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## TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE AMERICAN HERO IN THE US MEDIA DISCOURSE

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### Abstract

In the era of digital technologies, media has become a powerful tool of shaping worldview of people by means of sociocultural stereotypes. Formed in the process of evaluative categorization, sociocultural stereotypes represent simplified and conventional images of individuals and groups in media discourse. Affected by a range of factors, stereotypes undergo changes. Mass media play a particularly influential role in this process. The prominent figure of the US media landscape is ideologically charged stereotype of the American hero that embodies nationally significant ideas of freedom, individualism, and enterprise that lead to the accomplishment of a much-desired goal. I argue that the idealized cultural construct of the American hero, embodied in a sociocultural stereotype, is conceptualized through an image schema integrating foundational elements: PART–WHOLE–FORCE, SOURCE–PATH–GOAL. The WHOLE, representing the hero, comprises PARTS such as appearance, clothing, and behavior. FORCE signifies hero's strength necessary to achieve the GOAL. SOURCE arises from one's understanding, while the PATH involves overcoming adversities, culminating in success as the GOAL. This paper outlines transformations of the American hero stereotype in the US media discourse in diachronic perspective. Invariably virtuous, courageous, self-confident, purposeful, and hardworking, the American hero is inspirational and idealized image that takes on different forms due to changes of historical context. In different periods, the American hero is represented by a first settler, a cowboy, a ranger, a scientist. This stereotype functions as a model pattern for evaluating individuals and social groups. While the portrayal of the American hero in media discourse adapts to changing contexts, his image schema remains invariable.

**Key words:** *American hero, sociocultural stereotype, media discourse, diachronic perspective, cognitive-linguistics aspect.*

“...*(h)ero, the leader, the saviour, is one who discovers a new way to greater certainty.*”  
(Jung, 1954/2014, p. 186)

### 1. Introduction

In view of their mental character, sociocultural stereotypes are acknowledged as verbalized cognitive structures that represent simplified and conventional images of individuals or groups (Ashmore & Del Boca, 2017; Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019; Tomasello, 2003, etc.). Sociocultural stereotypes are formed in the process of evaluative categorization, i.e., a mental process of distinguishing and assessing salient features of social phenomena, groups and individuals in accordance with cultural values and social standards. Stereotypes transform under the influence of

sociocultural and media factors (Lyubymova, 2023). Sociocultural factors that include ethical, aesthetic and behavioural standards, cultural dominants and ideological guidelines determine interpretation of societal experience of newly appeared groups. Media factors refer to journalists' work and the social networks leaders' activity that cause reinforcement of stereotypes or their reinterpretation.

In the era of widely spread digital technologies, media has become a powerful tool shaping worldview of people by means of sociocultural stereotypes. In media discourse, stereotyping is a complex process that depends on the information from different semiotic resources, social context, and personal experiences (Shevchenko, 2024). Media shape stereotypes through specific configuration of popular narrative formulas and categorical sociocultural schemas (Brylla, 2018, p. 264) that condition the way stereotypes are treated (Dyer, 2002, p. 1). As multimodal signs, sociocultural stereotypes are constructed by interacting visual and auditory channels. Visuals activate the accurate perception of sociocultural stereotypes through stimulation of external features (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998), such as clothing style, physical characteristics and kinetic features. Auditory channel represents stereotypes by certain sociolects or territorial dialects.

Sociocultural stereotypes are not only products of mass communication, but also the “main bet” in the ideological struggle for the opportunity to impose a certain worldview (Bourdieu, 1985). Though all sociocultural stereotypes are based on societal principles and beliefs, some of them are ideologically charged as they represent nationally significant ideas. Such is the American hero stereotype, which embodies outstanding abilities and deeds of a person who is a model for evaluating individuals and social groups. The American hero “is archetypal, a paradigm who bears the possibilities of life, courage, love – the commonplace which define our human lives” (Fishwick, 1985, p. 60). The hero saves people from troubles and encourages them to act boldly. Endowed with exceptional attributes, a hero “peaks above the mass that still clung to its collective fears, its beliefs, laws, and systems” (Jung, 1954/2014, p.175). He chooses his own way to achievements and victory irrespective of difficulties and dangers. As idealized personality, the hero has no flaws, only virtues, as “what we seek in visible human form is not man, but the superman” (Jung, 1954/2014, p. 178). He personifies not only the highest degree of courage, but “symbolizes the ideas, forms and forces that mould or grip the soul” (Jung, 1954/2014, p. 175). As a tool to raise the nation in the spirit of freedom, individualism, and enterprise, the American hero is maintained and strengthened by the US media. While the portrayal of the American hero in media discourse adapts to changing contexts, his essence remains invariable.

