



WHEN OTHERS TELL OUR STORY:

LIBRARIAN

PORTRAYALS IN FILM

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OLA CONFERENCE 2016 – “TELL YOUR STORY” – APRIL 2016

FILM CLIPS AND FAIR USE

- This program included several brief film clips, for which I provided attribution on the end slides.
- I used these film clips under the “**fair use**” guidelines in U.S. Copyright Code 107, Title 17:
 - 1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
 - 2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
 - 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
 - 4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.
- **NOTE: For the purposes of this online version of my program and in order to preserve copyright, I have substituted the film titles in place of the film clips I used.**

LET'S ROLL 'EM

- When you think of librarian portrayals in film – AKA “reel librarians” – who immediately comes to mind?
- Mary from *It's a Wonderful Life*?
- ‘Marian the Librarian’ from *The Music Man*?
- Others?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

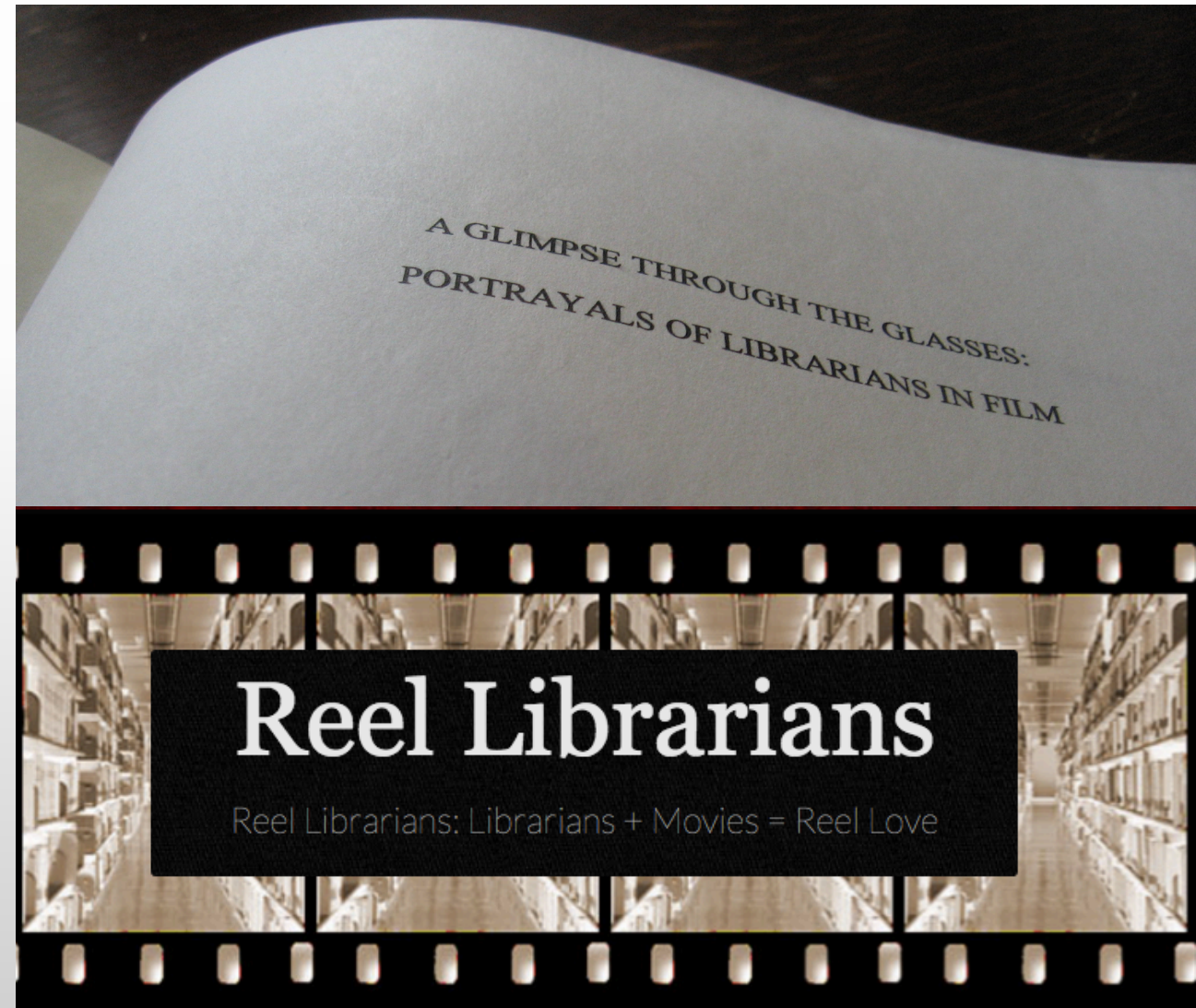
- Imagine if this were the FIRST reel librarian you encounter onscreen:
- 1953's *Pickup on South Street*, the earliest film I have come across so far to feature an African-American reel librarian
- 1995's *Party Girl* [musical montage scene, in which Parker Posey dances while she shelves books]

