Analyze the Stereotypes in the Movie *Zootopia* and How to Eliminate the Typical Stereotypes in Today's Workplace

Qichao Hao[1]

[1] University of Southampton

Correspondence: Qichao Hao, University of Southampton.

Abstract

After Lippmann put forward the concept of stereotype, people gradually pay attention to the ubiquitous stereotype. In today's workplace, stereotypes are even more pronounced, especially for women and people with disabilities. By taking *Zootopia* as an example, this paper aims to analyze the problem of stereotypes in the movie, and put forward some feasible suggestions for eliminating stereotypes based on specific cases.

Keywords: stereotype, journalism, film, workplace

1. Introduction

Stereotypes are mainly an oversimplified and fixed perspective on something or an object, and the generalization of that perspective to assume that the thing or the entire has that trait while ignoring individual variances. It is a long-standing stereotype or perspective of something, to put it simply. In daily life, stereotypes are pervasive. They can sometimes be beneficial to us, but they can also impair our judgement and cloud our thoughts. The damaging impacts of stereotypes in contemporary culture are examined in this essay. Disney's 2016 3D animated film *Zootopia*, which was released in the US, serves as the case study. It is a lovely film that not only brings laughter to the audience, but also causes us to reflect. It is worthwhile for both kids and adults to watch this movie. Based on case studies and theoretical notions of stereotypes and their impacts, I will assess how stereotypes impact underrepresented groups of people in the next section.

Additionally, we all gravitate toward the workplace, which is a small-scale representation of society. However, it cannot be denied that there are still a lot of stereotypes, even extremely harmful ones, in the workplace. To everyone, this is unfair. The paper that follows will evaluate this using examples, challenge readers to think critically, and summaries potentially viable defenses.

Figure 1.

Source: Baidu, unknown

Therefore, this paper will be divided into three parts, which are literature review, stereotype analysis of the movie *Zootopia*, and possible measures of workplace stereotype.

2. Literature Review

Stereotypes are an overused argument, to put it mildly. There is a substantial amount of literature on this subject with a range of perspectives that has been studied by numerous academics and professors across the globe. Stereotypes are actually a part of psychology. As civilization has evolved, it has gradually been mapped onto many elements. I'll pick a few papers to discuss in the next part and give brief abstracts of each one, which will provide literature to back up the ideas in this paper.

American journalism critic and novelist Walter Lippmann is credited with introducing the idea of stereotypes. Everyone, he contended, moves in a little circle while they live and work on a relatively small portion of the earth's surface. As a result, we don't have many close pals. But we can only really see one stage and one facet of any significant public event. Any other situation is the same. Naturally, our opinions encompass a wider range of events, a longer period of time, and more things than we can really see. They must consequently be put together

using information from various sources and our imagination. Stereotypes were originally thought of in this way. According to Lippmann, stereotypes can be thought of as experiences and are useful for expanding users' perspectives of novel concepts. Through these encounters, people are able to learn more rapidly and forego needless learning or communication expenses. The concept of stereotypes has significant ramifications for both psychology and media. However, 101 years have elapsed since Lippmann first suggested the idea, thus unavoidably, the test of time may have been applied to the original idea. Therefore, it is crucial that we examine stereotypes in the context of the present.

In their essay "Irrepressible Stereotypes," Thomas E. Nelson and other authors explore and study stereotypes in great detail. Through their analysis, they discovered that while preconceptions are frequently adaptive, the social costs associated with them, such as bias and discrimination, frequently lead us to reject or change our stereotypes. This suggests that the initial stereotypes may be altered by outside factors. This involves social experience growth and the sway of social circles in addition to bias and discrimination.

W. Edgar Vinacke makes the case in his essay Stereotypes as Social Concepts that stereotypes should be viewed as a concept with both positive and negative purposes, possessing the same general nature as other concepts and utilized to organize experience in a similar manner. This is due to the fact that stereotypes are frequently seen as attitudes and are linked to bias. Therefore, it is typical to dismiss his beneficial benefits and view him negatively. This viewpoint has significant, vital ramifications for how this paper should be studied. I must continue to think critically about this particular issue.