The *aim* of this paper is to present the results of a study on the transformations of the American hero stereotype in U.S. media discourse. The *objectives* are to outline the portrayal of this stereotype from a diachronic perspective and to identify the image schemas that structure the information associated with it. The language data came from ‘quality’ periodicals, popular entertaining magazines, movies, and commercials.

*Theoretically*, the study rests on the premise that stereotypes are results of socio-cultural reality interpretation that takes place within the scope of cognitive models by means of linguistic signs (Bartmiński, 2017; Lawton, 2016; Ross, 2019). Scientists acknowledge simplicity, conventionality and axiological character of stereotypes that are the integral part of natural language (Ashmore & Del Boca 2017; Schneider, 2004).

Media representation of sociocultural stereotypes reflect the causal connection between the categories of social world and societal cultural experience, values and norms that may vary. Sociocultural stereotypes manifest on the lexical-semantic level by words or collocations. A lexical unite that names a sociocultural stereotype is designated as stereotype nomen (Lyubymova, 2022a). On syntactic level, a stereotype is represented by propositional structures that implement subjective views on social groups and individuals. The evidence of stereotypes can also be traced in various linguistically bound phenomena: communicative style (Furkó, 2013; Deutschmann & Steinval, 2020), pragmatic predispositions (Lawton, 2016), phraseological units and proverbs (Shutova, 2015).

## 2. Methodology

Interpretive reconstruction of the stereotype's meaning is based on the hermeneutic canon that the language is the medium for understanding (Gadamer, 2004). Media text interpretation involves knowledge of the communicative background, i.e., the historical, cultural and ideological context, as well as the information transmission channel (Lyubymova, 2022b). Interpretative procedure lies in comprehending the meaning of the sociocultural stereotype, interpreting it in the cultural and historic context, and explaining the means of its media representation. Diachronic perspective of the research refers to interpretation of changes in media representation of the sociocultural stereotype from the time of its appearance till the present day.

The meaning of the American hero stereotype, that is verbalized and contextually construed in media discourse, is analysed in the framework of image schema theory. Image schemas organize human experience of “basic perceptual, motor-program, emotional, historical, social, and linguistic dimensions” (Johnson, 1987, p. xvi). They function as flexible templates for ordering information in different empirical contexts (Oakley, 2012). Comprising primary building blocks of cognition, image schemas may occur as compounds that overlay, detail, or refine the information (Kimmel, 2005). The compositionality of image schemas allows to depict a wide range of verbalized social phenomena.

## 3. Results and discussion

The American hero is self-confident and courageous, determined and hardworking. Embodying established ideas and basic cultural values, the American hero stereotype evinces stability of its features, though it takes on different forms due to changes of historical context. In different periods the American hero is represented by images of a first settler, a cowboy, a ranger, and a scientist.

### 3.1. Coming-to-be the national hero

Over the centuries, European cultures refined and idealized their heroic figures, elevating them into archetypes of ‘purity’ and virtue. In contrast, the American counterparts of these ancient heroes developed distinctive traits, reflecting the unique values and challenges of the New World (Boorstin, 2010, p. 327). Grandeur and dignity of British heroes contrasted with perseverance and naivety of the American popular heroes, who embodied the most important values of newly born nation. These individuals distrust authorities, pursue personal achievements and appreciate freedom above all.

The process of “hero-making” in the US media discourse began in the colonial period, when newspapers, almanacs and pamphlets “fertilized by vulgar humor and the popular imagination” (Boorstin, 2010, p. 330). Published in American colonies, “Astronomical Dairy and Almanack”, “Poor Richard Almanack”, “North American Almanack” taught people practicality and reliance on their own strength. Almanacs laid the foundations for cultural values and national features that crystallized into American hero. In his “Poor Richard’s Almanack”, B. Franklin portrays the hero, who protects the freedoms and wealth of people: “Your true hero fights to preserve, and not to destroy, the life liberties, and estates of his people” (Franklin, 2004, p. 154). B. Franklin outlined the basic cultural values that made up the American hero: individualism (“he may well win the race that runs by himself”), lust for victory (“Strive to be the best, and you may succeed”), diligence (“Industry pays Debts, while Despair increases them”) (Franklin, 2004, p. 139, 100).

