figure (right) represents U.S. President Donald Trump. The Monopoly board prominently displays the word “PALESTINE” in the center. Both figures appear serious, suggesting that the game is not merely for entertainment.

At the connotative level, the Monopoly game symbolizes territorial contest and power strategy. This satirical representation implies that the Palestinian conflict is treated as a “game” controlled by major world powers. Netanyahu and Trump embody the political alliance between Israel and the United States in manipulating the Palestinian issue. The word “PALESTINE” on the board serves as a symbol that Palestine is treated as an object of competition, while the surrounding Monopoly money and cards signify political, economic, and power interests involved in the conflict. Moreover, the serious and weary expressions of the figures highlight that this “game” is not lighthearted—it reflects real human suffering and the weight of oppression. At the myth level, the caricature dismantles the larger myth constructed by Israel and its allies—that the

domination over Palestine is natural and politically legitimate. It reveals the ongoing reality of oppression, colonialism, and human suffering. Israel is portrayed as possessing rights backed by U.S. approval, while the map of Palestine becomes a representation of geopolitical domination.

The caricature posted on February 14, 2025, is closely related to the contemporary political situation between Israel and Palestine. It can be understood as a response to the political stalemate and escalating conflict in early February 2025. This interpretation aligns with factual data reported by *The Guardian* on February 12, 2025, which highlighted Israel's dominance in determining the terms of the ceasefire and shaping international political support. A few days earlier, Hamas halted the release of Israeli hostages, accusing Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement and rejecting U.S.–Israeli threats regarding the Gaza truce. On February 7, Hamas announced plans to release three hostages, but by February 10, it stopped the process, claiming Israel had broken the agreement. This sparked renewed tension, as Netanyahu and Trump issued harsh threats, with Trump proposing that the U.S. take control of Gaza. Netanyahu declared that there could be no peace as long as Hamas remained. This proposal to seize Gaza disrupted the next two phases of the ceasefire agreement, which were intended to end the war and negotiate Gaza's future governance, leaving Hamas with limited options.

The frustrated expressions of both figures—one resting his head on his hand with eyes closed, the other leaning on his chin—suggest confusion and frustration in strategizing, reinforcing that dominating Palestine is not easily achieved. In relation to this, *The Guardian* (February 12, 2025) reported Hamas's statement that it “would not accept threats from the U.S. and Israel” regarding the Gaza ceasefire. The caricature showing two world leaders frustrated over a Monopoly board labeled “Palestine” can thus be interpreted as a visual response to this situation. The confused expressions represent the failure of international diplomacy following a fragile truce. After Trump's irrational remarks about taking over Gaza, over two million Palestinians faced the prospect of permanent displacement. The global community, including 79 countries such as Jordan and Egypt, strongly rejected the U.S. plan. Egypt's president even refused to visit the U.S. if the agenda included Gaza's expulsion. Other nations, including Turkey and Indonesia, long-standing supporters of Palestine, also voiced opposition. Meanwhile, Israel's military mobilized reserve troops, fearing escalating anger across Arab nations over Trump's plan to turn Gaza into the “Riviera of the Middle East.”

Through this analysis, the Palestine–Israel conflict is represented as a global power game orchestrated by Israel and the United States. The Monopoly metaphor emphasizes how the Palestinian territory is reduced to a political and military commodity. The use of a game setting serves as a critique of the logic of power that trivializes the Palestinian struggle as something negotiable, while it actually involves human suffering and violations of human rights. Moreover, the depiction of emotional exhaustion symbolizes not only frustration but also the failure of diplomacy. Hence, this caricature exposes the political myth constructed by the two allied powers to legitimize dominance over Palestine as natural and justified. In this way, the visual representation becomes a semiotic critique of modern colonialism and the collapse of international diplomacy in resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict.

The caricature by Osama Hajjaj, published on his Instagram account @osamahajjaj on July 17, 2024, received 1,203 likes, 9 comments, and 307 shares. The caricature depicts an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) soldier armed and surrounding Palestinian civilians. At

the denotative level, the visual elements are simple: the IDF military forces and Palestinian civilians. The caricature shows a Palestinian family consisting of a father, mother, child, and a deceased body. They sit on the ground, appearing frightened, huddled together, and protecting themselves. Around them lie numerous bombs and rockets marked with the inscription “IDF (Israel Defense Forces)”, symbolizing the wartime situation between the military forces and civilians.

At the connotative level, the IDF bombs and rockets symbolize Israel’s military power that encircles and threatens Palestinian civilians. The IDF is no longer portrayed as merely a “defense force,” but as a machine of oppression. The family at the center represents powerless civilians, emphasizing the humanitarian aspect — a father sitting helplessly, a mother holding her child, and a wounded or lifeless child lying beside them. The circle of bombs signifies total siege, leaving no space for Palestinians to escape or survive. The white shadows atop each bomb surrounding the family illustrate the constant surveillance and threat of military power, suggesting that the civilians are deliberately targeted by these missiles. At the myth level, the caricature dismantles the myth that Israel’s attacks are defensive or directed only at militants. In reality, Palestinian civilians are besieged and bombarded. The bombs surrounding the family symbolize Israel’s total military dominance, while the family’s defenselessness represents Palestine’s vulnerability and suffering under structural violence.

