Master Narratives and the Pictorial Construction of Otherness: Anti-Semitic Images in the Third Reich and Beyond

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Abstract
Collective identities of the Self (or Ego) vs. the Other are not only conveyed in and between cultures through verbal discourse but also through pictures. Such cultural constructions are often established and consolidated by storytelling, where, briefly put, events or situations are temporally ordered. Pictures and visual artworks may be powerful narrative resources for establishing and consolidating cultural stances and framing actions. In this paper, I shall focus upon demarcation efforts of Jews as the Other from the Middle Ages onwards, in the Third Reich's iconography, and in modern, radicalized forms of anti-Semitic picturing in Arab media. Within overarching master stories staging a pseudo-historical struggle between various protagonists and Jewish antagonists, considerable efforts have been made to produce pictorial narratives or gists in order to demarcate the Ego from the Other. A number of concrete pictorial examples will be presented from a narratological and cultural semiotic perspective.

Key Words
anti-Semitism, Arab world, caricatures, cultural semiotics, Islam, master stories, Middle Ages, National Socialism, pictorial narrativity, stereotypes

1. Introduction: on (pictorial) narrativity and master stories

In the humanities, narratology has become an established research area during the last few decades, notably among scholars concerned with literature, film, and semiotics. Furthermore, in cognitive science, narrative-like structures in mental representations have also come to play a significant role. As cognitive psychologists such as Jerome Bruner and Roger Schank have argued, narratives are crucial and fundamental cognitive instruments or tools.[1] Moreover, narrative is undoubtedly a cross-cultural phenomenon, while also occurring basically across all individuals within cultures. From the point of view of content, moreover, many successful stories seem to be concerned with more or less universal human preoccupations, such as sex, danger, life and death, deception, violence, power, wealth, and so on.[2] Many stories, in various kinds of semiotic modalities, whether oral, written, or pictorial, appear to touch upon existential concerns, fears, and hopes, and thereby contribute to giving structure to the fragility and vulnerability of human existence. They tell us something about the world or some of its aspects, and about possible or recommended ways of interaction with or manipulation of the world. Thus storytelling is an important means of creating ontological, existential, or social orders, and it reminds us of existent ones of which we may not always be consciously aware, thereby playing a part in their reproduction.[3]

Furthermore, as Schank suggests, the identity of a culture is largely based upon shared low- and high-level narrative structures, varying in degrees of abstraction.[4] Such culturally shared stories, or stories in general, occur frequently in highly abbreviated form as skeleton stories, proverbs, or as gists. As I hope to show here, pictorial material often functions in a similar way. Pictures may have a quite explicit or full-fledged narrative appearance, but sometimes even highly condensed or indeterminate pictures may trigger the emergence of more full-fledged narrative interpretations.

But what exactly is a story? As a point of departure, we might propose that a minimal condition for something being a narrative ought to be "the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other."[5] According to this suggestion, no requirements on the expression side of such representations occur, thus permitting the possibility of narrative being enacted in media other than language, and even in such media that do not permit any clear temporal division, such as static pictorial representations. On the content side, however, narratives have frequently been delineated from non-narrative texts, for example, arguments, explanations, or chronicles, by defining criteria, such as temporal sequence, emplotment, eventfulness, causality or causal agency, and particularity rather than generality. Bruner has also stressed the inherent sequentiality of narratives: "[A] narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events, mental states, happenings involving human beings as characters or actors. These are its constituents…. Their meaning is given by their place in the overall configuration of the sequence as a whole – its plot or fabula."[6] Moreover, as the narratologist Tzvetan Todorov pointed out, narratives prototypically follow a scheme of an initial equilibrium through a phase of disturbance to an endpoint which restores the equilibrium.[7]

Historically, the privileged medium for transmitting narratives appears to be linguistic, sequential structures such as oral storytelling or literature that, until recently, most narratologists have focused upon. However, it seems

unquestionable that numerous, and more or less clear-cut examples of pictorial storytelling can be found throughout history, for example, in ancient Egypt, Greece, the Renaissance, India, and China. Thus we might distinguish between at least three types of pictorial storytelling:

1. *Serial pictures* where multiple static, distinct pictures, each of them conveying a single scene, are linked in a narrative series that has a fixed reading order, frequently horizontal or vertical.

2. *Single pictures* showing different events and persons *in the same pictorial space,* sometimes called continuous narratives, cases of simultaneous succession, or polyphase pictures.

3. *Single pictures* in which an entire story is compressed into or implied by a single scene, sometimes called monophase pictures.[8]

The last case, of course, gives rise to the question of to what extent pictorial narrating, especially in single pictures, presupposes the beholder's previous acquaintance with verbally communicated stories or further media-external contexts. In media involving static images, many works seem, indeed, parasitic on language-based stories, where only a beholder acquainted with the relevant background knowledge might see this pictorial representation, as, for example, a significant or crucial moment within a narrative sequence implicitly stretching backwards in time and also forward into the future. Monophase pictures may have a more or less illustrative function, being sometimes supplemented by external or internal textual descriptions, comments, and other paratextual elements. In other cases, a verbal title prompts viewers to situate the static images in a narrative context.[9] Yet pictorial stimuli frequently are also narratively quite indeterminate or polysemic, permitting multiple interpretative paths. For example, different temporal orders or causal relations among the agents may be imposed upon and be compatible with the content of pictures when the pictures in question, strictly speaking, do not exclusively express any of those orders or relations, either formally or semantically. But still, this doesn't mean that anything goes. In many cases there are certainly conventionalized limits to the range of justifiable or possible interpretations.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to differentiate among three levels of pictorial narrativity: representations of (i) single events, understood as the transition from one state of affairs to another, usually involving (groups of) agents; (ii) stories, that is, particular sequences of related events that are situated in the past, and retold, for example, for ideological purposes and involving disruptive turns in the narrated happenings; and (iii) by implication, master narratives, being deeply embedded in a culture, that provide cosmological explanations and patterns for cultural life and social or moral structure.