L. Monique Ward and Petal Grower note that women are still underrepresented in the mainstream media and that there is a distortion of femininity and masculinity in the case of the research in this paper that deals with the subject of gender stereotypes. They contend that appearance can affect stereotypes after a series of research that correlate regular television viewing with attitudes toward gender roles generally. This in turn necessitates focusing more on the individual rather than their gender or role. This unquestionably makes a favorable impact on social development. It aids in eradicating outdated perceptions of women and encourages greater receptivity to the idea of justice in all its manifestations.

In addition, I looked over the literature on workplace stereotypes, with Dannii Y. Yeung and others stating that it is crucial to create an environment that is accommodating to older workers as the number of older workers in the workforce rises. They discovered through experimental research that job requirements and compensation resources suggested a potential connection between age discrimination and professional outcomes. Additionally, they advocate for creating an environment in the workplace that is welcoming to older workers in order to combat any potential misconceptions. Ageism is undoubtedly one of the stereotypes in the workplace that cannot be ignored.

A study of ex-prisoner stereotypes is a different approach that Crosbie suggests. The authors discovered through a series of quantitative studies that the label of ex-offender does not appear to induce discrimination based on the actions of the tagged person. Instead, just the description of having a criminal record is enough to prejudice a group of people. The authors also point out that stigmatized groups can include, but are not limited to, drug users, sick individuals, obese people, and those who have a variety of mental diseases. In fact, it can be challenging for certain populations to work without encountering prejudice or discrimination. This is due not only to ingrained preconceptions but also to a deep mistrust of them. However, we shouldn't generalize and should continue to treat them as regular citizens who have, after all, consented to legal sanctions. A contemporary, civilized society should value acceptance and tolerance like this.

The literature mentioned above has provided me with a lot of motivation after studying and understanding it. The content of my post will then be based on research, case studies, and my own writing.

3. Body

The state and outcomes of the research on stereotypes are revealed by the examination of the studies in the previous section of the literature review. Although it is evident that academics have done more research on stereotypes, some fresh approaches still need to be explored. In this essay, using the example of *Zootopia*, we will examine the types of stereotypes and forms of industry discrimination that disadvantaged groups may experience, as well as how those prejudices affect them.

The division of labor is becoming more efficient and more jobs are emerging and playing a crucial part in our society as a result of the ongoing growth of society and technological advancements. People have broad perceptions of some workers as a result of the occupational system's gradual growth; for instance, firefighters are perceived as being strong, engineers as being civilized, teachers as being serious, etc. We are continually reminded of these underlying perceptions of other individuals. So much so that when we see a picture that doesn't resemble the one we're expecting, we're taken aback and could make a bad judgement about it. In actuality, this is how stereotypes present themselves in terms of occupation and the detrimental effects they have.

Men and women labor in separate production workforces because of biological differences. While men hunt, women frequently congregate and work in groups. Despite the fact that occupations are naturally genderless, individuals frequently differentiate between them. Due to gender stereotypes, men are perceived as more qualified for leadership roles and professional and technical work due to their harsh, courageous dispositions, while women are seen as weaker and more timid and are more suited for service-related employment. For instance, the majority of men typically work as CEOs and police officers whereas the majority of women work as staff and accountants. This is continuously verified and reinforced in real life, in addition to being in people's views. In terms of the nature of the work, people have less regard for those who work in the service industry and more for those in managerial, professional, and technical domains. Because of this, the tale of Judy, the lead character in the motion picture *Zootopia*, has defied all expectations. I'll examine the portrayal of professional stereotypes in this movie from four angles in the paragraphs that follow.

