

Bari L. Helms. *Reel Librarians: The Stereotype and Technology*. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2006. 48 pages. Advisor: Barbara B. Moran

The issue of the stereotypical image of librarians in film is examined through a content analysis study of thirteen films spanning the years 1989-2005. The topic of the film image of librarians is reviewed, and then a checklist of categories is applied to the selected films to determine whether or not portrayals of librarians are changing as the profession evolves and becomes more closely aligned with information technology.

The results of the content analysis indicated that the traditional stereotype of librarians has evolved with respect to portrayals of librarians, but the depictions of the profession itself have remained relatively static.

Headings:

Librarians in motion pictures

Libraries in motion pictures

Stereotypes of librarians

REEL LIBRARIANS: THE STEREOTYPE AND TECHNOLOGY

by
Bari L. Helms

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2006

Approved by

Barbara B. Moran

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| I: Introduction | 3 |
| II: Literature Review | 8 |
| III: Methodology | 16 |
| IV: Results of the Analysis | 19 |
| V: Discussion of Results | 30 |
| VI: Conclusion | 36 |
| Appendix A: The Films | 38 |
| Appendix B: Librarians in Film Analysis Checklist | 41 |
| Filmography | 43 |
| Bibliography | 44 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Movie Genre | 19 |
| Table 2: Type of Library | 20 |
| Table 3: Gender | 20 |
| Table 4: Age | 21 |
| Table 5: Appearance | 22 |
| Table 6: Marital Status | 23 |
| Table 7: Education | 24 |
| Table 8: Stereotypical Characteristics of Female Librarians Stereotypical Characteristics of Male Librarians | 25 |
| Table 9: Librarian Attitudes Toward Librarianship | 26 |
| Table 10: Information Technology Present Attitude Towards Information Technology | 27 |
| Table 11: Tasks Performed on the Job | 28 |

Introduction

In the film *Desk Set* when asked about her job as head of reference for the Federal Broadcasting Company, Katharine Hepburn replies, “If I didn’t work here, I’d pay to get in.”¹ Unfortunately not all films portray the librarian and archival professions in such a favorable light. In the majority of films and television portrayals, librarians are almost always older females, seen wearing a bun and modest clothes, and eyeglasses are ever-present. They are pictured as performing such typical tasks as standing or sitting behind a desk, stamping a book, standing on a ladder, holding or shelving a book, picking up a book from a table, or pushing a book truck.² The complexity of the librarian profession is too often reduced to the mundane duty of stamping books and reorganizing shelves, leaving the impression that the job of the librarian is most suited to low-level clerical staff.

Unfortunately, the prevalent old maid stereotype of the librarian is an image that has been part of our cultural heritage for decades:

In the public psyche, a librarian is a woman of indeterminate age, who wears spectacles; a person with either a timorous disposition or an austere disposition, wearing a long sleeved blouse buttoned to the neck; someone who loves silence, likes books, and suffers people. Librarians don’t laugh. They are covered with a thin film of dust. They have pale skins, which, when touched (as if one ever could) might flake and prove to be reptilian scales.³

¹ *Desk Set*. (Fox, 1957) Dir: Walter Lang.

² Ray Tevis and Brenda Tevis, *The Image of Librarians in Cinema, 1917-1999*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2005.

³ Alison Hall, “Batgirl was a Librarian,” *Canadian Library Journal* 49 (1992): 345-347, 345.

The image of the librarian as old maid has remained remarkably consistent and enduring over time and has appeared in a variety of formats including film and television.

Interestingly the related profession of archivists has escaped the librarian stereotype.

Unlike librarians, archivists are almost entirely absent from popular culture, and when they are present, they are portrayed interchangeably with librarians.

The librarian stereotype is yet another area in which it is possible to explore the representation and repression of women through cultural expression, since librarians are most commonly portrayed as females. Thus, the portrayal of the movie librarian is intrinsically linked to the depictions of women in film. In the film *Party Girl*, a librarian, godmother to the title character, laments the perceived image of women in the profession:

Melvil Dewey hired women as librarians because he believed the job didn't require any intelligence. It was a woman's job.... That means it's underpaid and undervalued. This country has more illiteracy than some of the most underdeveloped nations. Even Americans who can read, don't. They watch movies. They watch television. They watch movies on the television.⁴

Unfortunately some suspect that the negativity of the librarian stereotype is due to the predominance of women in the profession. In order to change the public perception of the profession, the popular image of librarians must be altered. But to do so the image must be fully understood. By critically examining such views of librarians it is possible to begin to imagine how the librarian stereotype can be embraced and used to the advantage of the librarian profession. Several studies have examined how the librarian stereotype has appeared in films, but these studies have neglected to examine librarians' relationship with information technology.

As computer technology redefines the profession, the librarian stereotype is once again a topic for debate. Librarians are increasingly associated with computers rather than

⁴ *Party Girl*. (First Look, 1995) Dir: Daisy von Scherler Mayer.

books, and even the area of study of the profession itself is often being referred to as “information studies” rather than “library science.” So as the librarian and even the archivist becomes more and more associated with information technology, is the stereotype of the librarian changing? Is the old maid with glasses and a bun being exchanged for a more hip, young computer geek personality?

Unfortunately, it appears that only the librarian profession itself seems to be aware of this occupational shift, and librarianship is seen more clearly by those in the profession than those outside of it. This is evidenced by ALA’s “@ your library,” a campaign to revitalize the image of America’s libraries. Through this campaign, ALA has attempted to create a new image and redefined the librarian to be a “well-trained, technology-savvy, information expert who can enrich the learning process of any library user.”⁵ But is this new image reflected in popular culture? By analyzing a number of films released after 1980, I will determine if the traditional stereotype of the librarian is still prevalent and whether or not computers and technology are becoming associated with librarians and their profession.

Such films as *Desk Set* and *Party Girl* along with television productions such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *The Librarian* offer a more comprehensive and complex view of librarianship than presented in earlier films. Stereotyped librarians have appeared in films since the days of the silent movie, and the stereotype has remained relatively unchanged throughout the twentieth century. In Frank Capra’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946), James Stewart is given the opportunity to see how his family and hometown have evolved without him. In one of the most negative portrayals of librarians, Donna Reed is

⁵ American Library Association, Public Information Office, Campaign for America’s Libraries; available from <http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/aboutyourlibrary/keymessages.htm>; accessed 15 March 2006.

portrayed as an unattractive old maid. She is seen coming out of the library dressed in a conservative suit, wearing wire-framed glasses, with her hair pulled back in a tight bun. Her features are pinched and she becomes frightened when Stewart approaches her, and she later faints when Stewart adamantly claims that she is his wife. In the rest of the film, Donna Reed is an attractive and vibrant woman. It is only as the old maid librarian that she is portrayed as a failure of womanhood.