The first a national popular hero of the colonial period was a simple and clumsy, but shrewd villager *Yankee Doodle* named after the song by the same name (example 1). Known by 1775, the British song mocked American fighter as both *a doodle*—a country hick, and a *dandy*—a conceited jerk (*Yankee Doodle*, n.d.):

(1) *Yankee Doodle, keep it up  
Yankee Doodle dandy  
Mind the music and the step  
And with the girls be handy.*

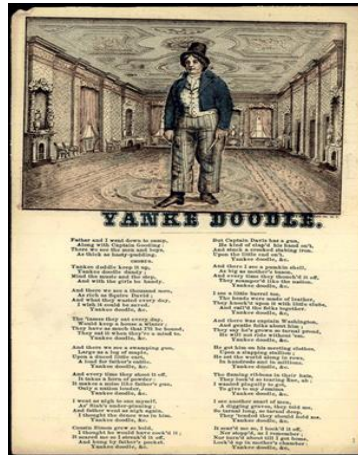


Fig.1 The text of *Yankee Doodle* (The Kennedy Center).

The newspaper “Hartford Courant” of 1775 reported the word *Yankee* originated from the name of the Indian tribe *Yankoo*s, which meant ‘invincible’ (Moore, 1858). The settlers of New England received the name *Yankee* after they conquered the tribe that traditionally gave its name to the conquerors. The history of this name was associated with the greatness of Americans and their hopes to be equal to Romans or ancient Englishmen (Moore, 1858).

In the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods, the comic image of a rough, but witty and quirky *Brother Jonathan* replaced *Yankee Doodle*. The word *Brother* in the nomen indicates the equality of the Masonic address, while *Jonathan* is considered typical for a dweller of New England in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Brother Jonathan was depicted as a man of low social status, wearing a long coat, colorful trousers, and a topper. A simple villager was a respected person in his community (Morgan, 1988, pp. 21–22). *Brother Jonathan*’s antagonist was an ethnic stereotype of brits – *John Bull*, caricatured in American newspapers as a fat and unpleasant man, richly dressed in a tailcoat, leggings, and a vest with a national flag of the United Kingdom.



Fig. 2. Brother Jonathan beats John Bull.

In the above-given satirical picture, *Brother Jonathan* overcomes *John Bull*. The text to the picture explains the fight: defeated and begging for mercy *John Bull* acknowledges superiority of his rival, *Brother Jonathan*, which states: "...we are an enterprising nation" (A boxing match, 1813). Resourceful and practical *Brother Jonathan* is an individualist, who can get out of difficult situations rewarded. These qualities became basic features of the American hero.

### 3.2. A first settler

Adventures in the wilderness, unexpected encounters with hostile tribes, and untamed animals—that was the life of the backwoodsmen, as the newspapers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century called the settlers of uncivilized territories. To survive in the wilderness, they had to be very self-reliant and independent:

(2) *men of Nature's own make, not starched into a precise formality, nor with souls and limbs alike fetched with artificial restraint, but with nerves and elastic frames, that do credit their 'raising', with quick feeling and buoyant hopes sparkling in their eyes; in a word, Backwoodsmen* (The Backwoods, 1837).

The metaphor "not starched into a precise formality" conveys the backwoodsmen's independence and dynamism by contrasting them with the rigid and inflexible qualities of dense, glossy fabric, symbolizing the structured lives of people in the civilized world. The phrase "buoyant hopes sparkling in their eyes" is emotionally elevated, reflecting the author's admiration for the backwoodsmen's vigor and determination to settle untamed lands.



Fig.3. The story about the life of backwoodsmen published in The Native American (The Backwoods, 1837).

The courage and commitment of the Americans who advanced to the southern borders exceeded what the world knew of British courage: "...the determined valor of the Western men and their offensive operations against overwhelming force surpass all that is recorded of British valor, either on Indian or European fields" (Buena Vista, 1848). The inhabitants of the borderland were portrayed as free, brave and entrepreneurial as the country in which they grew up.

The appearance of backwoodsmen, as described in newspapers, typically included buckskins, leggings, moccasins, Bowie knives, rifles, and flasks (Tuesday Evening, 1839).



Fig.4. Andriolli, M. E. American Pioneer Life (Drawings, n.d.).

Prototypical backwoodsman is Daniel Boone (1734 – 1820), whose media image is made up of exaggerated facts and outright fictitious details. His life credo was “Love and fear God, believe in Jesus Christ and do all the good to your neighbors and himself” (News of the Day, 1874). These were the moral principles that guided the first settlers, who are described as devout Protestants.