In the following, I shall focus mainly on the last kind of implied pictorial narrativity as a means of establishing collective identities and demarcations, particularly as revealed in anti-Semitic iconography. Frequently, the term 'master narrative' is used as referring to socio-cultural forms of interpretation strategies employed by individual subjects and collective institutions, manifested as myths, legends, religious tales, historical accounts, overarching scientific theories, and so on. The philosopher Jean-François Lyotard brought this term into prominence when criticizing modernity's "grand narratives" (*grand récits*), that is, large-scale theories stemming from the Enlightenment, as manifested in the universalizing pretensions of science and beliefs in the progress of history.[10] Leaving Lyotard's scepticism towards modernity and relativist inclinations aside, the concept of master narrative might nevertheless be useful in order to describe more all-embracing forms of story-telling as providing historical, existential, or ontological explanations, often also attempting to preserve or to challenge the status quo of existing power relations. Hence, master narratives are rather principal stories, trying to provide basic or underlying interconnections between various events, the succession and gradual development of social conditions and systems, and so on, in making sense of history and human existence.

2. Constructing (collective) otherness

Stories and master stories are, so it seems, efficient means of establishing and consolidating socio-cultural identities, and of segregating groups from one another. These identification and demarcation processes may be analyzed further from a cultural semiotic point of view. As first proposed by the Tartu school of semiotics, it might be argued that all societies make models of their own culture, conceived in opposition to other cultures.[11] In these models, the home culture is basically opposed to nature or non-culture and seen as contrasting order to disorder, civilisation to barbarism, and so on. This conception might be regarded as a canonical model, defined from the point of view of the home culture itself, implicitly placing the Ego inside it looking out over non-culture.[12] There are at least two kinds of criteria for making such a division between culture (Ego) and non-culture (Alius): something could be part of non-culture because it is less valued, i.e. a normative stance, or because it is too difficult or even impossible to understand, i.e. a cognitive stance. According to this model, an Alius-culture, from the Ego perspective, is characterized by the absence of dialogue and basically by an unwillingness to be understood. (See Figure

1.) Non-texts belonging to the Alius-culture are non-informative and lack any value; they are not regarded as having the potential of participating in a dialogical communicative act.[13] The relationship between Ego- and Alius-cultures is asymmetrical and dominated by the Ego, which decides which position to take versus the counterpart. Non-texts from the Alius-culture may be observed but are not allowed to enter the Ego-culture sphere, being unwanted and/or perceived as unintelligible.

Ego-culture vs Alius-culture
(Homeworld) (Alienworld)

System
Order
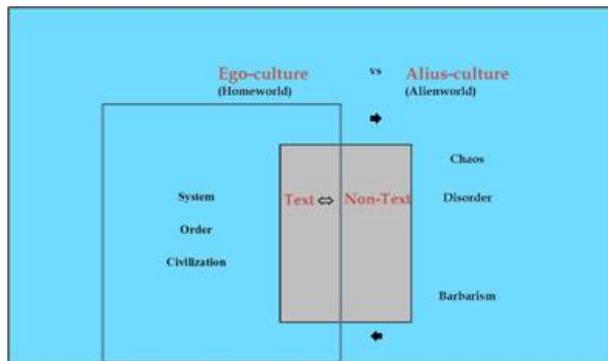Civilization

Text ⇔ Non-Text

Chaos
Disorder

Barbarism

Figure 1. Canonical model of cultural semiotics[14]

Apart from a cultural semiotic approach, related lines of thought can also be discerned within social psychology.[15] Among social behaviors, prejudice towards people or groups of people is certainly a common and widespread phenomenon. Generally speaking, prejudice may be defined as an attitude, consisting of three components:

- an affective or emotional component, involving pro- or con-emotions;

- a cognitive component, involving beliefs and thought; and

- a behavioral component, resulting in certain dispositions or actions.[16]

Prejudice may be positive or negative, although the term is commonly used to refer to negative or hostile attitudes to others. Moreover, such biases also involve stereotyping, which goes beyond simple categorization. The external world consists of an incredible number of entities that may differ in innumerable ways, hence the ability to generalize or to find regularities in objects and events appears to be one of the most consequential cognitive activities. The formation of categories enables us to apply previous experiences to new ones, to make inferences, and to make predictions about the future, and they provide efficiency in communication, just to mention a few examples.

Stereotypes, however, are the result of categorization processes that, in social contexts, may be described as "generalization[s] about a group of people in which identical characteristics are assigned to virtually all members of the group, regardless of actual variation among the members. Once formed, stereotypes are resistant to change on the basis of new information."[17] Moreover, stereotyping may also include exaggerated and fabricated, and derogatory or idealizing features attributed to certain people, thus surpassing simple value-neutral and empirically more well-founded forms of classification. Such stereotyping is also crucial in establishing what is called by social psychology *in-groups* vs. *out-groups*.[18] Simply put, an in-group is a social group to which one psychologically identifies as being a member, to which one has a sympathetic attitude, and whose members are regarded as deserving a special, favorable treatment. By contrast, an out-group is a social group with which an individual does not identify, and where not only an equivalent favoritism compared to the in-group is absent but whose members also may be regarded as threatening or in derogatory terms. Indeed, it is far from uncommon to even dehumanize out-groups, whose members may be viewed as rather mechanistic objects without typical human characteristics, such as warmth, curiosity, and depth. Another form of dehumanization occurs when out-groups are treated as animals, lacking culture, morality, higher cognition, and refinement.[19] Further, members of an out-group tend to a higher extent to be perceived as more similar to each other, as all alike, or homogeneous, while in-group members are experienced as more diverse.[20]

As I shall argue in the following section, the formation of collective identities as described here may, to a considerable extent and even crucially, be the result of widespread, socio-cultural forms of storytelling, not least through implication by pictorial means.

3. Master narratives and anti-Semitism

In their work *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism* (2011), Jeffry Halverson, H. L. Goodall, and Steven Corman suggest that we might plausibly define a master narrative as follows:

[A] master narrative is *a transhistorical narrative that is deeply embedded in a particular culture*. By "transhistorical" we do not mean that master narratives are "born" as such. In fact, they "grow up" to attain that stature over time through repetition and reverence within a particular culture. In addition, by "culture" we are referring to an interrelated set of shared characteristics or qualities claimed by an ethnic, social, or religious group to which human beings collectively identify.[21]

For our present purposes, this suggestion can aptly be used as a sufficient working-definition. In this section, I shall consider three historical strands of anti-Semitic master stories, namely those circulating during medieval Europe and afterwards, Germany's Third Reich, and in (parts of) the Muslim world.