One of the most memorable portrayals of a librarian is Shirley Jones as Marian the Librarian in *The Music Man* (1962). In the film, Robert Preston portrays a traveling con man who is out to steal from the residents of River City, Iowa. Despite being portrayed as a spinster, Shirley Jones possesses a keen intellect and is the only person who can see through the con. She believes that the purpose of the public library is to improve “River City’s cultural level;”⁶ she even makes scandalous works such as Balzac and Chaucer available to her patrons. In the 1978 romantic comedy *Foul Play*, Goldie Hawn portrays an attractive, young librarian at the San Francisco Public Library. Hawn has a quiet lifestyle, but she is often seen discussing men and relationships with her co-workers.

In the 1957 Spencer Tracy—Katharine Hepburn romantic comedy *Desk Set*, Spencer Tracy is the engineer of the Electromagnetic Memory and Research Arithmetical Calculator (EMARAC) hired by the Federal Broadcasting Company to determine the feasibility of using EMARAC in the reference department. Hepburn, the head of the reference department, along with her group of competent, efficient, and lively librarians, fear that this new technology will make their jobs obsolete and that the machines will replace the librarians. A similar fear has arisen more recently as some both inside and

⁶ *The Music Man* (Warner Brothers, 1962). Dir: Morton DaCosta.

outside of the library profession believed that the internet and computer technology would replace librarians. However, in a world that is information rich with direct access available to the user, it is the librarians who are information smart and are still needed to help guide users through the plethora of information available. This content analysis study will examine the current librarian stereotype as depicted in film and will attempt to determine whether or not information technology is portrayed as a vital component of the profession.

Literature Review

Stereotypes are created through a process of reducing individuals to a few essential characteristics that are exaggerated, simplified, and understood as natural. Stereotypes shape the perceived normal into an imagined community and send those who are different, the stereotyped, into exile.⁷ Many in the Library Science field have examined the application of stereotypes to the librarian image. Literature on the stereotype has addressed: 1.) what are the particulars of the old-maid stereotype as portrayed in novels, films, commercials, and popular culture generally; 2.) how close is the representation to reality; and 3.) what should librarians do to combat the negative representations. Previous studies have attempted to discover if librarians really do possess the traits attributed to them and whether the library profession happens to attract these types of individuals. In 1982, Pauline Wilson published a definitive study of the librarian stereotype – *Stereotype and Status: Librarians in the United States*. Wilson's quantitative analysis approach studied how librarians depicted themselves in journal articles, news items, and book chapters from 1921 to 1978. According to her findings, no member of the profession believed that the stereotype referred to them personally, but they did believe that the stereotype did in fact accurately reflect others in the profession.⁸

⁷ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Retrospection: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall. London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997, 249.

⁸ Pauline Wilson, *Stereotype and Status: Librarians in the United States*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982.

Since the days of Melvil Dewey, librarians have been concerned with the public images of libraries and librarians. Dewey himself confronted the image of librarians in the premier issue of *Library Journal* by remarking that “the time was when a library was very like a museum and a librarian was a mouser in dusty books.”⁹ Libraries quickly became a preferred profession for women because it was, at the time, one of only a few socially acceptable occupations. The first woman library clerk was hired by the Boston Public Library in 1852, but by 1878, two-thirds of library workers were women. The number of women in the profession only continued to grow. In 1910 78.5% of library staff were women and by 1920 the number had risen to almost 90%,¹⁰ so it is no surprise that the stereotype of the librarian is a woman.

It is unclear when the stereotypical librarian as an elderly, or at least middle-aged, unattractive woman with her hair pulled tightly into a bun and glasses perched on her nose became so prevalent in popular culture. In fact, in her study on librarians in fiction, Rosalie McReynolds argues that if the old maid stereotype is to be “found anywhere, it is within the profession itself, and with social attitudes held about – and by – women.”¹¹ Nevertheless, the stereotype has been a recurring topic for contention within the profession. Over the years two distinct views on the issue have developed from the ideas of two noted librarians. In 1907, Edmund Lester Pearson proclaimed:

Is there some particular look of weakness or ill health that marks librarians as a class? Some astigmatism, stoop of the shoulders, pallor of the complexion or general dustiness of appearance that labels us like one of our own books?... What is the badge by which one knows the librarian? Some will immediately answer, “a pair of spectacles, a black alpaca coat, silk skull-cap, straw cuffs and rubber heeled shoes,” and indeed one or another of these things may often be found accompanying him. But they are not his exclusive possession, nor are they with

⁹ *The American Library Journal* I (30 September 1876).

¹⁰ Norman D. Stevens, “The Last Librarian,” *American Libraries*, vol. 32, no. 9 (October 2001): 60-64, 61.

¹¹ Rosalie McReynolds, “A Heritage Dismissed,” *Library Journal*, vol. 110 (November 1985): 27.

him when he goes forth into the world. As for the sex which in numbers predominates the profession we resolutely decline to be drawn into a discussion of that phase of the subject, other than to note their curious fondness for a pince-nez that is fastened to the hair by a small golden chain.¹²

Pearson's brief allusion to women is one of the earliest associations of glasses with the female librarian. Somehow this stereotypical image of a librarian found its way out of the stacks and into popular culture. Years later in 1962, Lawrence Clark Powell dismissed Pearson's views by proclaiming that what was unique about librarians was their diversity of personality. In the 1980s, Norman Stevens worried that a "new stereotype which represents the librarian as the contemporary professional lacking all distinction"¹³ would become prevalent. Today, with the advent of the Internet, librarians are now able to proclaim their individuality through such web sites as "The Lipstick Librarian," The Bellydancing Librarian, and even "The Librarian Avenger."¹⁴

Despite the efforts of many librarians, the stereotype still persists, and librarians have often complained of the consequences brought on by their stereotypical image. One librarian responded to a "For Better or Worse" comic strip published in the 1980s:

Will this stereotype ever die? The cartoon is innocent; the joke is even cute; but it perpetuates the nasty image. I sometimes wonder if I would have chosen to become a librarian if I had realized how frequently I would be subjected to cracks, comments, and, worse, the unspoken prejudices. As I'm sure you realize, librarians must work harder than most professionals to win the respect they deserve.¹⁵

In her recent article on the stereotype, Amy Duncan complained that the general public's view of the work of librarians is that "all librarians do is sit around all day reading books,

¹² Edmund Lester Pearson, *The Librarian*. Scarecrow, 1976, p. 25-26.

¹³ Norman Stevens, "Our Image in the 80's," *Library Trends*, vol. 34 (Spring 1988): 825-851, 848.

¹⁴ Stevens, *The Last Librarian*, 62.

¹⁵ Linda Wallace, "The Image – And What you can do about it in the Year of the Librarian," *American Libraries*, vol. 20, no. 1 (January 1989): 22-24.

checking books in and out of the library, drinking coffee, and shushing patrons who dare to speak above a whisper.”¹⁶ It is this undervaluing of the profession that validates the study of the stereotypical image in popular culture.

