



Activity N°14: Cartoon characters transformed!

Analysis
European encounter

Key words: *Culture / Stereotype / Diversity*



Target groups:

- Journalism students
- Professional journalists
- Other media professionals
- Media literacy trainers

Duration: 60 minutes

Context: How is diversity incorporated into strip cartoons? And what would happen if our cartoon heroes changed their origin, gender or physical appearance? Through this short analysis and production activity, participants explore the concepts of archetype and stereotype and examine their discriminatory dimensions.

Objectives:

- **To identify the archetypal dimension of strip cartoons**
- **To give thought to the presence and role of stereotypes**
- **To discuss the discrimination conveyed by strip cartoons**

Equipment:

- Pens and paper
- Sketching equipment (optional)

Media Resources: A collection of cartoons whose heroes are well known to the public.

Observations: Prepare in advance a list of cartoon characters who could undergo a transformation. For example, Superman could be gay, the Smurfs could be Chinese, Tintin could have lost his sight, etc.

Organisation:

Class configuration	Time in minutes	Sequence of activities
GR	10'	Introduce the activity and present the various cartoons selected. Discard any that might be unknown to the participants. Distribute the cartoons to the different sub-groups.
PRS	5'	For each cartoon, alter or interchange the heroes' physical, social and cultural attributes.
PRS	20'	Each sub-group follows the general thread of the story as thus transformed. The aim is to identify the stereotypes in the cartoon and to think about the possible changes in the narrative of the story that the transformation would produce.
GR	25'	The sub-groups pool their work and discuss the functions of the stereotypes and discrimination conveyed by cartoon strips.

Variants: A storyboard could be produced with the most emblematic scenes in which the transformed heroes face discrimination. A discussion could also be held about what would happen in a story reflecting diversity.

Suggested follow-up activities:

- **Stereotypes and representations** Unit: Activity n°19. *Parody yourself!*
- **Using games and humour** Unit: Activity n°19. *Parody yourself!*