3.1. Medieval Europe and onwards

During the Christian-dominated Middle Ages in Europe, policies of systematically outlawing Jews from society were widely promoted and applied. However, this general view should also be somewhat modified. There is evidence concerning the relationship between Jews and Christians that suggests that Jews were sometimes more assimilated into Christian society than was commonly thought. Jews worked in Christian villages and towns, at times experienced economic security, prosperity, even certain privileges, and marriages between Jews and Christians occurred.[22] However, the fact seems undeniable that Jews, particularly from the Crusades onwards, were demonized and accused of various forms of atrocities and moral deterioration, resulting in their suppression and persecution, including physical violence and mass executions. There were in particular the following beliefs and master stories flourishing during this period, which contributed to the general hostility towards Jews:[23]

(i) <u>Deicide</u>. A long-standing and basic pseudo-historic belief among Christians that the Jewish people as a whole were fundamentally responsible for the death of Jesus.

(ii) <u>The blood libel, ritual murder, and cannibalism</u>. The belief that Jews kidnapped and murdered children of Christians in order to use their blood as part of their religious rituals and as means of re-enacting the crucifixion. One famous 'historic' example was the case of the two-year-old Christian boy Simon, who, in 1475, was found murdered in the city of Trent, Italy. The leaders of the Jewish community were arrested, confessed under torture, and some of them were subsequently executed. Numerous pictures, as frescoes, woodcuts, or etchings, rendering Simon and his 'martyrdom' were produced until the end of the fifteenth century, reaching all classes of society. (See figure 2.[24])

Various similar case stories circulated during the Middle Ages throughout Europe, leading to an over-arching master story according to which Jews were indulging their blood-lust by committing ritual and child murders of this kind.[25]
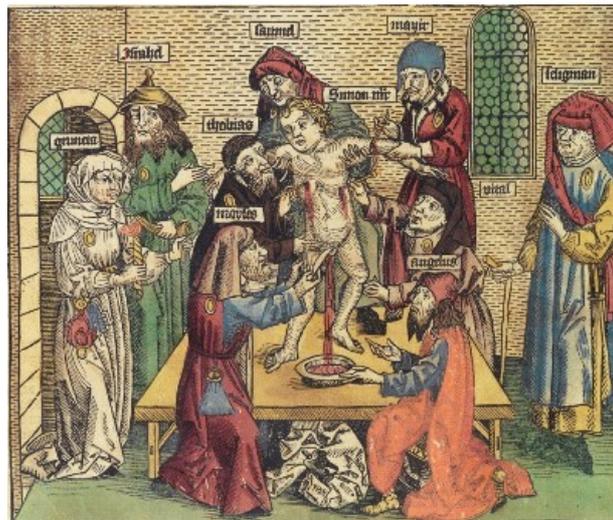

Figure 2. The Murder of Simon of Trent (woodcut, 1493)

(iii) <u>Desecration of Hosts</u>. This form of sacrilege in Christianity involved the mistreatment or malicious use of a consecrated host. From the twelfth century onwards, rumors were widespread that Jews stole, burned, or otherwise mistreated the Host in order to symbolically re-enact the killing of Jesus; this accusation was thus related to that of deicide.[26] In many cases, such accusations led to penalties, such as torture and execution. Also, pictorial renderings of such acts of sacrilege were produced during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[27]

(iv) <u>Well-poisoning</u>. During the Middle Ages, Europe was severely struck by

several waves of the Black Death, one of the most devastating pandemics in human history. As no knowledge of viruses or bacteria was available at that time, other explanations were searched for. Prominent among those were accusations according to which Jews had poisoned wells with potable water. Also, after the decline of the plague in Europe, similar myths about disease-spreading Jews were still widespread for centuries to follow, as late as in the Soviet Union during the 1950s or in the Arab world in the 1980s and 1980s.[28]

(v) <u>Money, greed, and usury</u>. During the Middle Ages, when the Church prohibited Christians from lending money with interest but Jews were legally permitted to do so, many Jews went into money-lending occupations. A widespread myth was the assumption that Jews had entered these professions out of greed and that their way of life basically was parasitic on other people's hard work.

Such negative stereotypes of Jewish practices, as outlined here, were manifested and reproduced by orally transmitted myths, in Church sermons, and in written form. Famous examples include the *Canterbury Tales* from the fourteenth century or Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. In the latter, for example, the Jewish moneylender Shylock is portrayed as an unscrupulous and greedy person, perhaps interpretable as a general metaphor for the Jewish Otherness, the "Jewish religious, social, and economic distinctiveness."[29]

Although pictorial representations of Jews engaged in morally despicable behavior were produced, we should also note that explicit anti-Semitic iconography does not seem to have emerged before nineteenth-century France. Until then, Jews were generally depicted as normal humans, without any physical distortions or deviations, distinguishable from others only by name inscriptions or attributes such as a pointed hat or a yellow patch on their clothing.[30] The famous Dreyfus affair in France at the end of the nineteenth century, however, gave rise to an abundance of anti-Semitic cartoons and illustrations published in right-wing newspapers, where more consistent, derogatory iconic codes of Jewishness emerged. (See figure 3.[31]) From then on, the visual otherness of Jews became more clearly outlined, and also spread to other parts of Europe, such as Germany, Austria, and Scandinavia. Iconic representations of Jews were rendered with caricature-like characteristics, that is, a selection of distinguishing and typifying attributes that, despite or even because of the omission of details, facilitate recognizability, memorability, and schematization. (See also section 4.)
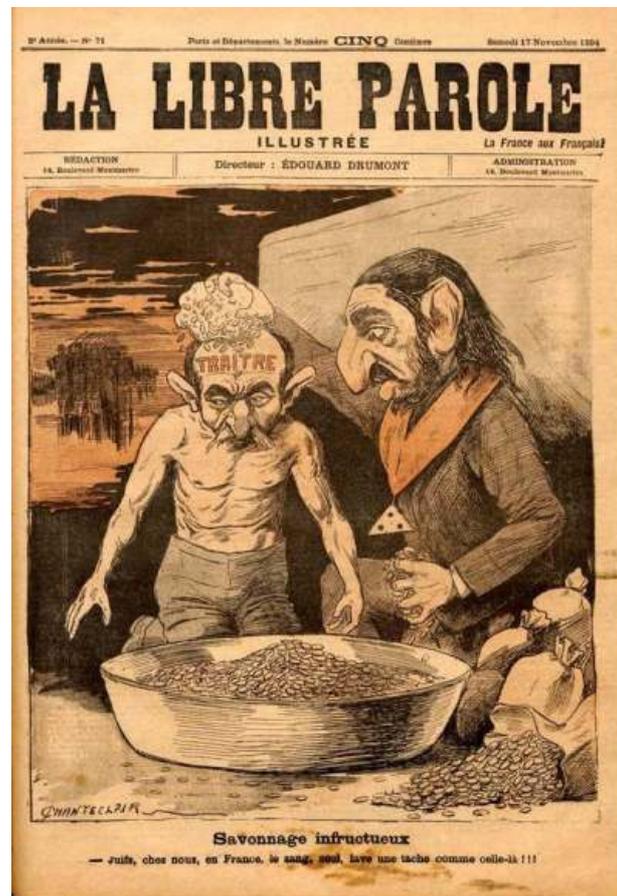