Most studies of librarians in film have found that while the old stereotype does exist in movies, the stereotype is balanced by more compelling and positive portrayals of librarians. The two films *Desk Set* and *Party Girl*, which are included in my study, are two films which focus on the library profession as a whole and offer interesting characterizations of librarians. Released in 1957, *Desk Set* presents the inner workings of a film company’s reference department. Spencer Tracy has been hired to install a computer in the department that could endanger the jobs of the lively reference staff headed by Katharine Hepburn. The librarians are single women who are knowledgeable, capable, and efficient professionals. Going against stereotype, the women are stylishly dressed with fashionable coiffures, and, in addition, they are seen singing, dancing, and drinking champagne in the library. The film *Party Girl*, released in 1995, is a coming of age story of young New Yorker played by Parker Posey who turns to her librarian godmother for a job. At first Posey hates her position as a library clerk, but she soon falls in love with the profession and trades her stereotyped image of party girl for that of librarian. The two films are about the library profession rather than just using a library as a setting or prop for another narrative. Unfortunately, these two films are unique in their favorable portrayals of libraries, prompting the development of extensive annotated filmographies and a few published examinations of the librarian stereotype.

¹⁶ Amy M. Duncan, “Caught Between the Stacks and a Hard Place: Dealing with Librarian Stereotypes,” *Louisiana Libraries*, vol. 66, no. 4 (Spring 2004): 3-5, 3.

In their work *The Image of Librarians in Cinema, 1917-1999*, librarians Ray and Brenda Tevis examine the librarian image in American films by analyzing the total character of the librarian as emphasized in the film including personal attributes, socio-economic status, and entanglements with the opposite sex. The authors do not rely on the works of others such as film critics, but rather use their own research gleaned from their own systematic description of the texts. After analyzing numerous films, the authors found that the stereotypical image of librarians remained relatively unchanged and that on the whole, the depictions of libraries and librarians in film changed very little throughout the twentieth century. The authors go on to note that “any filmgoer of any generation of the twentieth century would immediately recognize a librarian in any motion picture released during any year of the century.”¹⁷ The typical characteristics of age, glasses, and hairstyle were unchanged, and the only significant change was in the clothing. With the advent of Technicolor and DeLuxe Color, librarians were provided with a more colorful, dynamic wardrobe; although, most librarians were still garbed in darker, more sedate hues. Ultimately, the authors declared that in spite of ardent complaints from librarians, the stereotype remained unchanged in motion pictures made during the twentieth century.

In an unpublished thesis written in 1990 entitled “The Celluloid Librarian,” William King also examines the stereotypical image of librarians with respect to motion pictures. King sought to determine whether or not the stereotypical image that appears in literature is also present in films. King examined a list of seventeen films ranging in dates from 1945 to 1990. King acknowledged that the stereotype does in fact exist, but that it is

¹⁷ Ray Tevis and Brenda Tevis, *The Image of Librarians in Cinema, 1917-1999*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2005, p. 189.

counteracted with unique characters. King finally concluded that “when a librarian becomes the main character of a motion picture today [1990], he or she is much more likely to be depicted as a well rounded individual possessing a wide array of human qualities” but in the case of stock background characters, the stereotype persists.¹⁸

In “The Librarian Stereotype and the Movies,” Stephen Walker and V. Lonnie Lawson examine thirty films from the 1920s to the 1980s to determine the character traits and job duties of librarians, and they find that librarians appear in small numbers in both brief scenes and starring roles. They discovered that the “purest librarian stereotypes” are those that have a small amount of screen time.¹⁹ They also acknowledge that their films were chosen primarily from the time of the pre-computer library, but they maintain that books are uniquely associated with librarians, a stereotype frequently depicted on film. They conclude that a film librarian is “frequently female, and she is likely to be introverted, unmarried, prim, shy, and young” and that “attributes such as timidity and drabness are prevalent.”²⁰

In their work, “Librarians and Party Girls,” Marie Radford and Gary Radford apply cultural studies to the stereotypical image and examine how the stereotypes of party girl and librarian are expressed in the film *Party Girl*. The authors argue that the field of cultural studies allows for a rethinking of the basic assumptions that have been made by the profession. The authors further state that it is not enough to ask how the librarian or party girl is represented but it is necessary to ask to what use the representation is being put. The study is not interested in the characteristics of the

¹⁸ William H. King, “The Celluloid Librarian: The Portrayal of Librarians in Motion Pictures,” MSLS Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1990, p. 33.

¹⁹ Stephen Walker and V. Lonnie Lawson, “The Librarian Stereotype and the Movies,” *The Journal of Academic Media Librarianship*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 16-28, 18.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 25-26.

stereotype but in the ways that the image affects librarianship. The authors advise that librarians can challenge the stereotype through two approaches – by reversing the stereotype or by substituting a range of positive images for the negative imagery that continues to dominate popular representation.²¹

In “The Image of Librarians: Substance or Shadow?” Patricia Schuman argues that a poor image of librarians can hinder the profession’s growth and that the negative stereotype limits the status and salaries of librarians. Schuman maintains that librarians too often focus on the physical aspects of the stereotype and argues that the critical problem of the stereotype is that it indicates a lack of awareness of what librarians actually do. Schuman argues that the focus “should not be on how attractive people think we are (or even how smart) but how useful, necessary, and important we are to their educational, research, and everyday lives and work.”²² Schuman goes on to assert that librarianship is a “profession of searching and discovery. While we are often thought of as gatekeepers, in actuality librarians can be gateways. Librarians provide access and dissemination, not just storage and protection of knowledge.”²³

So, the debate over the librarian image and its stereotype in popular culture continues, and several studies have examined how that stereotype has been portrayed in films. However, no study has investigated how information technology has altered the traditional stereotype. As librarians are redefining their profession in light of new digital and computer technologies, the stereotype of librarians and librarianship must be

²¹ Marie L. Radford and Gary P. Radford, “Librarians and Party Girls: Cultural Studies and the Meaning of the Librarian,” *Library Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 1 (2003): 54-69, 67.

²² Patricia Schuman, “The Image of Librarians: Substance of Shadow?” *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, vol. 16, no. 2 (May 1990): 86-89, 87.

²³ *Ibid*, 88.

analyzed in order to determine if the changing nature of the profession is being represented in popular culture.

Methodology

Over the years, librarians have criticized the stereotypical image of librarians in popular culture, especially in literature. However, only recently has attention been given to how librarians have been portrayed in films and television. Films are cultural texts that do not simply reflect history and society but are also integral components in the formation of that history and society. Most cultural theorists argue that cultural texts are studied for the ideological work that they perform rather than for the ideological work that they purportedly reflect.²⁴ As Americans are spending increasingly greater portions of their leisure time consuming audiovisual forms of media such as movies and television, it is important to examine how librarians and the library profession are portrayed through this medium.

As with any content analysis study, the first step is to determine the body of work to be analyzed. Over the years several filmographies have been compiled documenting the appearance of librarians in film. One of the best and most comprehensive filmographies is “Librarians in the Movies: An Annotated Filmography” compiled by Martin Raish.²⁵ The filmography, last updated in October 2005, is identified as an “ongoing attempt to expand our collective memory, to find a more comprehensive and

²⁴ Stephen W. Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1999, 3.