Synonymous with *backwoodsman* is the nomen *frontiersman*, which denotes a settler, who lived at the border of uncivilized territories: “The first settlers in this country were, when they first landed, frontier settlers. The frontier people...have done everything in their power to keep them in peace” (Review of the Session, 1795). Their deeds in defending the settlements from Indian attacks became the standard of valor: “armed and brave as frontiersmen” (An Old Timer, 1885).

Nomen *pioneer* of the first settler stereotype appeared in American newspapers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Originally it meant ‘infantryman’ that prepares roads for the main army (Klein, 2003, p. 563). ‘Hardy’ and ‘sturdy’ pioneers (The Cherokee Neutral Lands, 1869) did all possible to tame the wilderness and make the life comfortable on the new lands: “Let all emulate the sturdy American pioneers, who heeded not the perils of environment, but constituted the vanguard of civilization” (Don’t Strain Yourself, 1897). The call to ‘emulate the sturdy American pioneers’ indicates the role model of the first settlers.

In the cinematic discourse, pioneers are protagonists of westerns. They live by code of honor and their vision of justice was enacted by weapon. The credits of the silent film “The Covered Wagon” (1923) describe the heroism of American pioneers that carried out a noble mission to spread civilization westward:

(3) *The blood of America is the blood of pioneers – the blood of lion-hearted men and women who carved a splendid civilization out of an uncharted wilderness. With dauntless courage, facing unknown perils, the men and women of the 'forties flung the boundaries of the nation westward, and still westward, beyond the Mississippi, beyond the prairies, beyond the Rockies, – until they bounded the United States of America with two Oceans* (Cruz, 1923).

In example 3 above, the American hero is a gender-neutral personality described as “*lion-hearted men and women*”. Women shared all the hardships of the pioneers' lives in their advancement westward. The metaphor “*carved a splendid civilization out of an uncharted wilderness*” shows the process of creating the nation by pioneers as compared to stone carving. Pioneers exhibit the highly valued quality of the American hero—“*dauntless courage*”.

### 3.3. An American cowboy

The proximity of the United States to Mexico conditioned livestock farming practices. The workers, who herd and tend cattle were named *cowboys*, *punchers* or *cowpokes*, but only the word *cowboy* functions as the nomen of the American hero stereotype as it got additional meaning of a freedom-loving, bold and enduring personality, known throughout the country.

Cowboys not only raised and drove cattle, but also helped the military to control new territories: “American cowboys came to the aid of United States troopers” (American Cowboys, 1916). In the newspapers, they were estimated as rough, brave, big-hearted, having strict ideas of honor, ready to share their last crust with you (Real Live Cowboys, 1885). Individualism and ruggedness, a fierce pride in his land (Creek, 1960) were stated as the main characteristics of a cowboy.

Commercials exploit the stereotype of a cowboy for spreading the information about the products and services and compelling the desire to become a real cowboy, a leader in their surroundings: “If you wanna be the king of cowboys in your corral, eat plenty of Post Grape Nut Flakes” (Rogers, 1952).

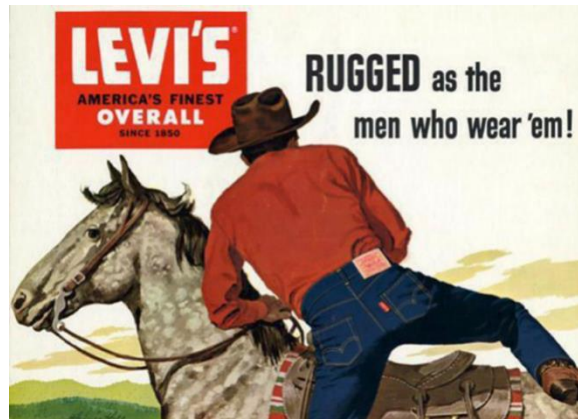


Fig.5. The image of a cowboy in the mid-20th-century advertisement of jeans (Levi's, n.d.).

Visual attributes of cowboys, i.e., blue jeans, denim work shirts, are as rugged as a cowboy, who wears them (Fig.5). Worn scuffed boots and sweat-stained Stetson hats (Creek, 1960) signify the hard work of a cowboy.