QUICK STATS

- How many films would you guess include librarian characters?
[almost 1,000 titles currently on my master list]
- Reel genres
- Reel quality
- Reel substance

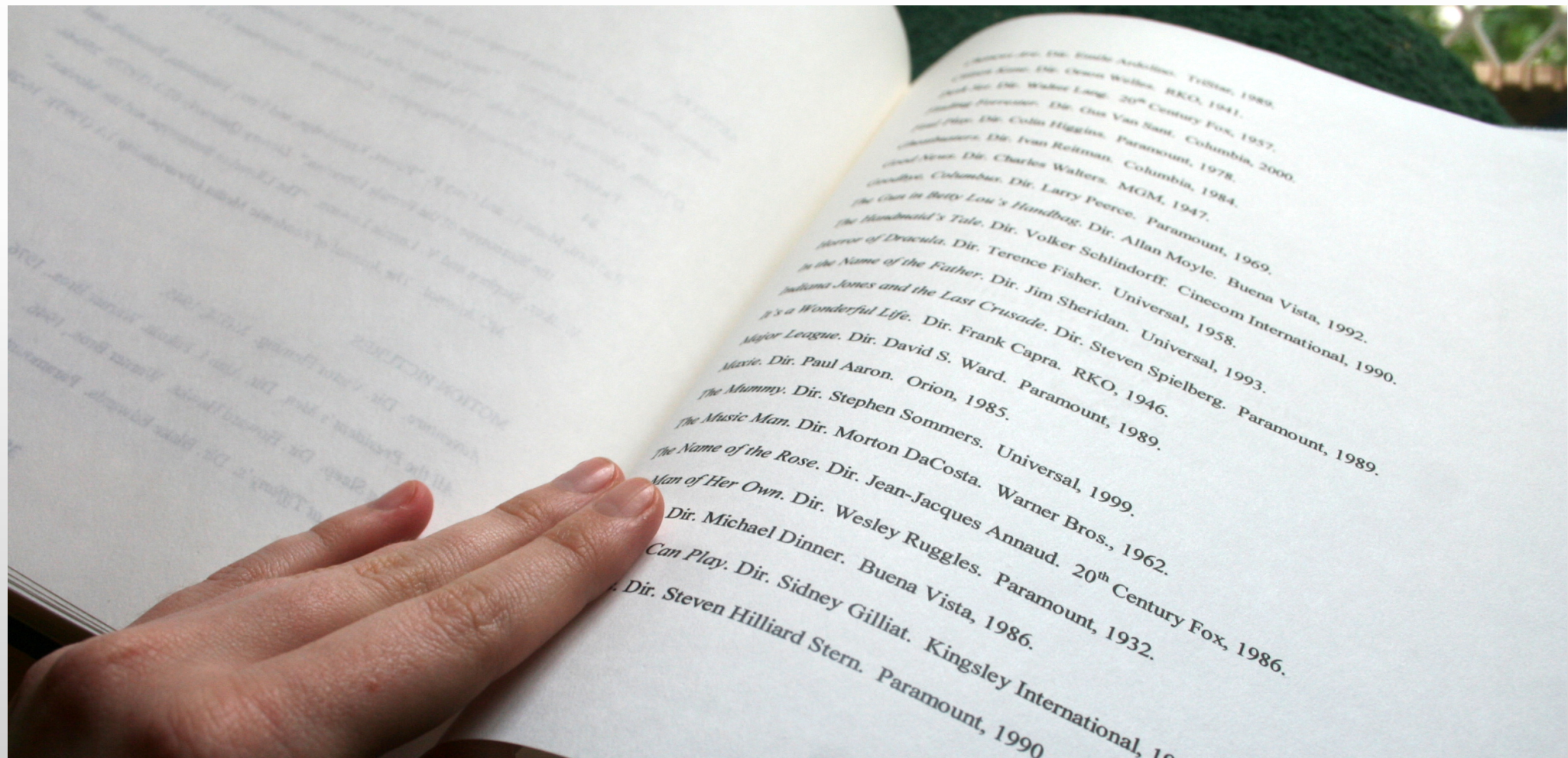
A REAL LIBRARIAN'S INTEREST IN REEL LIBRARIANS

- Undergraduate honors thesis, “A Glimpse Through the Glasses: Librarian Portrayals in Film”
- Reel Librarians website + weekly blog post, <http://reel-librarians.com>



“IT ALL STARTED WITH A BIG LIST”

- 47 titles on initial list for thesis



THE LENS OF PURPOSE

- So many lenses through which you can analyze reel librarian portrayals: gender, class, race, etc.
 - *“Both the development of those [library] stereotypes and the sustained interest in them come from two root causes: the history of the development of librarianship as a profession, and the negotiation of gender, race, class, and sexuality within library organizations.”*
(Keer & Carlos, 2015)
- My personal lens? **PURPOSE.**
- What is our role, or purpose onscreen, in “reel life”?
How does our role *onscreen* then connect to our role *off screen*, in real life?

CHARACTER TYPES

■ Character types vs. stereotypes

FEMALE CHARACTER TYPES	MALE CHARACTER TYPES
Spinster Librarian	Anti-Social Librarian
Spirited Young Girl	Librarian as Failure
Liberated Librarian	
Naughty Librarian	
Comic Relief	
Information Provider	

For more details and examples, see <http://reel-librarians.com/rolecall>

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are sexless AND sexy.

Sample film titles:

- *It's a Wonderful Life* [sexless/afraid of sex]
- *Hammett* [sexy]
- *Maxie* [sexy]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are rule-mongers AND rule-breakers.

Sample film titles:

- *The Caveman's Valentine* [rule-monger]
- *Flight of the Intruder* [rule-breaker]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are gatekeepers AND door-openers.

Sample film titles:

- *Citizen Kane* [gatekeeper]
- *The Name of the Rose* [gatekeeper]
- *The Pagemaster* [door-opener]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We loathe AND love our jobs.

Sample film titles:

- *A Simple Plan* [loathe]