²⁵ Martin Raish, “Librarians in the Movies: An Annotated Filmography;” available from <http://emp.byui.edu/raishm/films/introduction.html>; accessed 1 March 2006.

defensible basis for our acceptance or rejection of the ‘typical movie librarian’.”²⁶ The list includes 550 Hollywood films broken into four categories. Group A includes 175 films in which someone says or does something that clearly identifies them as a librarian whether it is as a professional, clerk, student assistant, or some other type of library worker. Some of the librarians have major roles while others make only minor appearances. Group B is composed of 150 films in which a library is used for research, study, or some other purpose in which librarians are only present in order to identify the setting. Group C includes 50 films in which no library or librarian is shown, only mentioned. The 175 films in Group D are films that have not yet been viewed by Raish and so they lack an adequate description to make it possible for the films to be placed in a particular category.

Films Selected

I selected my films from the 175 films in Group A. Out of that list only about fifty films were released after 1980, and of that fifty only thirteen include substantial librarian characters. Since the nature of my study requires more than a brief glimpse of a librarian, only films that contain a significant librarian character in either a starring or supporting role were selected. (See Appendix A for an annotated filmography of the films discussed.) The list of films selected for this study spans the time period from 1989 to 2005, and all are Hollywood films except for the two television productions – *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the popular television series with the significant librarian character Rupert Giles, and the made especially for television film *The Librarian: Quest for the*

²⁶ Ibid.

Spear. These two television productions were chosen because of the important role of libraries in the narrative. Like *Desk Set*, *The Librarian* is a film that not only features a librarian but that also focuses on the workings of a library. Similarly, the school library in *Buffy* was featured in each weekly episode and often provided the right information needed to save the world.

For this study I considered a librarian to be anyone performing professional duties in a library whether they are specifically referred to as a librarian or not. In two cases, *Party Girl* and *The Mummy*, there were two significant librarian characters in each film, and the two supporting characters had substantial enough roles to also be included in the study.

It is difficult to examine the elements of a film as the images are fleeting and are the creative product of many artists – the director, writer, and, especially important to this study, the actor. For this study, the method of content analysis is used to determine systematically the portrayal of librarians in the films examined. I have created an analysis check list, Appendix B, which attempts to isolate the characteristics common to the librarian stereotype and to determine the presence or absence of information technology. The categories comprising the list attempt to isolate the characteristics common to the stereotypical image of the librarian as the unattractive spinster who is more concerned with quiet and orderliness than with user satisfaction. Added to the list for this particular study are categories to determine the presence and influences of information technology in libraries.

Results of the Analysis

In this section the results of the content analysis are discussed by category. Each characteristic is presented in tables representing the number of occurrences and percentages. The first category studied was film genre in order to determine what types of movies contained librarian characters. The results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Movie Genre

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Drama | 3 (23%) |
| Comedy | 4 (31%) |
| Action | 5 (38%) |
| Horror | 0 |
| Other | 1 (8%) |

Genre was assigned according to the standard classifications used by film guides and databases. Of the thirteen films considered in this study, over half were either comedies or action films. The one television series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, was classified as an action film for the purposes of this study. The one film classified in the “other” category is *Because of Winn-Dixie* which is categorized as a family film.

The next results category, presented in Table 2, displays the type of library portrayed in the films.

Table 2
Type of Library

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Public | 6 (46%) |
| Academic | 3 (23%) |
| Special | 1 (8%) |
| Archive/Museum | 3 (23%) |

Public libraries are the most commonly portrayed type of libraries in films, with academic and archives/museums also frequently presented. For action films, the most common type of library is an archive or museum, with both the National Archives and the British Museum represented on film.

The next category looked at was the gender of the librarian. As can be seen in Table 3, the results show that the film industry conforms to the stereotype by portraying the majority of librarians as women.

Table 3
Gender

| | |
|--------|----------|
| Female | 10 (67%) |
| Male | 5 (33%) |

In fact, the numbers of women librarians on film are almost identical to those found in the profession. In 1998, ALA published a status report on the ethnic and racial diversity of librarians and found that in public libraries 79% of librarians are women. In academic libraries women make up 68% of the population.²⁷ So in the case of gender, films not only conform to the stereotype but also to the realities of the profession.

The categorization of librarian characters in the films by age is encouragingly weighted toward the young. As can be seen in Table 4 the vast majority of librarians featured in recent films appear to be in their 20's or 30's.

Table 4

Age

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Under 30 | 5 (33%) |
| 30-50 | 7 (47%) |
| Over 50 | 3 (20%) |

The age of librarians was determined by references made by the characters in the film. If no age reference was made, the approximate age was determined by the actor's age at the time of the film's production. The age as well as gender and appearance of librarians in the media is often cited as a major aspect of the negative stereotype. Of the three librarians considered to be middle aged, two are significantly positive characters. Rupert Giles of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has been described as doing "more for the image of the profession than anything in the past 50 years, with the possible exception of Katharine

²⁷ Mary Jo Lynch, "Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among Librarians: A Status Report," available from <http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/reports/raciaethnic.htm>; accessed 1 March 2006.

Hepburn in *Desk Set*.”²⁸ Giles is an attractive hero librarian whose love of books and research is the key to saving the world in most episodes. The only librarian categorized as “Over 50” was Eva Marie Saint’s character in *Because of Winn Dixie*, who is still an extremely positive character, despite the fact that she is first seen napping in the library. She is shown most often interacting with the children of the community.

The next category examined in Table 5 was the physical appearance of film librarians; this is obviously an especially difficult category to analyze.

Table 5
Appearance

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Attractive | 13 (87%) |
| Average | 2 (13%) |
| Unattractive | 0 |
| Not Indicated | 0 |

Because of the visual nature of films, determining the attractiveness of librarian film characters is much more difficult than gauging the appearance of their literary counterparts. The actor portrays the physical attributes of the character, leaving the judgment of appearance up to the audience. For this study, attractiveness was determined by the comments and reactions of other characters in the films. In the majority of the films viewed, the librarian was the main character who was always characterized as attractive. In almost every film, the librarians had substantial roles and were the love

²⁸ Grace Anne A. DeCandido, “Bibliographic Good vs. Evil in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,” *American Libraries* (September 1999): 44-47, 44.

interests for the leading characters, and were therefore considered to be attractive. The two librarians classified as average in appearance were supporting characters who conformed to the traditional librarian stereotype.

The spinster or old maid is a common element of the librarian stereotype for women. Even for men, being unmarried, usually not by choice, is a recurring theme for librarians. Table 6 indicates that being single is a common characteristics among librarians in film, but those numbers are deceiving.

Table 6
Marital Status

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Single | 10 (67%) |
| Married | 3 (20%) |
| Divorced | 0 |
| Widowed | 0 |
| Not Indicated | 2 (13%) |

The majority of the single librarians (seven of the ten portrayals) were the love interests of the films' leading characters. The only actual old maid categorization would go to Eva Marie Saint's character, Miss Franny, in *Because of Winn-Dixie*. When asked why she never married, Miss Franny proclaims that she never had a need. When told that she does not "have anyone," Miss Franny responds with, "but I have all these books."²⁹ Despite being portrayed as an old maid, the character Miss Franny is energetic and appears quite

²⁹ *Because of Winn-Dixie*. (20th Century Fox, 2005) Dir: Wayne Wang.

happy with her lifestyle choices. She is invested in the community and by the movie's end she also has a potential love interest. The other two single librarians who were not paired as a couple by film's end were Chris O'Donnell's character in *Scent of a Woman* and *Buffy's* Rupert Giles. O'Donnell portrays a teenager at a prestigious boarding school who works at the library to help cover tuition costs. The other single librarian is Rupert Giles who engaged in several relationships throughout the show's run.