Figure 3. Dreyfus washed by another Jew (caption: "Only blood can clean a stain like this"), La Libre Parole, 71/1894.

Frequently, then, Jews were depicted with distinctive physiognomic features, such as swarthy complexions with curly black hair, large hook-noses, thick lips, beady-eyes, large feet, crooked postures, and so on. All

in all, one might argue that their outer appearance was rendered as an antithesis to Western classical ideals of human beauty. Furthermore, these characteristics were also supposed to indicate inner psychological and moral deficiencies. Anti-Semitic pictures, moreover, are not usually intended as depictions of certain individuals but rather of types and as visual synecdoches of the Jewish people, and Jewishness, as a whole. From then on, a distinctive anti-Semitic iconography of otherness became increasingly established, not the least flourishing and used for propagandistic purposes in Nazi Germany.

3.2 The Third Reich

National Socialism may, according to a number of scholars, be described as a radicalized version of fascism or, as termed by Roger Griffin, as a form of "palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism."[32] The term "palingenesis" stems, etymologically, from the Greek terms 'palin' (again, anew) and 'genesis' (creation, birth), and is used by Griffin as referring to a core myth in fascist thinking. The idea of renewal, rebirth, or regeneration is, of course, by no means peculiar to fascism but also essential in Christianity, most notably with the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself, the Renaissance view on the West's cultural history, and Marxist thinking, just to mention a few examples. And, as an archetypal narrative, it is certainly not restricted to the Western world. As Griffin claims, the idea of and striving for a new birth occurring after a period of perceived decadence lies at the heart of fascism. The term 'populist ultra-nationalism' is referred to as a very specific sub-category of nationalism. Fascist movements depend, even if they are led by small elites, in practice or in principle on the support of the public or larger groups of people, and they endorse a concept of the nation as a higher racial, historical, spiritual, or organic reality that includes all the members of an assumed ethnical community. Fascism's and National Socialism's mobilizing vision is that of the national community rising phoenix-like after a period of decadence that all but destroyed it.[33] This general narrative of crisis would also include the belief that one's group is a victim, a sentiment that justifies any action against the group's enemies, internal and external.[34]

In National Socialist art, the Aryan past is frequently rendered as an idyllic, pre-industrial way of life, functioning as a timeless source of inspiration for the future; racially perfect men and women, often with classical features, are depicted. Imperfect aspects of this idealized world, such as "inferior" races, are largely omitted. In other media, such as journals, posters, and school books, however, Bolshevik or Jewish stereotypes of the Others are explicitly shown in propagandistic images in order to reinforce anxieties about contemporary developments in political and economic life. The typical outward features of those reveal, for example, their allegedly Middle Eastern and Asiatic, and also morally derogatory, characteristics. Sinti or Roma (Gypsies) and especially Jews had a special status as anti-types, as belonging to an Alius-culture, deprived of any option of assimilation, with which no dialogue whatsoever could be possible.

An example illustrating and participating in the overall narrative of the Nazi regime, as outlined in the previous section, this antithetic distinction between the Ego and the Alius can be found in the picture book for children, *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid* (*Don't Trust A Fox in A Green Meadow or the Oath of A Jew*, from 1936. (See figure 4.[35])
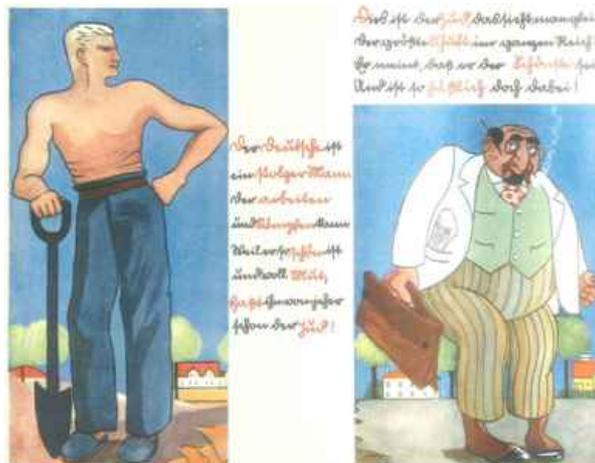

Figure 4. (German) Ego vs. (Jewish) Alius

The German is here depicted as a tall, blond, slender, and sturdy Aryan archetype, with regular features and a high forehead. His shovel indicates that he is engaged in physical, that is, genuine, work. In contrast to the Aryan ideal, the Jew is shown as short, crooked, dark-haired, misshapen, bulky, with a sloping forehead and a bent nose, embodying the Jewish racial characteristics set forth by the Nazis. At the same time, this image conveys the stereotype of the money-hungry Jew, well-dressed and carrying an attaché case in his hand and a financial newspaper in his

pocket. The Aryan, with his proud posture, looks fiercely down upon the former, who seems to give him a sneaky glance. These illustrations are then accompanied by short texts in verse form intended to enhance this dichotomization of these figures. For the one on the right, the accompanying text reads as follows:

