

HACKS, HEELS AND HOLLYWOOD

How accurately do recent film portrayals of women journalists reflect the working world of their real-life counterparts?

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BA (HONS) MULTI-MEDIA JOURNALISM

2004 - 2005

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Declaration

I declare that the following dissertation is entirely my own original work and has not previously been submitted for assessment. This work does not to the best of my knowledge, contain any material previously published or written by another author, which has not been referenced in the text.

Signed _____

Date _____

Abstract

This study explores the treatment and behaviour of female journalists and contrasts it with fictitious film representations of women working in the news industry, determining the existing conditions for western women in the media and how accurately films choose to illustrate these conditions. It raises issues of power and prejudice, and proposes that despite the 'Hollywood-isation' of newsroom environments, and largely negative representations, there is much truth in the attitudes towards, and experiences of female journalists in recent films.

Literature highlighting discrimination towards women in journalism, and debates surrounding the roles delegated and carried out by them, are explored in detail, and contrasted with previous studies into the representations of journalists in Hollywood films.

A questionnaire-based survey raises various issues with both British and American journalists, highlighting conduct of and towards women in modern newsrooms. These views are contrasted with the authoritative opinions of expert interviewees.

A qualitative content-analysis of a range of cinematic portrayals of women working in the news media provides comparative evidence to contrast with questionnaire and interview testimonies.

Results of these methods illustrate specific areas of accurate representative treatment, together with stereotypical and unrealistic assumptions which fail to resemble the realities of the industry. They suggest there are injustices still faced by women working in the media, especially in relation to power-roles and discrimination. Despite the abundance of prejudicial behaviour on-screen, this study recognises glamorised exaggerations not experienced by the majority of women in reality.

Although disparity over these areas exists, there is evidence to support the precision of film interpretations which serve the dominant argument that although women can achieve as journalists, their success comes at a sacrificial price.

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Introduction

Walter Burns: “You can’t quit. You’re a newspaperman.”

Hildy Johnson: “That’s why I’m quitting, I want to go someplace where I can be a woman.”
(His Girl Friday, 1940)

It is a commonly-reported truism that, “in the eyes of the world, women journalists were women first, journalists second, and suspect always,” (Good, 1998, pg 51). This distinction highlights the challenge faced by women in the news industry over the last century, and prompts questions as to how far it has changed. Popular culture, especially film, serves as a vehicle to explore these societal attitudes towards women working in journalistic environments and provides a valuable comparative setting.

It is argued that cinematic representations are both a reflection of the existing world and rewritten, reconstructions of what they show; creating coded examples for both cross-examination and internal exploration, (Kuhn, 1985, pg 48). For the purpose of this study, films will be used as a tool to explore prevailing behaviour and treatment of western female journalists. Although fictitious, these images make up a widely acknowledged impression of the working situation for women, and using “basic and recurring characteristics” serve to enforce gender stereotypes, (Gunter, 1995, pg 12). Roland Barthes’ study into semiotics suggests that whilst we derive meanings from the codes used to create these seemingly natural images, we must recognise the constructive tools of signification in their production, (1957 cited in Kuhn, 1985, pg 5).

The female journalist faces an ongoing dilemma: How to incorporate the masculine traits of journalism essential for success...while still being the woman society would like her to be. (Saltzman, 2003, pg 1)

Journalism provides films with a vehicle for exploring these gender based conflicts, (Good, 1998, pg 30). Analysis of Hollywood’s depiction of the newspaperman has been considerable, but despite the large number of films featuring female journalists, there is relatively less attention given to this specific area of study.

The accuracy of these portrayals is explored here, together with the importance of this precision. Smith’s feminist belief that women in film are always subservient, devoid of human form and are not shown “in characterisations any self-respecting person could identify with,” (Smith, 1999, pg 14), is supported by Joe Saltzman’s analysis of female journalists on film,

where he examines, “independent, hardworking...self-sufficient” reporters who would leave their careers behind settling for the dominant ideals of family and domesticity. These assumptions are held up against recent film portrayals and contrasted with the changing face of the news industry, and the diminishing notion of the ‘glass ceiling’ for women.