The next characteristic studied was education. In Table 7, the educational profiles of the librarian characters are presented, and as can be seen in a little over half of the films, the educational status of librarians is not indicated.

Table 7
Education

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Undergraduate Degree or Less | 2 (13%) |
| Master's | 4 (27%) |
| PhD | 1 (7%) |
| Not Indicated | 8 (53%) |

A character's education was determined by a reference to a degree or a specific field of study. Only two characters state that they have a master's degree in library science – Rene Russo in *Major League* and Sasha von Scherler in *Party Girl*. The other two characters with master's degrees are a medical school graduate in *Men of Honor* and Noah Wylie in *The Librarian* who is said to hold twenty-two college degrees. The only character with a PhD is Diane Kruger in *National Treasure* who is referred to as Dr.

Chase. Kruger works at the National Archives; although, it is unclear what position she holds. Her field of study is not indicated, but she refers to herself as someone who is trained in handling antique documents. The small references given to the librarians' level of education may be indicative of the small regard given to the characters' actual profession or of an ignorance on the part of filmmakers about the level of education required for the profession.

Next, the presence of stereotypical characteristics of librarians was analyzed and the results are described in Table 8.

Table 8

Stereotypical Characteristics of Female Librarians

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Glasses | 5 (50%) |
| Bun | 3 (30%) |

Stereotypical Characteristics of Male Librarians

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Glasses | 2 (40%) |
| Receding/Bald | 2 (40%) |

One of the major features of the librarian stereotype is the presence of glasses and buns for female librarians and receding hair lines for men. Most of the characterizations seem to be moving away from these visual stereotypes; although half of the women are still portrayed as wearing glasses. But, in the majority of the films, glasses and buns for

female librarians are only present while the character is working at the library. The glasses and upswept hair serve as an additional prop to indicate the library setting.

The set of categories displayed in Table 9 indicates the attitudes of the librarian characters towards the profession itself.

Table 9

Librarian Attitudes Toward Librarianship

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Not Indicated |
|-------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|
| Profession | 11 (73%) | 1 (7%) | 1 (7%) | 2 (13%) |
| Co-Workers | 2 (13%) | 2 (13%) | 4 (27%) | 7 (47%) |
| Patrons | 5 (33%) | 0 | 2 (13%) | 8 (53%) |

Librarian's attitudes were measured by examining their interactions with patrons and co-workers. Attitudes toward the profession were determined by any comments made concerning libraries, research, or any other aspect of libraries. For example, Rene Russo's character in *Major League* was determined to have a positive attitude toward librarianship because she chose the career over pursuing her life as a professional athlete, an Olympic level swimmer.

Interestingly despite the increase of information technology throughout society, information technology is present in only 38% of the films, and even in those films, technology is mentioned or merely represented by the presence of a computer. The presence of information technology within the films is displayed in Table 10.

Table 10**Information Technology Present**

| | |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | 5 (38%) |
| No | 8 (62%) |

Attitude Towards Information Technology

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| Positive | 3 (60%) |
| Negative | 1 (20%) |
| Not Indicated | 1 (20%) |

Never does a librarian actually use any form of information technology to complete a job task. However, in *Party Girl*, Parker Posey does mention having used Telnet to answer a reference question, but when we see Posey assisting a patron she is always consulting the card catalog. In *National Treasure*, the librarian Diane Krueger and treasure hunter Nicholas Cage are searching for a treasure with a map written in invisible ink on the back of the Declaration of Independence. Krueger and Cage rely on their own historical knowledge and education to follow the clues to the treasure, but it is the villains who must consult the Internet for answers. The only negative attitude toward information technology is exhibited by Rupert Giles in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The Internet is often used on the series to find information that cannot be revealed through Giles's books, but Giles, in his forties, is wary and cautious about the new technology. Giles confesses that computers fill him with a "childlike terror."

In order to ascertain how films represent the actual responsibilities of the librarian a tally was kept of the tasks performed by the cinematic librarian. These results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11
Tasks Performed on the Job

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Reference | 4 |
| Circulation | 4 |
| Shelving Materials | 5 |
| Stamping Books | 2 |
| Cataloging | 1 |
| Fundraising | 2 |
| Storytelling | 2 |

Rarely was a librarian seen performing more than one task at a time, and most often the task was performed while the librarian was engaged in a conversation relevant to the film's plot. The only film that represented the hectic nature of the librarian's job was *Party Girl*. Sitting behind the front desk, checking books in and out, and shelving materials were the most common activities of film librarians, when in reality these activities are most often performed by library paraprofessionals. In the films where reference tasks were performed, reference questions were not of the typical variety. Answers to reference queries were used to either find a hidden treasure or to help save the world from destruction.

The results indicate that the stereotype of the librarian is evolving into a much younger and more attractive version of the old maid image. Certain stereotypical characteristics such as glasses remain, but the librarian is no longer portrayed as unattractive, introverted, and sexually repressed. Unfortunately, the results also indicate that portrayals of the profession itself have remained relatively unchanged. Information technology is not yet a vital component of librarianship, and filmmakers are still ignorant of the intelligent and dynamic aspects of the librarian profession.

Discussion of Results

Recent portrayals of librarians have come a long way from Marian the Librarian in *The Music Man* and Donna Reed in *It's a Wonderful Life*. The current study of the image of librarians in film does not attempt to analyze the librarian stereotype as a whole, but instead focuses on depictions of the librarians in the last twenty-five years. The study attempts to determine whether or not the portrayals of librarians are changing as the profession evolves and becomes more closely aligned with technology. Three main areas of the stereotype are addressed in the study – physical appearance, behavioral traits, and the professional nature of librarians.

The predominance of librarians in action films and comedies could be a positive sign since in these films librarians are taken out of their stereotypical serious surroundings. Action films especially portray librarians acting counter to their stereotype. Both *The Mummy* and *National Treasure* contain librarian characters who could best be classified as archivists because of their work with documents and artifacts. In addition, both of the librarians in these two films are major participants in the action sequences. In *The Mummy*, Rachel Weisz portrays a librarian who is a bit ditzy and clumsy. When we first see her, she knocks over an entire room full of shelves, but through the course of the film we see her grow and mature. It is Weisz's knowledge that leads her group to the treasure. However, it is also Weisz's intellectual curiosity that brings the title character back to life when she reads *The Book of the Dead*. In this case the librarian was wrong

when she stated: “It’s just a book, and no harm ever came from reading a book.”³⁰ By the film’s sequel, *The Mummy Returns*, Weisz has evolved into a martial arts expert and is the instigator in that film’s treasure expedition.