3.1 Character Design and Stereotypies

First of all, the spectator is given a certain impression by the animals' appearances in the movie, including the impulsive Chief Bull, the bright but selfish foxes, the sloths who serve as civil employees, and the rabbits who seek their aspirations. They are far more anthropomorphic than the animals in previous Disney movies, giving the audience the sense that they are actual "people," but still maintaining their animal features to serve as a reminder that they are still animals. The designers decided on the film's high degree of anthropomorphism by combining the physical traits of the animals with the human trait of walking erect. For instance, Judy, the main rabbit, is based on the cottontail rabbit. The designers gave Officer Judy a dexterous, lanky, and powerful appearance by fine-tuning the dimensions of its body and increasing its feet in order to account for the rabbit's petite and animated features. Based on the African buffalo, Chief Burger is a "tough guy" with pronounced horns and improved muscles to show off his ferocious attitude.
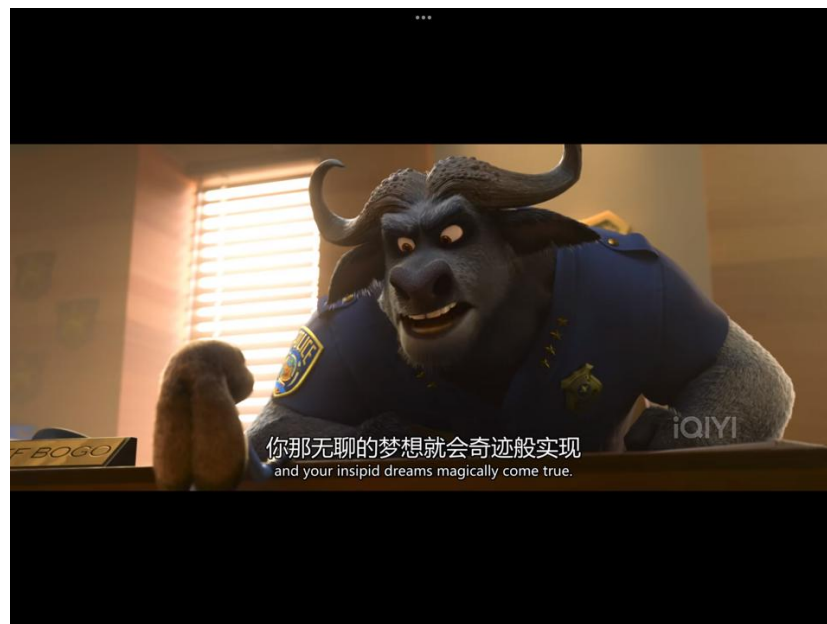

Figure 2. Police Chief and Judy in Conversation

Source: *Zootopia*, dir. Rich Moore, Byrne Howard, Gerard Bush, 2016

Second, the design of the characters' clothing is one of the film's highlights in terms of attire. In order to give a character a social standing, that character must dress according to the social class to which it belongs. While it is true that animals do not need to wear clothing, all of the animal characters in the movie had attire befitting of their rank and position, giving the animals a human identity and a sense of professionalism. Judy typically wears a rosy check shirt with jeans, which serves to indicate the character's natural physical condition and family status while also resonating with Judy's brave and intelligent character, aside from the police uniform, which is frequently seen in the movie and represents a profession. The mayor is depicted as a lion wearing a simple suit and tie, which is unquestionably the attire of prosperity in modern society. Of course, there are other images that have the opposite impact; for instance, the figure "Mr. Big" in "The Godfather" looks just like a European gentlemen with his suit and chair. The character's appearance actually demonstrates the director's intention to employ imagery to subtly convey a stereotype to the audience and evoke a sense of vulnerability.
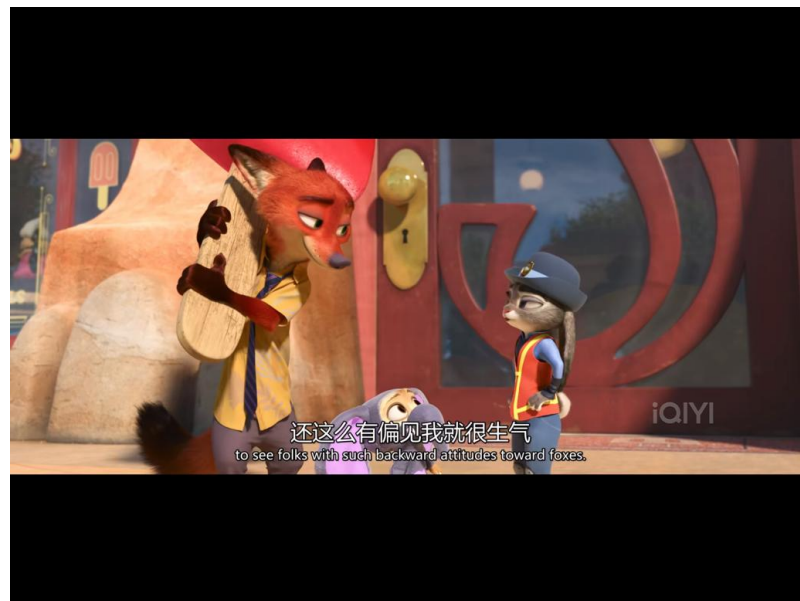
Figure 3. Judy and Nick in Conversation