Vaughn and Evensen remark on the important relationship between the press and the film industry; saying that the characterisation of journalists may result:

Not so much from accident or idealism as from an often complex interaction between powerful forces, many of them outside the studios. (Vaughn & Evensen, 1991, pg 830)

Whether or not these images are born out of a defective symbiotic relationship, remains unclear, but research concludes; from the late 1970s onwards, that these films have “persecuted” women who display “courage and initiative” (Good, 1998, pg 137). This in itself is enough to warrant serious research into the conditions tolerated by real newswomen and the accuracy of these often, overlooked and readily accepted interpretations.

Literature Review

“The highest compliment you can pay a female journalist is to call her “a newspaperman.”
(Saltzman, 2003, pg 3)

When exploring the fundamental nature of the female reporter on film there is an academic disagreement. Joe Saltzman (2003, pg 3) believes that 1930s actresses found a new voice playing head-strong journalists and argues that where previously women's roles had been restricted to that of the love-interest or the masculinised female, here she could hold down a job, and be a leader, whilst still retaining her femininity. But not everyone subscribes to this optimistic view. Howard Good speaks of Frank Capra's notorious collection of journalist films (*Mr Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) *Meet John Doe* (1941)) with less positivism.

The working woman in Capra's Depression films...has one overriding function: to give up her career and freedom for the man and shine on darkly. (Good, 1998, pg 41)

This debate extends to the more recent portrayals of the 1980s and 90s, where Richard R. Ness (1997, pg 557) argues the focus has shifted to the suitability of women in journalism noting that unlike their 1930s contemporaries, today's women journalists often resort to drugs and alcohol to manage professional pressure. Arguably, this broad generalisation is a result of the changing societal attitudes towards women, but nevertheless highlights the heavily contrasting viewpoints on the subject.

Hard life or home life

"I'm going to be a woman, and not a news-gathering machine." – **Hildy Johnson**, *His Girl Friday*, 1940

Many researchers refer to the early example of Hildy Johnson (*His Girl Friday* 1940) as a prime depiction of the difficult choices facing many women in the industry.

Hildy stays in the game, thus curtailing her dream of a traditional, middle-class home-and-babies existence. (Good, 1998, pg 44-45)

In reality, some studies have revealed that female journalists are put off by the "cut throat" nature of the news industry which they regard as incompatible with personal and familial obligations, (Sebba, 1994, pg 248). Although this dichotomy still exists, there is recognition of

the freedom of choice available to those women in the industry in recent films. Relationships between men and women focus on a “mutual respect” and although the woman has to compromise more than her partner, her own control of her identity and career is never questioned, (Good, 1998, pg 47).

This is supported by Sebba's research which focused especially on ground-breaking female journalists and commented on former BBC Chief News Correspondent Kate Adie, who has never married.

Kate does not seem like a victim who has sacrificed herself, but rather one who has chosen her lifestyle in a positive sense. (Sebba, 1994, pg 274)

Film portrayals suggest that Adie is a privileged exception to the rule. In *Absence of Malice* (1981) Megan Carter is seemingly punished for choosing a career over a domestic existence, under the guise of having poor journalistic ethics; a camouflage common of later films featuring female journalists, (Good, 1998, pg 122).

Newswomen and their ethics

However it is raised, the notion of journalistic ethics is never far from focus in films, and many women journalist characters are fated to choose between their beliefs and their career, man or other ambition. Hanson recognises the hypocrisy this situation creates for Holly Hunter's character in *Broadcast News* (1987). Where despite her constant battles with colleagues over ethics and journalistic integrity:

The plot has her (Hunter) benefiting from staff cuts by the bottom-line boys she detests, becoming a bureau chief and later pole-vaulting to the managing editor slot.