The physical portrayals of librarians are on the whole positive with such actors as Rene Russo, Julia Roberts, and Tom Hanks portraying librarians. When the librarian is the main character, he or she is almost always portrayed as attractive. Librarians in smaller roles conform to the stereotype, allowing filmmakers to create characters whom the audience can immediately identify as librarians. In one of the most recent films, *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear*, Noah Wylie portrays a librarian as bookish, intelligent, and socially inept. In the made for television production, thirty something Wylie is a professional student still living at home with his mother, but after accepting a position as librarian at the Metropolis Public Library, Wylie becomes a comic action hero who is responsible for protecting the world’s treasures that include the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail. At first glance Wylie conforms to the typical male stereotype, but here the librarian is portrayed as a tough protector of knowledge. In one scene, when Bob Newhart’s character faces surprise over his ability to take out a bad guy, he responds with, “I was a librarian, too, you know.”³¹

Female librarians in films are increasingly being depicted as independent and successful professionals. The female lead of *Major League* portrayed by Rene Russo is a highly successful single librarian who claims to have assembled one of the best special collections departments in the country. She is engaged to an attorney but is pursued by the leading man Tom Berenger, a major league baseball player. She is portrayed as an

³⁰ *The Mummy*. (Universal, 1999) Dir: Stephen Sommers.

³¹ *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear*. (Turner Network Television, 2004) Dir: Peter Winther.

independent woman who has chosen the librarian profession instead of pursuing her career as a professional athlete. So while some stereotypical characteristics such as glasses remain, film librarians are becoming much more attractive and engaging individuals.

However, filmmakers continue to exhibit relatively little knowledge of the librarian profession. Bob Newhart's character in *The Librarian* explains that "Nobody can understand the mysteries of the library unless they experience it."³² Apparently, most filmmakers have spent little time researching the librarian profession as little recognition is given to the relationship between librarians and patrons. However, some librarian characters do profess a strong love for the librarian profession. In the film *The Mummy*, the characters are engaged on a treasure hunt, but the librarian character, portrayed by Rachel Weisz, is searching for "one of the most famous books in history," made from pure gold – a search she describes as her life's pursuit. Early in the film she boasts of her knowledge of Egyptian history and hieroglyphics as well as being the only person "within a thousand miles who can properly code and catalog a library." As the others search for treasure, Weisz searches for the book and other historical artifacts, and it is her knowledge of history that ultimately leads the group to the treasure. When the rather mercenary male lead Brendan Fraser attempts to understand her, she replies with a response that is complimentary to the library profession:

Weisz: "Egypt is in my blood. You see my father was a very famous explorer, and he loved Egypt so much that he married my mother who was an Egyptian and quite an adventurer herself."

Fraser: "I get your father and I get your mother and I get him, but what are you doing here?"

³² Ibid.

Weisz: “Look, I may not be an explorer or an adventurer or a treasure seeker or a gunfighter, Mr. O’Connell, but I am proud of what I am.”

Fraser: “And what is that?”

Weisz: “I am a librarian.”³³

In addition, little time is spent on how librarians interact with patrons or co-workers, with these attitudes going unmentioned in half of the films analyzed. The relationship with patrons is especially ignored with very few scenes depicting these interactions. The two librarians who are considered to be negative toward patrons are Parker Posey from *Party Girl* and Rupert Giles from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Rupert Giles often becomes so consumed with saving the world that he forgets that he is a school librarian and thus is caught by surprise when students enter the library to search for materials. In *Party Girl*, Parker Posey’s character is also often negative toward patrons. Posey is often seen behind the reference desk mechanically stamping books, but she soon becomes enamored with the library profession and learns the Dewey Decimal System. Wanting to use her hard won knowledge, Posey loudly reprimands a male library user who has just mis-shelved a book:

Excuse me, what are you doing? Yeah, you.... Were you just putting that book away? It looked like you were just putting that book away. I guess you didn’t know we have a system for putting books away here. You know, I’m curious, you were just randomly putting that book on the shelf, is that it? You’ve just given us a great idea. I mean, why are we wasting our time with the Dewey Decimal System when your system is so much easier, much easier. We’ll just put the books anywhere. Hear that everybody? Our friend here has given us a great idea. We’ll just put the books any damn place we choose! We don’t care! Right? Isn’t that right?³⁴

³³ *The Mummy*.

³⁴ *Party Girl*. (First Look, 1995) Dir: Daisy von Scherler Mayer.

When another librarian forces Posey to take a break she responds with, “I just want to do a good job.”³⁵ In this scene, Posey represents the stereotypical idea that librarians are happiest when the books are on the shelves and in their proper places.

Technology is present in several of the films; however, librarians are never shown actually using the technology. Despite the presence of online catalogs, librarians are still shown using the antiquated card catalog. In the film *Party Girl*, information technology is alluded to when a librarian wishes that she was in graduate school now because of all the “new technologies.” In addition, Parker Posey is told to shut down all of the computers when she locks up the library. However, we never see any of this technology as Parker Posey is always shown stamping books or using the card catalog. In the film *Because of Winn-Dixie*, technology is represented by a computer on the librarian’s desk. But when the librarian is shown performing professional duties, she is shown merely to be stamping books. The presence of information technology in these films is due more to its pervasiveness in society as a whole than it is to an awareness of its relationship with libraries and librarians. None of the films exhibit a concrete connection between librarians and technology. In *The Librarian*, when Noah Wylie excitedly tells his mother about his new job as the librarian, she responds: “Sixteen years of college and you’re putting books on shelves.”³⁶ Unfortunately with film librarians still portrayed as primarily shelving materials and checking books in and out, the traditional stereotype is still being perpetuated in popular culture.

It is apparent from this study that the stereotypical portrayal of librarians is evolving. Film librarians are young, attractive, and single by choice. No longer do we see

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear*.

the “maiden lady librarian”³⁷ prevalent in such earlier works as *The Music Man*. Today, when the librarian is the main character, few stereotypical characteristics are present. However, the stereotypes associated with the profession of librarianship remains the same. While librarians are engaging and intelligent, the profession remains a dull one comprised primarily of shelving books and guarding materials from noisy patrons. This study indicates that the librarian characters look favorably on their chosen careers, but the few references that films make to the career itself indicate that filmmakers have paid little attention to the library profession.

³⁷ *The Music Man*.

Conclusion

In the film *The Librarian*, when Noah Wylie arrives for his job interview he is asked what makes him think he could be the librarian. To which he replies, “I’ve read a lot of books.”³⁸ This study has attempted to determine if the librarian stereotype in film has been refuted as the profession itself is evolving due to advances in information technology. Unfortunately, the film industry still portrays librarians to be bookish types who spend their days shelving materials and occasionally working the circulation desk. In only one film, *Party Girl*, was the juggling of management, customer service, and scholarship portrayed, and even this favorable portrayal of libraries neglected to include technology in the workings of the library.

The solution to the stereotype most commonly heralded by librarians is the demand for a more positive and accurate representation of librarians in popular culture.³⁹ But librarians have also struggled in defining what they believe to be a favorable portrayal of the librarian. For example, the librarian character in the popular television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has been both praised and criticized for his representation of the profession. Giles has been described as an “icon and image” for the profession and as a “librarian model who is elegant, deeply educated, well (if fussily) dressed,

³⁸ *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear*. (Turner Network Television, 2004) Dir: Peter Winther.