Source: *Zootopia*, dir. Rich Moore, Byrne Howard, Gerard Bush, 2016

Because the underdog always prevails in the animal kingdom in terms of character bias, people typically identify large animals with total power and dominance while smaller animals are seen as delicate and in need of strong protection. The mayor and police officer jobs are held by lions, cows, leopards, and other huge animals in *Zootopia*, whereas little animals like Judy are rejected and made fun of for even wanting to be a police officer. Judy encounters discrimination and sarcasm from classmates, instructors, coworkers, Nick, and even her parents, who claim that "rabbits are only excellent for growing carrots and not for being a policeman." Nick's contemporaries thought that foxes were naturally cunning and required special muzzles to keep them out of danger, which resulted in his isolation and lack of appreciation as a child due to his ethnic identity. However, Mr. Lion, the mayor, worries that as a towering, powerful carnivore, he may not be able to win the community's trust. According to what has been written about the movie, it is one that provides audiences with what they want and has a deeper lesson than fairy tales that merely say, "You get what you paid for."

3.2 Stereotypes and Gender of Characters

Figure 4. Judy and Cheetah in Conversation

Source: *Zootopia*, dir. Rich Moore, Byrne Howard, Gerard Bush, 2016

One's social gender is influenced by one's upbringing, personality preferences, and societal expectations, even though it is undeniable that each person's gender is defined at birth and cannot be self-selected. The movie has two strong female characters, including Judy, who finds solutions to problems that other male animal police officers are unable to. Judy is objective and open-minded. Judy's accomplishment demonstrates that women can succeed in the workplace even in a culture where men predominate. The sheep deputy mayor, on the other hand, has always interacted with people in a nice and innocent manner, but he is subjected to the lion mayor's ignorance and careless call-and-response. She eventually concocts a scheme to manipulate the animals in order to vent her fury after having suppressed her true self for so long. This is typically an example of a different kind of lady who sympathizes but is cautious when delivering the death blow. In today's multicultural world, people are encouraged to reject common gender norms, transition from wearing bonds to seeking freedom and pursuing their own moral principles, much as Judy Rabbit progressively liberated herself.