> "This is the Jew, as all can see,
> The biggest villain in the whole Reich!
> He thinks himself the greatest Beau
> Yet is the ugliest around!"[36]

Frequently in art as in other pictorial media, Aryans are depicted with blonde hair, blue eyes, long head, a smooth straight nose, and presumably a tall and muscular stature, the stereotyped physical appearance of the Nordic race. (See figures 5 a/b.[37])

Figure 5 a. Poster, "Hitler Builds Up – Help Out - Buy German Goods" (1924)

Figure 5 b. Poster, "The Reichs Sports Day of the Association of German Girls" (1934)

Jews, on the other hand, are frequently rendered with caricature-like features, which had appeared in anti-Semitic cartoons since the Dreyfus affair. Moreover, outright dehumanizing pictures depicted Jews as satanic creatures with horns, cloven hoofs and tails, or as snakes, rats, vermin, and so on. (Figures 6a and b[38]). Basically, they were verbally and visually rendered as an alien race parasitic on the host nation, poisoning its culture, seizing its economy, enslaving its hard-working inhabitants, and conspiring to attain economic world dominance. This general view, although neither new nor unique to the Nazi Party but already widely shared during the Middle Ages, now became a state-supported stereotype. National Socialist iconography, as outlined here, was, among others things, intended to render and reveal an eternal conflict between an Aryan homeworld against a Jewish alien world. Some of the pictures produced had undoubtedly an explicit narrative appearance, and were directly experienced as such, for example, illustrations used in children's books or journal articles, where the textual accompaniments steered the reader to more fixed readings.

Figure 6 a. Poster, "Down with Enslavement! – Vote National Socialist!" (1924)
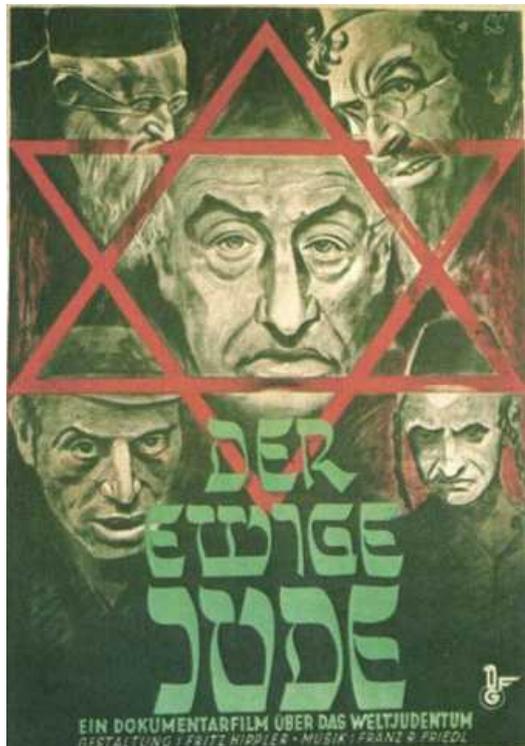

Figure 6 b. Poster for the film "The eternal Jew" (Der ewige Jude, 1940)

Still pictures in propagandistic posters, rendering Ego and Alius personifications with their alleged physical and implied racial, political, and moral characteristics were certainly understood as abbreviations of a larger narrative structure. This master story, which permeated the Third Reich in most media and institutions, speeches, public spectacles, exhibitions and, not least, cinema, basically consisted of the historical struggle between the Aryan protagonists and heroes and the Jew antagonists and villains, between good and evil, and a promise of a utopian future.[39] And within this overarching story, National Socialist images functioned as narrative gists and cognitive tools, as instruments for generating and enhancing collective identities as envisaged by National Socialism.[40]

3.3. The Arab-Muslim world, past and present

Viewed historically, an outspoken and radicalized anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim world is of relatively recent origin. Along with other religious communities, including Christian, so-called dhimmi-citizens, that is, protected persons in Islamic states, lived under certain restrictions. They had to pay special additional taxes, and they did not enjoy certain political rights reserved for Muslims. However, in many other respects, they had equal rights under the laws of property, contract, and obligation.[41] The Koran expresses a wide range of attitudes and recommended actions towards Jews, stretching from tolerance and even friendliness to blunt hostility, where it is stated that *jihad* (the holy war) against Jews, and also non-believers in general, is the duty of every Muslim believer.[42] Still, despite occurring incidents of oppression and ethnic cleansing, it appears that Jews by and large fared better in Arab regions than in Europe during the Middle Ages and afterwards. Traditional Christian accusations of striving for Jewish world domination, well-poisoning, ritual murders, and especially deicide, as Jesus was considered to be a prophet, not the son of God, were largely absent.[43]

Things changed dramatically, however, during the nineteenth century, where accusations of ritual murder committed by Jews spread in the Arab world. One incident especially generated considerable attention, namely the so-called Damascus affair. In 1840, a Capuchin monk in Damascus suddenly disappeared, and other monks, supported by the French Consul, accused the Jewish community of ritual murder. Jewish leaders were subsequently arrested and confessed under torture, leading to some of them being executed. During the following decades, similar incidents and accusations followed in the Ottoman Empire, mostly in regions with Christian communities.[44] In the twentieth century, also due to the impact of Nazi propaganda, anti-Semitic tendencies successively spread from Europe.[45] Anti-Zionist and outspoken anti-Semitic physical attacks and even massacres occurred during the 1930s and 1940s. The Jewish colonization of Palestine during the 1880s had gained little attention outside of the region. But after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and a general resentment over Jewish nationalism and Zionism, and also violent conflicts such as the 1948 and 1967 Arab–Israeli wars, where Israel's victories were experienced as traumatic humiliations, conditions for Jews in the Arab world worsened considerably.

