

Stereotypes & Agency

Agency

The term refers to:

the capacity of social agents to make choices and act within the system constraints.

The term is used as:

an alternative to 'freedom' and 'liberty' which imply that social subjects can escape power structures and dominant ideologies.



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Stereotypes

Psychology & Cognitive sciences

Broad definition: Pictures in our head that condense, schematize and simplify our conception of the world. (Lippmann, 1922)

Narrow definition: Conventional ideas of people who belong to certain groups (race, nation, profession, class, gender, etc.). (Schweinitz, 2011 and Perkins, 1979)

Media Stereotypes

Film studies, literature & art

Broad definition: Recurrent patterns of narration, plot structure, acting, visual style, music, etc.
(Schweinitz, 2011)

Narrow definition: Types of characters that are defined by a limited set of characteristics and do not evolve throughout the story (Dyer, 1993)

Stereotypes

PROS

- Facilitate cognition and communication (cognitive relief)
- Reduce the buzzing confusion of the world (simplification)
- Build consensus among communities
- Create and maintain the group identities

CONS

- Standardize our perceptions of groups and people
- Stabilize what is changing
- Erase nuances and differences
- Lead to judgements and intolerance
- Replace critical thinking
- Align our beliefs with dominant ideologies

Media Stereotypes

PROS

- Help the audience to make sense of media content and understand the story
- Increase chances to make profit with a production

CONS

- Standardize productions into ready-made formulae
- Homogenize culture
- Make viewers more intelorant towards innovation

Naturalization of stereotypes

Repetition



Conservation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Equilibrium zone
(potential of naturalization)

Innovation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Difference

Ref. Trépanier-Jobin, 2013

Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #1

Repetition



Difference

Conservation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Equilibrium zone
(potential of naturalization)



Innovation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Ref. Trépanier-Jobin, 2013

Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #2

Repetition



Difference

Conservation zone
(potential of denaturalization)



Equilibrium zone
(potential of naturalization)

Innovation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Ref. Trépanier-Jobin, 2013

Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #3

Repetition



Difference

Conservation zone
(potential of denaturalization)



Equilibrium zone
(potential of naturalization)



Innovation zone
(potential of denaturalization)

Ref. Trépanier-Jobin, 2013

References

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