

Cultural Representation and Epistemic Violence: A Theoretical Dissection of the Stigmatization of Women through the “Gold Digger” Labeling

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Abstract

The label of ‘gold digger’ has been imposed popularly on women who seem to form relations with men to get financial security. As the nature of the concept is so dynamic and ambiguous, it has been observed that the label is employed to generalize many women who are simply engaging in hypergamy without any motives of benefits as well. The problem with the term and label is that it becomes a cultural myth having a negative connotation, distorting many realities and complexities of relations that affect many contemporary women. This paper aims to look into the narratives surrounding gold diggers in popular culture, examining the complexities and implications of these labels by doing an in-depth analysis of the term under the lens of Cultural Theories. The study will employ qualitative research methods, utilizing in-depth analysis and cultural theories such as Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Roland Barthes's concept of mythology, and Epistemic Violence by Gayatri Spivak. Scholarly literature and works in popular culture will also be employed to build the arguments. The analysis affirms the label and concept as a cultural myth, having a depoliticized speech in terms of its usage and representation to reinforce the gender inequality in its power dynamic. The labeling of a gold digger and its constructions of meaning in culture can be deemed as a form of epistemic violence to oppress women and bring backlash to the contemporary feminist discourse. The study is imperative to raise awareness on the issue and contribute to female empowerment and solidarity.

Keywords: depoliticize; epistemic violence; gold digger, myth, representation