A detailed explanatory account of the rise of anti-Semitism in Arab regions would go beyond the scope of this paper.[46] However, as Human Rights Watch founder Robert Bernstein claims, "a deeply ingrained and institutionalized anti-Semitism" has nowadays become a dominant factor in Arab nations."[47] However, rather than upholding stereotypes of Jews as parasites as in Nazi Germany, they are now regarded as aggressors and warmongers. The Jew has been "turned into a superhuman, demonic, almost omnipotent figure – a danger to the whole world." Furthermore, because of an increased Islamization, propagandistic use has been made of "selective anti-Jewish quotations from the Koran, the fact that Jews were perfidious, selfish, avaricious, obstinate, fraudulent, domineering, and bloodsucking."[48]

These anti-Semitic stereotypes are not the least reflected in pictorial renderings, especially in the abundant production of cartoons published in Arab newspapers and journals. Although, at first glance, numerous ones target Israel and its politicians, their anti-Semitic ingredients seem undeniable "in portraying the Jews as blood-drinkers and Sharon (a former Prime Minister of Israel) as a predator (vampire, shark, snake, etc.) by sketching Israelis in uniforms adorned with the Swastika, by wheeling out the crucifixion of Jesus and the medieval accusation of the blood libel. …"[49] One can perhaps discern the following, partly overlapping themes in Arab caricature:

(i) <u>The blood libel: the Jew as vampire and child-murderer.</u> Although the blood libel does not have any roots in Islam, as in Christianity, it has become a recurrent theme in anti-Semitic propaganda in the Arab world, where Jews are being accused of blood thirst, of requiring fresh blood, not least that of Palestinian children.[50] As the Middle East scholar Rivka Yadlin notes, "[t]here is no doubt that the frequent repetition of ideas and slogans has a cumulative effect. They become a common idiom, almost a maxim, defeating any fresh considerations or reassessment…Only this can explain how a twentieth-century society can accept and continue to propagate such preposterous fictions as the blood libel – the belief that Jews kidnap gentile children, slaughter them and mix their blood with unleavened Passover bread. It is not only the simple and ignorant who hold such beliefs. A number of recent books continue to accuse Jews of ritual murder…."[51] Visual representations of blood-thirsty Jews, a central theme in Arab cartoons, certainly contribute to consolidating such stereotypes. (See figures 7 a/b.[52])

Figure 7 a. Mrs. Shamir: "Why are you throwing out the girl's blood before you use it to make matzoth?" (1990, Bahrain)

Figure 7 b. "Here's to peace!" (2001, Egypt)

(ii) <u>The Jew as enemy of humanity and as demonic creature.</u>As Hassan Soueïlem, an Egyptian general, wrote in a newspaper (2000), "[h]istorians, professors of social studies and sociologists are all agreed in maintaining that in its long history the human race has never known a race with so many vile and despicable characteristics as the Jewish race…. There is no difference…between yesterday's Jew and the Jew of today, or between Jewish identity and Israeli identity."[53] This quotation may be regarded as symptomatic of a general view, according to which Jews and Israel are considered to be criminal and treacherous, with evil purposes and a threat to world peace. Also, visualizations of this theme have been abundantly published. (See figures 8 a/b[54])

Figure 8 a. "The end" (1992; Dubai)

Figure 8 b. Untitled (1992; Egypt)

(iii) The Jew as animal (zoomorphism). Attempts to dehumanize Jews, to regard them as insects, vermin, snakes, dogs or other inferior animals, as already in the Third Reich, do also figure as prominent themes in Arab caricature. (See figures 9 a/b.[55])
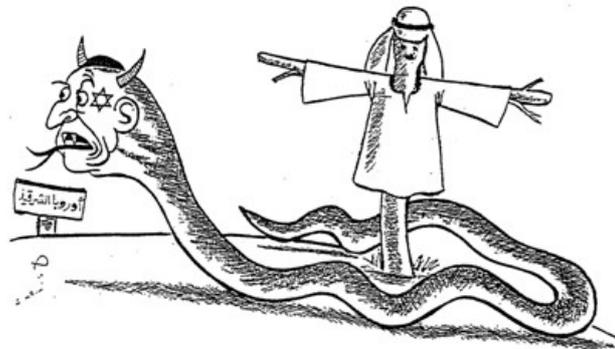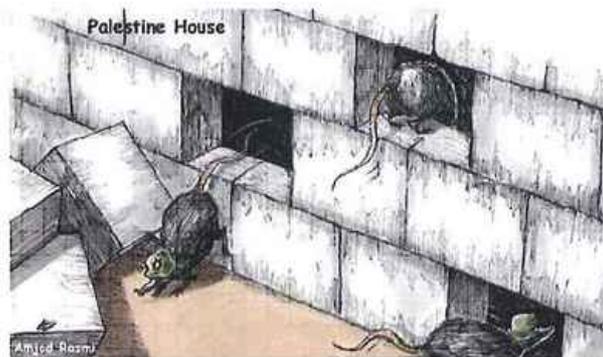

Figure 9 a. "The snake" (1990; Jordan)

Figure 9 b. "Palestine house" (date unknown; Saudi Arabia)

(iv) Jews as Nazis. Paradoxically, despite the atrocities committed against Jews in the Third Reich, Israel is frequently viewed as a Judeo-Nazi entity. In fundamentalist circles, it has been commonplace to regard these atrocities as exaggerated, as manipulative lies to whitewash the wrongdoings of Israel, and Jews, in general, which are far worse.[56] Actually, the "crimes" of the Jewish state are described and visualized as flagrantly fascist or national socialist in their core. (See figures 10 a/b[57])

Figure 10 a. Untitled [caricature of Ariel Sharon, former Prime Minister of Israel] (2002; Saudi Arabia)

Figure 10 b. "When I've finished with him, I'll take care of you!"(2001; Egypt)

4. Concluding remarks: why stereotypes and caricatures stick

Generally speaking, it seems doubtful whether pictures, in themselves, are necessary or sufficient to form, alter, or consolidate people's attitudes or behavior, although there might be context-specific exceptions. In this respect, Plato's and subsequent scholars' general worries about possible negative influences that morally inferior art or mimetic representations may exert on recipients appear to have been quite exaggerated. But when there is an abundant and continuous production of pictorial stereotypes, in combination with an extensive discourse within a society and also within legislative measures, things might very well be different. In such contexts, it might not be unreasonable to suspect that schematic images may cumulatively contribute to the establishment of stereotypical beliefs concerning, for example, the nature and character of other cultures and ethnic-religious communities, thus consolidating their status as the Other.