His solitude, courage, and masculine strength have been celebrated in numerous Hollywood films (“Stagecoach”, 1939; “The Searchers”, 1956; “Lonesome Dove”, 1989; “Dances with Wolves”, 1990) that portray exploits of cowboys and teach the American way of life. In cinematic discourse of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a cowboy looks a strong man in denim and a Stetson hat, speaking with a Southern accent. He skilfully shoots and fights enemies, defending honor and law. The cowboy from the film “Dodge City” (1939) is named ‘a trail boss’ that conveys the significance of the cowboy in the community, in which he establishes justice: “...a trail boss has sometimes got to take the law into his hands” (Curtiz, 1939). The society demands a hero that respects law and can defend it: “What Dodge City needs is a man with a sense of public pride...and the courage to back it up by shooting it out with men of equal skill” (Curtiz, 1939). An American cowboy is a patriot, as he has ‘a sense of public pride’.

In cinematic discourse of the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a cowboy stereotype acquires various gender and racial features, not changing its positive characteristics, e.g., a cowgirl who is a good shot and wins the fight against criminals in “The Quick and the Dead” (1995), gay cowboys in “Brokeback Mountain” (2005), African American cowboys in “Concrete Cowboy” (2020).

The American conservative magazine “The Federalist” describes the cowboy as the central hero of the American West and one of the founding heroes of American culture:

- (4) *The traditional cowboy, who is much more than just a “white man in a wide-brimmed hat... the traditional, stereotypical cowboy is, above all, a cultural hero. He (or she) is in fact the central hero figure of the American West and one of the foundational heroes of American culture as a whole (Grewell, 2018).*

The stereotype of a cowboy embodies America's belief in courage, endurance and willpower, integrity and ingenuity of Americans.

### 3.4. A ranger / military

Originated from French, the word *ranger* appeared in American culture in the period of the French and Indian Wars. The first and most famous organization of Texas Rangers was formed in 1823. Since the very beginning of the Ranger movement, the soldier who defended the borders of Texas has symbolized strong individualism, courage, and honesty.

An example of the American ranger hero is Walker (portrayed by Chuck Norris), the central character in the television series *Walker, Texas Ranger* (1993–2001). The series' introduction represents a man in a waterproof raincoat and a wide-brimmed Texas hat with a rifle in his hand and a ranger badge.



Fig.6. Chuck Norris as a member of the Texas Ranger Division in the series “Walker, Texas Ranger”.

Accompanying song asserts the inevitability of punishment from the ranger for breaking the law:

(5) *In the eyes of a Ranger  
The unsuspecting stranger  
Had better know the truth  
Of wrong from right  
'cause the eyes  
Of the Ranger  
Are upon you  
Any wrong you do  
He's gonna see  
When you're in Texas  
Look behind you (Wilder, 1994).*

The lyrics of the song are enhanced by the backdrop of a sunset, against which the audience observes the watchful gaze of a Texas Ranger. Walker explains his wish to become a ranger as his life goal to oppose injustice: “You know why I became a ranger? I mean, the real reason is I was hoping I could put a stop to this kind of thing” (Katzman et al., 1994).

Modesty and endurance are key traits of the American hero, often epitomized in the image of the military figure. In cinematic discourse, the American hero is often depicted as a brave warrior who saves the United States—and the entire world—from various disasters, such as environmental catastrophes (“The Day After Tomorrow”, 2004), alien invasions (“Independence Day”, 1996,



2016), and terrorist threats (“Iron Man”, 2008), as well as exploring new frontiers in space. An example of such a hero is Russell Casse in “Independence Day” (1996, 2016), who sacrifices his life to save humanity. A former Vietnam War pilot, he heroically turns his warplane against the alien invaders. When referred to as a ‘lifesaver,’ he humbly replies, “I’ve got to” and his rallying cry, “We’re not done yet! Gentlemen, let’s plough the road!” (Emmerich, 1996) embodies faith in victory and the resolve to overcome obstacles.

### 3.5. A scientist

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the image of a less physically strong, but shrewd, educated and inventive modern American hero emerges. In cinematic discourse, scientists are portrayed as individuals of diverse ages and genders, embodying resilience and a fervent dedication to science. Unfazed by the danger, they relentlessly focus on their task. High moral standards of American scientists are conveyed by the pleonasm ‘virtuous hero’ (Johnson, 2017). The metaphor ‘voices of virtue’ (Fahy, 2014) illustrates the significant influence that scientists exert on humanity, as their insights and opinions are regarded as manifestations of rational thought. Their knowledge and expertise are further encapsulated in the metaphor ‘knowledge-nuggets’ (Sauer, 2014), which emphasizes the value of their erudition for the benefit of humanity.