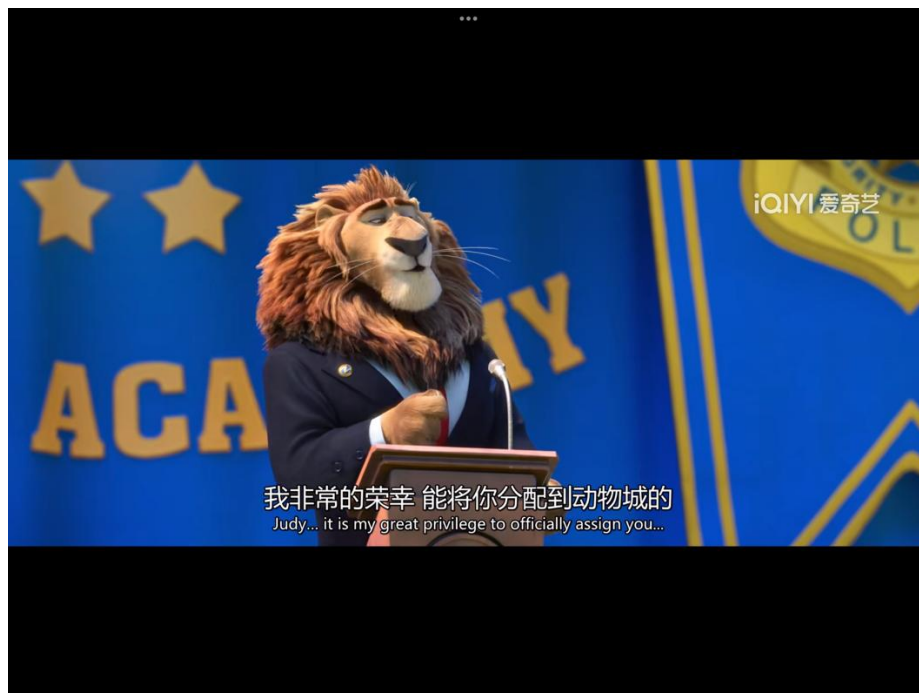*3.3 Stereotypes and Character Careers*

Figure 5. Mayor Lion in Speech

Source: *Zootopia*, dir. Rich Moore, Byrne Howard, Gerard Bush, 2016

The roles of waiter, police officer, mayor's secretary, and many other occupations are all represented in the movie. The first of these is the sheep's secretary, who, as a herbivore working with the lions, is understandably ignored and insulted, lacks a good office, must clean up the lion mayor's trash, and finally even distorts his worldview to conceive the ultimate plot. Judy is the second; she is a civil service employee and a police bunny. Judy, a herbivore, gives off the idea of being kind and well-behaved, so in the eyes of others, selling carrots and growing vegetables in the fields is their best way of life, one that is suitable for a tranquil and secure existence. The third is Nick the Fox, who eventually becomes a police officer. As an antagonist at the beginning of the movie, Nick the Fox fits the audience's idea of the fox as a pit bull who errs on the side of morality. Once more, stereotypes are at play in this situation. The last major celebrity is Sharky the Sheep, who is in the upper class and has some power. He frequently has a troupe of tigers perform for him, is the beloved ruler of Animal City, and is a great icon who supports racial equality and promotes peace.

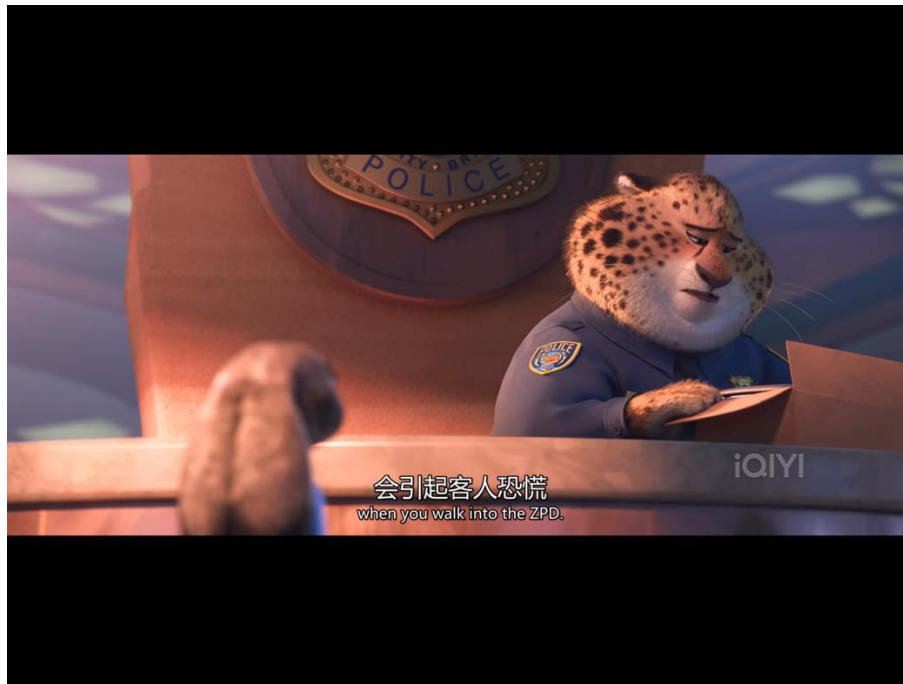*3.4 Stereotypes and Social Perceptions of Characters*