We may also point to a phenomenon sometimes called "the picture superiority effect." Numerous experiments have been carried out that indicate that visual information is processed and stored in a different way from verbal information. Allan Paivio's influential dual-code theory distinguishes between separate mental representations for verbal and visual information. An initial aim of his research was to explain the fact that memory for pictorial stimulus material, or pictured concepts, is often superior to verbal material or verbalized concepts. As his studies indicate, concepts that are more concrete and easier to imagine visually are usually better remembered than abstract ones. These findings are accounted for by suggesting that cognitive processes involve two parallel memory systems, a linguistic and a pictorial system respectively. Pictures are more likely than words to be encoded in both verbal and image representations, thereby enhancing the probability of later retrieval.[58] Furthermore, a number of studies in consumer research seem to confirm that visual information used in advertising, for example, indeed facilitates memory recognition tasks, especially in delayed recall tasks.[59] This could also apply to depictions of Jews. Consequently, then, frequently recurring encounters with pictorial stereotypifications of Jews might very well have had a considerable impact on the emergence of corresponding mental stereotypes among large groups of beholders involving negative connotations.

As to visually rendered stereotypes, there are a number of experimental and, at first glance, paradoxical findings according to which caricatures, despite being simplified and often exaggerated distortions of faces and people, often are more easily recognizable and memorable than undistorted or photographic images. A number of explanatory hypotheses have been put forward in cognitive psychology, a detailed discussion of which would exceed the scope of this paper.[60] However, it has been

suggested that "caricatures are extraordinarily recognizable portraits, more recognizable than the faces on which they are based…. For this to occur, the distinctive features of the encoded representation of the face must be exaggerated."[61] While individualized portraits or photographs depict individuals at specific moments in time having transitory features, caricatures emphasize constant and distinctive ones. As such, they seem closer to schematic memory representations than photographs. Generally speaking, our ability to recognize anything seems to presuppose something like a mental representation with which sensory stimuli can be compared. We obviously need some kind of typifying, schematic information stored in long-term memory that, when matched with external objects, leads to their recognition and categorization. And repeated encounters with these objects lead, of course, to the replication and stabilization of such mental schemas.[62] Visualized stereotypes of groups or group members may play a significant role for the reproduction of social, ethnic, and ethical categorizations.

It should be pointed out that stereotypification does not necessarily explicitly point to or involve derogatory characteristics. Numerous pictures throughout history depict idealized *types* of men and women, actions, warriors, landscapes, and so on. In what way, first, have male and female bodies been idealized? Well, idealized presentations of the human body may very well be thought of as corresponding to ideals having an evolutionary basis, that is, concerning reproduction or choice of possible sexual partners, strength, power, and protection. Thus, women may be rendered with "ideal" attributes such as youth, health, pronounced buttocks, hips, and breasts, while "ideal" men are characterized by health, broad shoulders and strong, muscular bodies. While some goal-related ideals manifested in pictorial representations concern phylogenetic adaptations characteristic for humans as a species, others are, of course, dependent on culture-specific circumstances. For example, humans rendered as persons practicing a profession or certain activities, which may be typical or well-known within a certain cultural context, may be idealized in that they are given attributes, such as tools, clothes, gestures, and facial expressions, considered to be suitable, or indicating suitability, for task-related goals.

However, stereotypifications of humans as Others, as belonging to an alien world, give them a more homogeneous appearance, as more replaceable and less free-standing individuals, thereby to some extent objectifying them and at least implicitly diminishing their humanness, seen from an Ego-perspective, although there may be differences in degree, of course.[63]

During the Middle Ages, pictorial means for establishing the Jewish stereotype might only have had a partial impact, as consistent stylistic ways of rendering or implying its negative characteristics were largely absent, and the general public had only limited access to pictures. Still, verbal discourse and social restrictions were, of course, sufficiently efficient for giving Jews an inferior status. An increasing consolidation of pictorial stereotypes of Jewishness followed in the nineteenth century, spreading all over Europe, reaching its climax in the Third Reich, and now flourishing in the Arab-Muslim world.

As already noted, stereotypes have a tendency to stick, resisting change and falsification. Disconfirming evidence concerning the characteristics of certain groups may easily be rejected and interpreted as dishonest efforts by the group members in question to conceal their "true nature," as in Nazi Germany, where the mimicry-like behavior of Jews was frequently stressed. Rather than preceding them, stereotypical beliefs may also be the result of prejudicial and discriminatory actions of a dominant group towards the suppressed one, that is, as retrojustifications.[64]

The continuous reproduction of stereotypes by various semiotic and behavioral means may also lead to assumptions that there might at least be a kernel of truth in them. Perhaps not *all* members in a group are supposed to have certain characteristics, but maybe *many or most* of them have. After all, there is no smoke without fire. Propagandistic strategies on these lines, sometimes called the Big Lie, were already pointed out by Adolf Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, who accused Jews of having employed them:

> …[In] the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods…. For the grossly impudent lie always leaves traces behind it, even after it has been nailed down....[65]

In concluding this paper, then, I would argue that the continuous stereotyping of Jews, not least as caricaturized visualizations that explicitly or implicitly point to their negative moral or behavioral character traits, had a considerable impact on dominant groups' attitudes and behavior, whether in the Middle Ages, Nazi Germany, or in the contemporary Arab world. Furthermore, they also imply and reproduce palingenetic master narratives concerning the "Jewish problem," basically telling an overarching story

about a pseudo-historic idyllic past (a state of equilibrium), a past/present filled with obstacles and threats posed by Jews (the disruption), past/present attempts to repair that disturbance, and the dream and promise of a new, future state of equilibrium, that is, a Jew- and trouble-free Christian, Aryan, or Muslim world.

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Endnotes

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[2] Roger C. Schank, "Interestingness: Controlling Inferences,"*Artificial Intelligence*, 12 (1979), 273–297.

[3] Cf. Michael Ranta, "(Re-)Creating Order: Narrativity and Implied World Views in Pictures," *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, 5 (2013), 1-30.

[4] Schank (1995).

[5] Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton 1982), p 4.

[6] Bruner 1990, p. 43.

[7] Tzvetan Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), pp. 9-10.