Osama Hajjaj’s caricature of July 17, 2024, reflects the condition of Gaza’s civilians living under the siege of Israeli military power. Through a visual technique that positions IDF missiles encircling a family, the artwork exposes the myth of war propaganda claiming that attacks target only militant groups. In contrast, international news reports from July 2024 confirmed that no place was safe for Gaza’s civilians, as strikes hit civilian facilities and caused mass casualties. As of July 7, 2024, nine months after the October assault that killed approximately 1,200 people and abducted 250 others into Gaza, the Israeli armed forces implemented the so-called Hannibal Protocol—a directive authorizing the use of force to prevent the capture of soldiers, even at the cost of hostages’ lives. The IDF’s use of this protocol likely endangered civilian lives during Hamas’s attacks.

In this analysis, the caricature constructs a visual critique of war propaganda. By contrasting the IDF’s self-image as a “defense force” with the reality of civilian siege, Hajjaj’s work reveals the mechanisms of power representation that conceal violence under the guise of legitimacy.

The caricature by Osama Hajjaj, published on his Instagram account @osamahajjaj on February 11, 2025, received 3,124 likes, 52 comments, and 654 shares. The artwork depicts two political figures, Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump, relaxing on a carpet labeled “West Bank”, which appears torn. Another figure is seen drawing a watermelon, symbolizing Palestine. At the denotative level, the visual elements are simple: the figures and the setting. The caricature shows Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu sunbathing on a beach, appearing relaxed and enjoying their leisure time. They use a carpet with the map labeled “West Bank” as their mat, and beside them is a beach chair labeled “Gaza”, which looks fragile and is supported by an American flag. In the background, there is a boat labeled “Gaza Citizens” approaching from the sea, but it is ignored by the two figures.

At the connotative level, the caricature conveys a strong political message. The beach and holiday setting symbolize the indifference of Israeli–U.S. leaders, who enjoy comfort and leisure while tragedy unfolds nearby. The West Bank carpet as a mat indicates that

Palestinian land has been reduced to something that can be stepped on and controlled. The torn carpet represents fragmentation and destruction resulting from colonial domination. The beach chair labeled “Gaza” serves merely as furniture for political convenience, not as a homeland for a suffering people. The boat labeled “Gaza Citizens” symbolizes the ignored suffering of Gaza’s civilians, appearing only as background—unimportant to those in power. The American flag reinforces U.S. support for Israel’s comfort built upon Palestinian suffering. At the myth level, the caricature exposes how Israel’s occupation of Gaza and the West Bank has been normalized, even turned into a source of comfort for global political elites. The domination of territory and the degradation of Palestinian symbols of resistance are presented as legitimate or trivial matters to world leaders. Palestinian suffering is rendered irrelevant to political agendas. By portraying the West Bank as a sleeping mat, Hajjaj’s work criticizes the myth that Israel has the right to “use” and “own” Palestinian land as if it were their property.

The caricature of Trump and Netanyahu relaxing on the Gaza map (depicted as a beach chair) with a towel labeled “West Bank” serves as a visual critique highlighting the brutal contrast between the suffering of civilians and the behavior of elite global powers. The “myth of relaxed rulers” is reinforced by the ongoing military operations in Jenin and Tulkarem, the killing of civilians, and escalating internal and international tensions across the West Bank just before the caricature’s publication on February 11, 2025. Netanyahu stated that the goal of these operations was to target Palestinian militants in the Jenin refugee camp to prevent attacks on Israeli territory. However, the caricature emphasizes that global elites not only control territories but also aestheticize and politicize conflict, turning real human suffering into an instrument of political spectacle.

In reality, on January 24, 2025, the United Nations expressed concern that the Gaza ceasefire was at risk, particularly in Jenin, West Bank, due to Israeli attacks. Israeli forces launched an aggressive operation in the refugee camp, demolishing several homes, killing more than 12 Palestinians, and injuring at least 40 others. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu again justified the operation as an effort to target Palestinian militants in Jenin to prevent attacks on Israeli territory.

The findings above demonstrate that the system of signs used by Hajjaj aligns with Roland Barthes’ concept of how ideology is embedded within everyday representations. The interplay between the caricatures and *The Guardian’s* news coverage shows a dialogic relationship between visual media and textual media. The limitation of this study lies in the small corpus focused on a single cartoonist, which means the results cannot be broadly generalized. Nevertheless, this research opens pathways for further inquiry, such as expanding the corpus across multiple media platforms, comparing the works of several cartoonists, or examining audience reception of caricatures on social media.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that digital political caricatures particularly Osama Hajjaj’s works on the Israel-Palestine conflict function as a medium of ideological critique that represents power and oppression through visual sign systems. Using Roland Barthes’ semiotic theory, the study finds that at the denotative level the caricatures present recognizable symbols at the connotative level they evoke themes of colonialism and at the myth level they construct an ideological narrative that legitimizes the oppression of Palestine as reproduced within media discourse.

The main contribution of this study lies in its approach that links visual analysis with actual news context from *The Guardian*, allowing the caricatures to be understood not merely as artworks but as ideological texts embedded within global communication flows.

Through this perspective, the caricatures can be read as a form of visual resistance against media hegemony and as a means to cultivate public critical awareness. The implication is that visual semiotic studies of this kind can strengthen media literacy and open reflective space on how images participate in naturalizing or challenging structures of power. Accordingly, this research offers a conceptual contribution to semiotic studies, critical media studies, and contemporary visual discourse analysis.

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