³⁹ Pauline Wilson, *Stereotype and Status: Librarians in the United States*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982.

handsome, and charged with eroticism.”⁴⁰ But Giles has also been described as the “professional-image slayer” who “provides one of the most negative and over-simplified images of a librarian ever depicted by the entertainment industry.”⁴¹ Giles is often criticized for stocking his collection with occult works that have little value to the wider student population, but he is most criticized for his fear of and refusal to use computer technology.

Librarians should stop being concerned with the physical image of librarians as an unattractive old maid as this study has shown that librarians are increasingly being portrayed as attractive, dynamic individuals. The traditional stereotype is now used primarily when a filmmaker needs to rely on a stock characterization that the audience will immediately recognize as a librarian. Librarians, instead, must be concerned about how the profession itself is portrayed in films. Filmmakers still do not have an accurate sense of the profession, especially about the information technologies now associated with librarianship.

The computer belongs to many professions, and it is the book that has always been associated with libraries. The book, rather than information, is too often portrayed as the tool of librarians. Information technology is slowly creeping into film representations of libraries, but books and knowledge remain the primary tools of librarians. This is most evident in *National Treasure* in which the title characters, one of which is a librarian, rely on documents and their own knowledge while the villains must rely on the Internet for their research. Despite the influence of technology in the profession, the film librarian has yet to embrace information technology.

⁴⁰ Grace Anne A. DeCandido, “Bibliographic Good vs. Evil in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,” *American Libraries* (September 1999): 44-47, 45.

⁴¹ John Cullen, “Rupert Giles, The Professional-Image Slayer,” *American Libraries* (May 2000): 42.

Appendix A: The Films

It's a Wonderful Life – In the holiday classic, Jimmy Stewart contemplates suicide and is given the opportunity to see what life would have been like if he had never been born. In their real life, his wife played by Donna Reed is an attractive, vibrant woman, but in the alternate reality, she is the stereotypical old maid librarian.

1946 / black and white / RKO Radio Pictures / director: Frank Capra / cast: James Stewart, Donna Reed (librarian), Lionel Barrymore.

Desk Set – Katharine Hepburn plays the head of a television network's reference department which is threatened by the installation of a new computer engineered by Spencer Tracy.

1957 / black and white / 20th Century Fox / director: Walter Lang / cast: Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn (librarian), Gig Young.

The Music Man – A charming con man sells the citizens of River City, Iowa on the idea of an all boys' band until his love for the town's librarian leads to his reform.

1962 / Warner Brothers / director: Morton DaCosta / cast: Robert Preston, Shirley Jones (librarian), Buddy Hackett.

Foul Play – A romantic comedy in which Goldie Hawn is unwittingly drawn into mystery and intrigue when she witnesses the murder of an undercover cop.

1978 / Paramount Pictures / director: Colin Higgins / cast: Goldie Hawn (librarian), Chevy Chase, Dudley Moore.

Major League – The new owner of the Cleveland Indians puts together a purposefully horrible team so that they will lose and she can move the team to another city. When the plot is discovered, the team wins to spite the owner and comes away with the division title.

1989 / Paramount Pictures / director: David S. Ward / cast: Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, Corbin Bernsen, Rene Russo (librarian).

Joe versus the Volcano -- When a hypochondriac learns that he is dying, he accepts an offer to throw himself in a volcano at a tropical island, and along the way there, learns to truly live.

1990 / Warner Brothers / director: John Patrick Shanley / cast: Tom Hanks (librarian), Meg Ryan, Lloyd Bridges.

Sleeping with the Enemy – Escaping from an abusive marriage, Julia Roberts changes her identity and moves to a small town where she is stalked by her husband who will do anything to kill her.

1991 / 20th Century Fox / director: Joseph Ruben / cast: Julia Roberts (librarian), Patrick Bergin, Kevin Anderson.

The Gun in Betty Lou's Handbag – An ignored, small town librarian confesses to a murder she did not commit in order to gain attention and respect.

1992 / Touchstone Pictures / director: Allan Moyle / cast: Penelope Ann Miller (librarian), Eric Thal, Alfre Woodard.

Scent of a Woman – A prep school student in need of money takes a job “babysitting” for a blind man, Lt. Col. Frank Slade. The duo depart for a memorable weekend in New York that involves women, good food, fine wine, and the details of Frank’s dark past.

1992 / Universal Pictures / director: Martin Brest / cast: Al Pacino, Chris O’Donnell (librarian), James Rebhorn.

Party Girl – Parker Posey portrays a free-spirited party girl with a high fashion wardrobe in a run down New York apartment. She calls her godmother for bail money. To repay the loan, she works as a library clerk in the New York Public Library. At first, she hates the job, but she soon falls in love with the profession.

1995 / First Look / director: Daisy von Scherler Mayer / cast: Parker Posey (librarian), Anthony DeSando, Guillermo Diaz, Sasha von Scherler (librarian).

Buffy the Vampire Slayer – A sixteen-year-old is the “chosen one,” selected by destiny to be the vampire slayer. Despite her best efforts at being a “normal girl,” Buffy cannot escape her destiny. With the help of the school librarian and her group of friends, Buffy slays demons while attending high school and college.

1997-2003 / 20th Century Fox Television / creator: Joss Whedon / cast: Sarah Michelle Gellar, Nicholas Brendon, Alyson Hannigan, Anthony Head (librarian).

The Mummy – In 1923, a group of archaeologists, lead by an adventurer played by Brendan Fraser, stumble upon a tomb in Egypt. Unfortunately, they accidentally bring the mummy back to life and now face a dangerous enemy and a threat to the modern world.

1999 / Universal Pictures / director: Stephen Sommers / cast: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz (librarian), John Hannah, Erick Avari (librarian).

Men of Honor – A biography tells the story of Carl Brashear who is determined to become the first African American Navy Diver at a time when racism is prevalent. 2000 / 20th Century Fox / director: George Tillman, Jr. / cast: Robert De Niro, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Charlize Theron, Aunjanue Ellis (librarian).

The Mummy Returns – The mummy is shipped to the British Museum where he is revived and once again determined to fulfill his quest for immortality. 2001 / Universal Pictures / director: Stephen Sommers / cast: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz (librarian), John Hannah.

National Treasure – A treasure hunter, descendant of a family of treasure seekers, is in pursuit of a mythical treasure that can be located by using a map written on the back of the Declaration of Independence. 2004 / Touchstone Pictures / director: Jon Turteltaub / cast: Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger (librarian), Justin Bartha.

The Librarian: Quest for the Spear – When a magical artifact is lifted from the library, the bookish librarian, with the help of a female martial arts expert, must ensure its safe return. 2004 / Turner Network Television / director: Peter Winther / cast: Noah Wyle (librarian), Sonya Walger, Bob Newhart.

Because of Winn-Dixie – A young girl, abandoned by her mother, moves with her preacher father to a small southern town, where with the help of a stray dog she connects with a group of eccentric friends and rekindles the relationship with her father. 2005 / 20th Century Fox / director: Wayne Wang / cast: Anna Sophia Robb, Jeff Daniels, Cicely Tyson, Eva Marie Saint (librarian).