- *The Mummy* [love]
- *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear* [love]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are good AND *not-so-good* at our jobs.

Sample film titles with reference interviews:

- *Curse of the Demon* [good]
- *Lorenzo's Oil* [good]
- *UHF* [not-so-good]
- *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones* [not-so-good]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are keys to the past AND the future.

Sample film title:

- *The Time Machine* (2002 remake)

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are para-professionals AND professionals.

Sample film titles:

- *Good News* [student]
- *Rollerball* [clerk]
- *Before Night Falls* [student]
- *Party Girl* [series of clips discussing differences of jobs in library, educational requirements, and MLS programs]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We intimidate AND inspire.

Sample film titles:

- *Sophie's Choice* [intimidating]
- *The Human Comedy* [inspiring]

WHAT DO MOVIES TELL US ABOUT LIBRARIANS?

- We are a vital, human link between knowledge AND technology.

Sample film title:

- 1957's *Desk Set*, still as relevant today!

CONNECT REEL AND REAL LIFE

- Hold movie nights, e.g. during National Library Week
- Promote reel librarian movies in your collection, e.g. with library displays, blog posts, a regular column in library newsletter, etc.
- Use film clips in staff training – examples to illustrate what to do and what NOT to do
- Use film clips to start conversations or use in team-building exercises in staff meetings

THANK YOU!

- Takeaway handout with fun quiz + contact info
- Questions? Ask the real librarian!
- If you spot more librarians onscreen, please let me know!
- Reel Librarians website,
<http://reel-librarians.com>
- Email,
reel.librarians@gmail.com



ATTRIBUTIONS

Slide 1

- Graphic: ["filmstrip 4"](#) by Peter Lippett is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Slide 8

- Quote: Keer, Gretchen, and Andrew Carlos. "The Stereotype Stereotype: Our Obsession with Librarian Representation." *American Libraries Magazine* (30 Oct 2015).