Figure 6. Judy and Cheetah in Conversation

Source: *Zootopia*, dir. Rich Moore, Byrne Howard, Gerard Bush, 2016

Despite being portrayed favorably, the protagonist nevertheless has a lot of preconceived notions about alien species. Judy is used at the beginning of the movie to show the preconceptions she carries. When Judy the rabbit visits the DMV and learns that the workers there are a bunch of sloths, she is initially shocked: "What! All of them are sloths!" Other species are likewise stereotyped by Nick the Fox, as evidenced by his remark regarding Timberwolves: "Several clueless Timberwolves! I don't understand why they feel the need to wolf whistle everything they do." "Do you believe she counts herself when she can't sleep," the joke about the deputy mayor of the sheep goes. Funny but thought-provoking. Additional stereotypes depicted in the movie include the carnivore lion mayor, who is supposed to be cruel and ruthless but lets the herbivore chief of cattle arrest him; the herbivore, who is naturally gentle and kind but ends up playing the man behind the curtain; and the gangster, who is supposed to be strong and commanding but is diminutive and tiny.

A small representation of life is art. These phenomena are actually all around us when the events of this movie are projected onto our daily lives. The preconceptions that are prevalent in the workplace in today's culture have been examined after the analysis above. In this article, I'll go through three strategies for minimizing the harm that preconceptions do to us.

The social component is the first. The pertinent institutions and departments should increase their efforts to advance equality and anti-discrimination in the workplace and to regulate businesses by strengthening pertinent laws and regulations. This will help to further foster an environment of equality at work. For instance, China's labor laws expressly forbid discrimination against female workers and provide pregnant workers with sufficient maternity and parental leave that is paid in compliance with the rules. This is a powerful barrier against bias towards female workers.

There is also the corporate level, which comes next. Promote equal employment opportunities inside the organization and make hiring decisions based on a candidate's qualifications are more crucial. Enhancing workplace culture and fostering a positive work environment are also crucial. When Nick first joins the police force in *Zootopia*, his treatment of Judy is considerably different. This is due in part to their ability to see things clearly without the "colored glasses" of others, as well as the fact that the police commissioner has recognized them and is so highly regarded by the whole police force.

And lastly, from our own unique perspective. The only thing we can do when prejudices cause us to be treated unfairly at work is to constantly put out effort on our own behalf. Like in Animal City, Judy is initially made fun of by everyone, including her parents, but she persists in taking risks and succeeding in solving significant problems on her own. All of this is a result of her own boldness and diligence. As a result, we are in control of our own fate. We only have the chance to alter how people perceive us by working hard.

4. Conclusion

Actually, to some degree or another, stereotypes may be seen in every aspect of life. Old, conventional ideas have a big influence on a lot of this. Of course, it is impossible to ignore the cognitive ease stereotypes offer to individuals. But I would like to assert that "colored glasses" are the most worthless eyewear ever created. One's ability to perceive things themselves is hampered, but one's ability to appraise other people is also impacted. In light of this, it may not be possible for us to avoid seeing the world through our own lenses when evaluating others, but we may gradually change our prejudices in social situations.

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