Appendix B
Librarians in Film Analysis Checklist

Film Analysis:

Film Title: _____

Librarian Character: _____

Film Release Year: _____

Film Genre: Drama Comedy Action Horror Other

Creative Control:

 Director: _____

 Producer: _____

 Writer: _____

Character Analysis:

Age:

 Under 30 30-50 Over 50

Sex: Male Female

Appearance:

 Attractive Average Unattractive Not Indicated

Marital Status:

 Single Married Divorced Widowed Not Indicated

Education:

 Undergrad or Less Master's PhD Not Indicated

Visual Characteristics of Female Librarians:

Glasses Bun

Visual Characteristics of Male Librarians:

Glasses Receding/Bald

Attitude of Librarian:

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|
| 1. Toward profession or job: | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Not Indicated |
| 2. Toward co-workers: | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Not Indicated |
| 3. Toward patrons: | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Not Indicated |

Library Task Analysis:

Is information technology used on the job?

Yes No

Is information technology a positive or negative force?

Positive Negative Not Indicated

If yes, in what forms?

Tasks Performed on the job (list as observed):

Type of library:

Public Academic Special Archive/Museum Not Discernable

Comments:

Filmography

Major League. (Paramount Pictures, 1989) Dir: David S. Ward.

Joe Versus the Volcano. (Warner Brothers, 1990) Dir: John Patrick Shanley.

Sleeping with the Enemy. (20th Century-Fox, 1991) Dir: Joseph Ruben.

The Gun in Betty Lou's Handbag. (Touchstone Pictures, 1992) Dir: Allan Moyle.

Scent of a Woman. (Universal Pictures, 1992) Dir: Martin Brest.

Party Girl. (First Look, 1995) Dir: Daisy von Scherler Mayer.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer. (20th Century Fox Television, 1997-2003) Creator: Joss Whedon.

The Mummy. (Universal, 1999) Dir: Stephen Sommers.

Men of Honor. (20th Century Fox, 2000). Dir: George Tillman, Jr.

The Mummy Returns. (Universal, 2001) Dir: Stephen Sommers.

National Treasure. (Touchstone Pictures, 2004) Dir: Jon Turteltaub.

The Librarian: Quest for the Spear. (Turner Network Television, 2004) Dir: Peter Winther.

Because of Winn-Dixie. (20th Century Fox, 2005) Dir: Wayne Wang.

Bibliography

- Adams, Katherine C. "Loveless Frump as Hip and Sexy Party Girl: A Reevaluation of the Old-Maid Stereotype," *Library Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3 (2000): 287-301.
- Berry, John N. "Tell 'Em What Librarians Do Each Day," *Library Journal*, vol. 126, no. 17 (15 October 2001): 6.
- Brooks, Jon. "Reel Librarians Don't Always Wear Buns," *School Library Journal*, vol. 43 (August 1997): 22.
- Burgett, Shelley Wood. "Libraries and Librarians in Film: An Annotated Filmography," *Kentucky Libraries*, vol. 64, no. 1 (Winter 2000).
- _____. "Back to the Library: Libraries and Librarians in Film: The Sequel, An Annotated Filmography," *Kentucky Libraries*, vol. 65, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 23-27.
- Church, Gary Mason. "In the Eye of the Beholder: How Librarians have been Viewed over Time," *Reference Librarian*, vol. 37, no. 78 (2002): 5-24.
- Cullen, John. "Rupert Giles: The Professional Image Slayer," *American Libraries*, vol. 31, no. 5 (May 2000): 42.
- DeCandido, Grace Anne A. "Bibliographic Good vs. Evil in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," *American Libraries*, vol. 30, no. 8 (September 1999): 44-47.
- Duncan, Amy M. "Caught Between the Stacks and a Hard Place: Dealing with Librarian Stereotypes," *Louisiana Libraries*, vol. 66, no. 4 (Spring 2004): 3-5.
- Filene, Peter. *Him/Her/Self: Gender Identities in Modern America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Hall, Alison. "Batgirl was a Librarian," *Canadian Library Journal* 49 (1992): 345-347.
- Hall, Stuart, "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Retrospection: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall. London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997.

Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974.

_____. *Holding my own in no Man's Land: Women and Men and Film and Feminists*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

King, William H. "The Celluloid Librarian: The Portrayal of Librarians in Motion Pictures." MSLS Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1990.

Kniffel, Leonard. "What we can Learn from Junk TV – and Vice Versa," *American Libraries*, vol. 36, no. 1 (January 2005): 44.

McReynolds, Rosalie. "A Heritage Dismissed," *Library Journal*, vol. 110 (November 1985).

Mosley, Pixey Anne. "Shedding the Stereotypes: Librarians in the 21st Century," *The Reference Librarian*, no. 78 (2002): 167-176.

Quaratiello, Arlene Rodda. "Greatly Exaggerated Death of the Library," *College and Research Library News*, no. 9 (October 1997): 625-626.

Radford, Marie L. and Gary P. Radford. "Librarians and Party Girls: Cultural Studies and the Meaning of the Librarian," *Library Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 1 (2003): 54-69.

_____. "Power, Knowledge, and Fear: Feminism, Foucault, and the Stereotype of the Female Librarian," *Library Quarterly*, vol. 67, no. 3 (July 1997): 250-267.

Ritch, Alan. "Back to the Future: From *Desk Set* to Desklessness?" *Reference Services Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 74-76.

Salinero, David M. and Jill E. Grogg. "May the Bun be with you: An Annotated Bibliography of Librarians and their Image," *The Southeastern Librarian*, vol. 53, no. 3 (Fall 2005). 12-16.

Schuman, Patricia. "The Image of Librarians: Substance or Shadow?" *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, vol. 16, no. 2 (May 1990): 86-89.

Stevens, Norman. "Our Image in the 80's," *Library Trends*, vol. 34 (Spring 1988): 825-851.

_____. "The Last Librarian," *American Libraries*, vol. 32, no. 9 (October 2001): 60-64.

Tevis, Ray and Brenda Tevis. *The Image of Librarians in Cinema, 1917-1999*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2005.

Walker, Stephen and V. Lonnie Lawson. "The Librarian Stereotype and the Movies," *The Journal of Academic Media Librarianship*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 16-28.

Wallace, Linda. "The Image – and what you can do about it in the year of the librarian," *American Libraries*, vol. 20, no. 1 (January 1989): 22-25.

Warburton, Marion. "Library Workers: Can we Escape 'Marian the Librarian'?" *Feliciter*, vol. 46, no. 4 (2000).

Wiebe, Todd J. "Issues Faced by Male Librarians: Stereotypes, Perceptions, and Career Ramifications," *Colorado Libraries*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 11-13.

Wiegand, Wayne. "Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells Us about the Present; Reflections on the Twentieth Century History of American Librarianship," *Library Quarterly* 69 (January 1999): 1-32.

Wilson, Pauline. *Stereotype and Status: Librarians in the United States*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982.