This illustrates the generic premise that you can be an outwardly moralistic character, but, “in the end you go along to get along, even if that includes becoming a tool of airhead journalism.” (Hanson, 1996, pg 48)

Comparatively, Stone and Lee's analysis (1990) of US prime time television found, "nearly half of the male journalists were depicted as unethical versus only 22 percent of the female journalists," going on to illustrate that, "Overall, none of the female journalists were portrayed negatively versus 42 percent of the males being portrayed in this manner." (Stone & Lee, 1990, pg 706) This indicates a favourable trend towards the screen image of women in the workplace, but although fairly conclusive, these figures cannot be looked at independently from the study, which clearly showed a dominance of male journalists over female.

In spite of these figures, the derogatory notion that women could be less ethical or unethical; insinuated by some films, naturally encourages a questioning of the principles and ability of real women working in the industry. Although some recognise the dramatic changes within the news sector; with women participating in the same training, receiving the same salaries and being taken as seriously as men, (Sebba, 1994, pg 277) others are less convinced and believe women are still unable to command the same respect men do.

Transvestites, sex-slaves and looking good

"Women are caught within the conflicting definitions of femininity and of 'the news' – themselves trivialised, they can be blamed for trivialising." (Holland, 1996, pg 198)

With these conflicting definitions comes much disparity over how women behave in the newsroom, both on screen and in real life. Minelle Mahtani has identified that the dominance of masculine values and ideas within newsroom culture, leads to the exclusion of women who choose to deviate from the approved social codes. She believes that:

Equating masculinism and objectivity has forced many women journalists to attempt to adopt more masculine traits in the field of journalism in order to become more successful. (Mahtani, 2005, pg 301)

Saltzman believes this is reflected in film and that images across the board of popular culture in the late 20th and early 21st century have barely progressed from those of the past and that:

If a woman is successful, it means she has assumed many of the characteristics of the newsman, losing her femininity in the process. (Saltzman, 2003, pg 5)

Good recognises another extreme in the cases of *I Love Trouble* (1994) and *Up Close and Personal* (1996) where the prominence of female characters creates a “sexualisation” of women journalists, who use their feminine charm, as a tool for success. He illustrates that this self-exploitation comes at a price as he remarks on Jane Fonda’s character in *The China Syndrome* (1979) who relies heavily on her beauty to be successful.

The film can’t illustrate the intensity of her work ethic without simultaneously illustrating the depth of her loneliness. (Good, 1998, pg 129)

In more recent years the lean has been towards television news giving screen writers the chance to create the illusion of strong career-orientated women, whilst enforcing the more acceptable notion that these “glamorous” characters are engrossed just as much in their appearance as their work, (Ness, 1997, pg 557). Ness refers to the disproportionate focus on the way female journalists look, in comparison with their male counterparts. Although it is commonly concluded that women working on newspapers in film did more glamorous work than those in real-life, (Barris, 1976, pg 139) there is no indication this focus is unrealistic.

Women have long been hired, fired and judged on the basis of appearance, although the standards of beauty change and critics are hard on women who are overly sexy. (Steiner, 2005, pg 51)

Sebba refers to one critique on the industry’s treatment of women which said they are practically forced to cut their hair into a “severe helmet shape” to convey the serious message of the news, (Sebba, 1994, pg 247). This illustrates that women must find a style that not only emphasises their femininity but manages to convey the sober mood of the news, (Holland, 1996, pg 199).

The extent to which appearance is focused on by employers and women journalists themselves raises questions as to whether the inclusion of young attractive reporters in television news, is based not on ability, but is an attempt by male managers to make the news more “visually pleasing”; using women’s bodies to sell serious content to the public, (Ross, 2005, pg 292).

Little Men vs Little Women

Another critical area where film reflects reality is that of power roles. Women are very rarely seen in managerial or editorial positions, (Mahon, 1991, pg 18) and when they do reach the top of their profession there are not the rewards one might expect. Good (1998, pg 123) refers to the example of Alicia Clark (Glenn Close) in *The Paper* (1994), who is punished in the film for her “unfeminine displays of authority.” Ambition in women characters is something satirised or deemed “amoral” by many narratives, as in *To Die For* (1995) where “numerous scenes” focus on Suzanne Stone Maretto’s (Nicole Kidman), “refusal to bear children,” because of her “all-consuming ambition,” to be an anchor-woman, (Good, 1998, pg 134-135). Ness also recognises an “abrasiveness” from characters’ co-workers (Ness, 1997, pg 557) and both Good and Ness remark on Sally Field’s *Absence of Malice* (1981) character’s relationship with Paul Newman’s in this light.