Hollywood films feature scientists who are able to solve various problems from space travel and alien invasion to geological or biological hazards (“Sunshine”, 2007; “Tornado Valley”, 2009; “Contagion”, 2011; “Arrival”, 2016). For example, in the film “Contagion” heroic scientists save the world from a dangerous virus that starts in Hong Kong. Only scientists, who develop a rapid action plan, can prevent the unknown threat: “We’re isolating the sick and quarantining those who we believe were exposed” (Soderbergh, 2011).



Fig.7. The scene from “Contagion”.

Scientists realize the danger, but decisively test the vaccine against the virus on themselves: “I’d rather the story be that we overreact...than that many people lost their lives because we didn’t do enough” (Soderbergh, 2011). Demonstrating courage, bravery and selflessness, the team of like-minded people overcomes the virus.

Thus, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American hero was characterized as an individualist, embodying personal freedom and independence while enduring the hardships of colonizing uncharted territories. In contrast, by the 21<sup>st</sup> century, amid the context of modern global challenges, the American hero exemplifies a team spirit, which helps to solve problems of any complexity.

#### 4. Conclusion

The media stereotype of the American hero embodies the exceptional abilities and actions of an individual who serves as a benchmark for evaluating personal and social ideals. An American hero achieves cherished dreams through decisive action. In contemporary media discourse, the American hero is no longer confined to the image of a white Protestant but may represent any faith or race being characterized by strength, courage, self-confidence, determination, and hard work. The formation of the American hero stereotype began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the emergence of national popular heroes, whose representations have evolved due to changes of historical context.

The idealized cultural experience, embodied in the sociocultural stereotype of the American hero, is structured as an image schema, which integrates such basic elements as PART–WHOLE–FORCE, SOURCE–PATH–GOAL. WHOLE, i.e., a hero, consists of PARTS appearance, clothing, manners, etc. The basic element FORCE is physical and/or moral strength, endurance that ensure achievement of GOAL. SOURCE is the understanding of the needs of the society and one's own. The hero's PATH is the struggle against nature and enemies, which ends with the GOAL – the achievement of the desired success. Changes in the integrated image schema of the American hero stereotype concern the information presented in the basic element PARTS. In the public consciousness, the stereotype of the American hero functions as a prototype for the stereotyping of social groups and individuals.

*Further research* could examine the American hero stereotype as a tool for constructing persuasive rhetoric in the speeches of politicians and influential public figures.

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The author has no competing interests or funding support to declare.

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## ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОГО ГЕРОЯ В МЕДІЙНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ США

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### Анотація

В епоху цифрових технологій ЗМІ стали потужним інструментом формування світогляду людей за допомогою соціокультурних стереотипів. Сформовані в процесі оціночної категоризації, соціокультурні стереотипи є спрощеними та умовними образами індивідів і соціальних груп у медійному дискурсі. Під впливом низки чинників стереотипи зазнають змін. Особливо впливову роль у цьому процесі відіграють засоби масової інформації. Провідною фігурою американського медіа простору є ідеологічно забарвлений стереотип американського героя, який уособлює національно значущі ідеї свободи, індивідуалізму та підприємливості, що ведуть до досягнення омріяної мети. Ідеалізований культурний конструкт американського героя, втілений у соціокультурному стереотипі, концептуалізується через образ-схему, яка об'єднує основні елементи: ЧАСТИНА–ЦІЛЕ–СИЛА, ДЖЕРЕЛО–ШЛЯХ–МЕТА. ЦІЛЕ, що представляє героя, складається з таких ЧАСТИН, як зовнішність, одяг і поведінка. СИЛА означає силу героя, необхідну для досягнення МЕТИ. ДЖЕРЕЛО виникає з розуміння людини, тоді як ШЛЯХ передбачає подолання труднощів, кульмінацією якого стає успіх як ЦІЛЬ. У статті простежено трансформації стереотипу американського героя в медіадискурсі в діахронічній перспективі. Незмінно добродісний, мужній, впевнений у собі, цілеспрямований і працьовитий американський герой є надихаючим та ідеалізованим образом, який набуває різних форм у зв'язку зі зміною історичного контексту його репрезентації. У різні періоди американський герой набуває різних образних форм: першопоселенця, ковбоя, рейнджера, науковця. Цей стереотип функціонує як зразок для оцінювання індивідів та соціальних груп. Незважаючи на те, що образна форма американського героя в медійному дискурсі змінюється відповідно до змін історико-культурного контекста, образ-схема, яка структурує інформацію про цей стереотип залишається незмінною.

**Ключові слова:** американський герой; соціокультурний стереотип; медійний дискурс; діахронічна перспектива; лінгвокогнітивний аспект.