[8] Cf. Michael Ranta, "Stories in Pictures (and Non-Pictorial Objects) – A Narratological and Cognitive Psychological Approach," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 9 (2011); 2013.

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[11] J. M. Lotman et al.,*Thesis on the Semiotic Study of Culture* (Lisse: The Peter de Ridder Press, 1975).

[12] As suggested by Göran Sonesson, "Ego meets Alter. The Meaning of Otherness in Cultural Semiotics," in J. Bernard (ed.), Special Issue in Honour of Vilmos Voigt, Semiotica, 128, 3 (2000), 537-559; "The Globalisation of Ego and Alter. An Essay in Cultural Semiotics." Semiotica, 148, 1 (2004). 153-173.

[13] "Text" should here be understood in a wide semiotic sense, that is, as every meaning-bearing artefact produced within a particular culture.

[14] Modified adaptation from Sonesson (2000), p. 539.

[15] Cf. also Anna Cabak Rédei, "Cognition and Stereotypes in 'Guess Who is Coming to Dinner': A Semiotic and Social Psychological Perspective," *Southern Semiotic Review*, 2 (2013). Retrieved September 7, 2016: http://www.southernsemioticreview.net/cognition-and-stereotypes-in-guess-who-is-coming-to-dinner-a-semiotic-and-social-psychological-perspective-by-anna-redei/

[16] Cf. Elliot Aronson, Timothy D. Wilson, & Robin M. Akert,*Social Psychology* (New York: Pearson, 2010), pp. 210-214, p. 422.

[17] *Ibid*, p. 423.

[18] For more detailed overviews, cf. ibid., pp. 428-432; Susan T. Fiske & Taylor, Shelley E. Taylor, *Social Cognition – From Brains to Culture* (London: Sage, 2013), pp. 283-291.

[19] Cf. Nick Haslam, "Dehumanization: An Integrative Review,"*Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10 (2006), 252-264.

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[22] For a detailed overview, see Jonathan Elukin,*Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007).

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[25] Cf. Kotek (2008), pp. 1-14; Stav (1999), pp. 25-33.

[26] Cf. Kotek (2008), pp. 6-9.

[27] Cf. Dana E. Katz,*The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[28] Cf. Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), p. 62.

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[30] Cf. Stav (1999), pp. 35-39.

[31] Kotek (2009), p. 19; Wistrich (1999), p. 9; Joel E. Vessells,*Drawing France – French Comics and the Republic* (Jackson, US: UP of Mississippi, 2010), pp 30-35. In this image, the "traitor" Dreyfus is depicted with caricature-like, distorted features distorted and receives ablutions of another stereotyped Jew. Retrieved September 7, 2016: http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/dreyfus/intro/item/20977

[32] Cf. Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge 1993); Roger Griffin & M. Feldman, Fascism – Critical Concepts in Political Science, vol. 1 [The Nature of Fascism] (London/New York 2004).

[33] Cf. Griffin (1993); R. O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," Journal of Modern History, 70 (1998), 1 – 23.

[34] Paxton (1998).

[35] Illustration from Elvira Bauer, *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid* (Nürnberg 1936).

[36] Bauer (1936), p. 5; my translation.

[37] Figure 5a Retrieved October 12, 2016: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/prop/resn/ns_baut.jpg;

5b) Jeremy Aynsley,*Graphic Design in Germany 1890-1945* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 187.

[38] Figure 6a Retrieved October 12, 2016: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/prop/resn/ns_down.jpg;

6b) Retrieved September 7, 2016: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2331

[39] See also Jeffrey Herf, "The 'Jewish War': Goebbels and the Antisemitic Campaigns of the Nazi Propaganda Ministry," Holocaust and Genocide Studies 19, 1 (2005), 51-80.

[40] For a more detailed account of creating Otherness in the Third Reich, see Michael Ranta, "The (Pictorial) Construction of Collective Identities in the Third Reich," *Language and Semiotic Studies*, 2, 3 (2016), 106-123.

[41] Cf. Stav (1999), pp. 80-83; Kotek (2009), pp. 23-24, Laqueur (2006), p. 193.

[42] Cf. Laqueur (2006), pp. 191- 194; Halverson et al. (2011), pp. 2-9.

[43] Cf. Laqueur (2006), pp. 192-193; Kotek (2009), p. 23.

[44] Cf. Laqueur (2006), pp. 194-195; Kotek (2009), p. 24.

[45] Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 2009); Israel Gershoni, (ed.), *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

[46] Cf., however, Laqueur (2006), pp. 195-199; Stav (1999), pp. 83-112.

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[50] Cf. Kotek (2009), pp. 61-86, pp. 108-116; Stav (1999), pp. 232-239.

[51] Yadlin (1999), p. 313.

[52] Figure 7a: Stav (1999), p. 234; 7b: Kotek (2009), p. 63.

[53] Quoted in Kotek (2009), p. 39.

[54] Cf. Kotek (2009), pp.39-46, pp. 93-107, Stav (1999), pp. 139-161, pp. 198-214, pp. 240-257. Figure 8a: Stav (1999), p. 247; 8b: Kotek (2009), p. 40.

[55] Cf. Kotek (2009), pp. 47-50; Stav (1999), pp. 215-231. Figure 9a: Stav (1999), p. 218; 9b: Kotek (2009), p. 50. The latter may have been inspired by the Nazi propaganda film "The Eternal Jew" (Der ewige Jude) from 1940, made in a pseudo-documentary style, where images of rats are used to draw an analogy between the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe with the migration of rats.

[56] Cf. Kotek (2009), pp. 87-92; Stav (1999), pp. 183-197; Wistrich (1999), p.11.

[57] Figures 10a & b: Kotek (2009), pp. 88-89.

[58] Cf. Allan Paivio, *Imagery and Verbal Processes* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979). For a more detailed account of pictorial representation as schematizations of general and ideal types, see Michael Ranta, *Mimesis as the Representation of Types - The Historical and Psychological Basis of an Aesthetic Idea* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2000).

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[62] See also Ranta (2000).

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[64] Cf. Yaacov Schul & Henri Zukier, "Why Do Stereotypes Stick?," in Wistrich (1999), pp. 31-43.

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