Their romance is brief, not because the film doesn’t sanction it, but because Megan is too much of a careerist to sustain it...she has blown her chance to be his wifely supporter – or, in a word, fulfilled. (Good, 1998, pg 122)

The pragmatism of studies within the industry, indicate that perhaps this ‘abrasiveness’ is exaggerated, although there is much evidence to support the struggle women face penetrating the “higher echelons” of power and how they are often confined to jobs traditionally regarded as “women’s work,” (Ross, 2005, pg 291). Flanders study (1984 cited in Smith *et al*, 1989, pg 228) for the National Organisation for Women showed that women network correspondents were “much less likely” to receive air-time during evening national broadcasts than their male colleagues. And the literature on sex-role socialisation indicates women are less likely to seek managerial positions, and to advance within the hierarchy, (Smith *et al*, 1989, pg 243). This is supported by a more recent study published by *Women In Journalism* which showed women tend to be in less senior jobs than men of the same age, (Sieghart & Henry, 1998, pg 1-4).

One theory suggests even when women do reach senior positions they are only there to satisfy equal opportunity quotas, and that male managers surround themselves with “safe and

attractive” women who will follow their instructions, and do not threaten their position of power, (Mahtani, 2005, pg 305). Unlike films, which continue to refer to past stereotypes relatively unchallenged, many believe in reality, this issue needs to be confronted for change to follow.

Until power dynamics between women and men journalists are unveiled, made visible, discussed and then challenged, only then will we begin to witness a change in the experiences of women journalists. (Mahtani, 2005, pg 308)

It should be noted there is a limited amount of research into the area of discrimination. Although many researchers have covered the treatment of women journalists in reality, including Thomas, (1997) and Sieghart & Henry (1998) the discriminatory behaviour witnessed in many recent films needs further investigation.

From real to reel

In the 1930s newspaper women were rare, yet on screen they were in abundance. This is arguably because of how well-suited the sharp-witted girl reporter was to ‘talkies’, but does serve the viewpoint that they were little more than a fabrication snapped up for the pleasure of comic audiences, (Good, 1998, pg 49). Good goes on to recognise another possibility;

Film portrayals served as a camouflage of, and compensation for, the lack of economic justice for women. (Good, 1998, pg 49)

Some are heavily supportive of recent filmic representations of women in the work-place arguing that we have seen an influx of women and men working alongside each other as equals, (Gauntlett, 2002, pg 57). After the rapid growth of newsroom staffs in the 1970s and the (US) Federal Communications Commission (FCC) added women to the list of minorities on its equal opportunities employment guidelines there was a dramatic increase in the number of women journalists (Smith *et al*, 1989, pg 227), which could account for the heavier female presence in more recent films.

Although much attention is paid to the choices these characters make there is little focus on our final impression on them, which may be worth additional study. It is not whether the characters

are positive or negative that concerns most, but the way in which they deal with a job previously regarded as male. It is the negative impression left by the outcome of most of these films that is relevant as Saltzman reminds us.

Many sob sisters have won equality in both image and achievement, but at what cost?...does anyone really want to be Hildy Johnson chasing after one more story or Lois Lane crying her eyes out because the person she loves is out saving the world and doesn't have time for domestic tranquillity? (Saltzman, 2003, pg 7)

Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln believe the word 'qualitative' in methodological terms:

Implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured...in terms of quantity.

Whereas they see quantitative studies as emphasising the, “measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pg 8)

Both types of method serve different forms of research, but it is argued that both approaches are valid and compliment each other (Hansen *et al*, 1998, pg 18). Fontana and Frey believe this idea of “triangulation” gives societal researchers flexibility in their work.

Human beings are complex, and their lives are ever changing; the more methods we use to study them, the better our chances to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives. (Fontana & Frey, 2000, pg 668)

This study utilised research methods incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to gage a more accurate, and holistic response to the hypotheses and allow collated data to be both analytical and statistical in its presentation.

Content Analysis

A film content analysis was the centre of this study, and is a commonly used, effective method of determining the messages and meaning derived from a film text. Weber defines content analysis as:

A research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences are about the sender(s) of message, the message itself, or the audience of the message. (Weber, 1985, pg 9)

Although a broad selection of representations have been used as referral literature this analysis was confined to five recent examples showing the woman journalist at work. Gunter refers to a “sampling frame” which is used to determine, “the selection of subsections or portrayals from these media products for closer analysis,” (Gunter, 2000, pg 61). The criteria for this sample was that the films be released between 1975 and 2000; as it was important to explore more recent examples, to draw comparisons with reality, and that the films had female journalist characters as central roles, allowing for developed narratives and characterisation. Below are the names of the ten roles analysed and the actresses that play them:

Absence of Malice (1981) – *Megan Carter* (Sally Field)

Broadcast News (1987) – *Jane Craig* (Holly Hunter), *Jennifer Mack* (Lois Chiles)

The China Syndrome (1979) – *Kimberly Wells* (Jane Fonda)

The Paper (1994) – *Alicia Clark* (Glenn Close), *Martha Hackett* (Marisa Tomei) *Carmen* (Roma Maffia)

Up Close and Personal (1996) – *Sally/Tally Atwater* (Michelle Pfeiffer), *Marcia McGrath* (Stockard Channing), *Joanna Kennelly* (Kate Nelligan)

Each film was viewed on 3 separate occasions and all information was recorded on a qualitative coding sheet (see Appendix A(1)), providing “one set of guidelines...throughout the study,” (Gunter, 2000, pg56). Although many researchers argue data gathered by this method should be quantifiable, (Kerlinger, 1986, pg 477) there are those that support the development of qualitative content analysis. Gunter argues that these procedures, “emphasise the capacity of texts to convey multiple meanings depending upon the receiver,” (Gunter, 2000, pg 82) and Hijams distinguishes five types of qualitative analysis, (Hijams, 1996, pg 93-108) two of which can be identified in this study.

Structuralist –semiotic analysis is where the, “referential nature and symbolic meaning of the message is explicitly taken to be the subject matter of analysis.” (Gunter, 2000, pg 83) Many of the scenes, and dialogue analysed were questioned for symbolic connotations to determine the underlying messages behind these representations. Hijams also recognises *narrative analysis* where, more emphasis is put on the characters themselves, (1996 cited in Gunter, 2000, pg 90). Their behaviour, relationships, decisions and narrative conclusion, were scrutinised in order to determine how these women were being presented.

A scale was created to illustrate how prominently issues featured within the film, (see Appendix A(2)). From these results, information criteria were drawn up to use as comparative pointers for other methods in the study.

Gunter recognises the main existing limitation of the method:

The researcher's personal idiosyncracies and biases should not enter into the findings. If replicated by another researcher, the analysis should yield the same results. (Gunter, 2000, pg 56)

Arguably, the researcher remained a constant recorder who was not exploring the impact the representations have on audience, but how they relate to each other and real women journalists. Following these clear set of objectives and watching all the films under the same conditions helped to ensure the necessary degree of objectivity.

Questionnaires

Madge sees a mass survey approach as a useful way of seeking the majority opinions needed to back up other methods of research:

If mass methods give us our only means of achieving the level of confidence and generality which we need, we are not justified in condemning them because they are more a method of proof than a method of discovery, or because their 'results' are sometimes mistaken as literally true. (Madge, 1953, pg178)

Using data gathered through content analysis, a questionnaire-based survey was produced to determine how particular issues affect real women journalists and whether their responses to questions about their working environment and journalistic behaviour are supported by their screen counterparts. The sampling frame was very broad, but as the depictions analysed through content analysis were chiefly of North American women in Western newsroom environments, it was decided both British and American female journalists would be relevant. There was also a limitation involved with regards direct contact with American journalists.

In simple experimental research with strict controls, successful research may be conducted with samples as small as 10 to 20 in size. (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001, pg 94)

With this in mind a target of 50 respondents was allocated, and approximately 300 questionnaires (this figure cannot be exact due to editors distributing questionnaires amongst their staff) were sent out to a cross section of British and North American newsrooms; including television, radio, national and local newspapers, magazines and online news organisations. The first 50 questionnaires received make up the analysed data in this study.

The questionnaire was divided into a number of closed-response sections relevant to these specific areas, (see Appendix B) such as *power*, *discrimination* and *sexuality*, providing strong quantitative data, as well as a statement-based section where respondents used a scale to reflect how strongly they agreed or disagreed. Balnaves and Caputi's recognition of possible error in this form of question was considered in analysis, especially with regards to a respondent's tendency to, "avoid extreme response categories," (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001, pg 81).

A pilot questionnaire was sent out to five journalists who found it easy to understand, and complete. Their only recommendation was there was no 'further comment' opportunity which was added as a strictly qualitative response question at the end of the questionnaire, offering respondents the chance to expand their views on the topic voluntarily.

Expert Interviews

Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings. (Fontana & Frey, 2000, pg 645)

While the questionnaire survey sought to provide useful quantitative data, and a broader insight into the minds of female journalists, a number of unstructured interviews were carried out with individuals whose expert insights provided credible qualitative responses to enforce, or rebut any conclusions drawn from both the questionnaires and the content analysis.

Here the interviewee is of less interest as a (whole) person than in his or her capacity of being an expert for a certain field or activity. He or she is integrated into the study not as a single case but as representing a group. (Flick, 2002, pg 89)

These responses although independently relevant, will serve more as a companion to other information obtained throughout the study.

Fontana and Frey (2000, pg 661) argue that sociologists have had to come to terms with the "reflexive, problematic and, at times, contradictory nature of data," derived from un-structured

interviews, and that there is often a “tremendous, if unspoken, influence of the researcher.” This method suited the irregular nature of the interviewees and allowed them to respond in their own words, and gave the interviewer a greater freedom in formulating questions, before and during the interview, (Gunter, 2000, pg26).

Interviewees were chosen on the relevance of their speciality field, while questions were tailored to suit this. A list of possible interviewees was drawn up from different fields, and then a range was selected to provide the necessary depth of information for each area. Their expertise varies, however, it was not necessary to have an equal quantity of interviewees from each field of knowledge, as it was the quality, and diversity of opinions that were important. Appendix C shows the final list of people interviewed and their occupation.

Findings and Analysis

“There are some wonderful and accurate depictions of newspaper work in film, and then there is Julia Roberts in spike heels at a crime scene.” (Paul Schindler, 2005, Appendix E)

Film representations do as they say. They re-present all, or part of something else. How accurately they choose to do this often illustrates societal attitudes towards the subject, and may influence perceptions of it.

Director of the Image of Journalists in Popular Culture, (IJPC) Joe Saltzman believed that although it is important that female journalists are represented in an accurate and realistic light,

“it is folly to think that this will ever happen.” Arguably through comparison of cinematic portrayals and the testaments of real working journalists, this statement is disputable. Journalist, Paul Schindler debated that these images must be controversial in order to be real, he said:

They should be shown succeeding and failing, because actual women journalists succeed and fail. They should be shown as noble and venal, because both those traits are exhibited by women journalists. In short, the cinematic portrayal of women journalists should range as widely as the portrayal of men.

This necessary inclusion of negativity means that the way women journalists are, and the way they want to be portrayed results in a varied collection of opinions and interpretations.

Ethics

“There must be some rules to tell me what I’m supposed to do now...I can hurt someone, or not hurt someone, no rules, just me.” – Megan Carter, Absence of Malice (1981)

According to the content analysis data, journalistic ethics is one of the top two issues focused on most heavily in the five films (see figure 1). These representations are an interesting mix of overtly ethical, and unethical women. As well as being less common, unethical behaviour carried out by female characters is criticised far more than that carried out by their male counterparts. This suggests it is more acceptable for male journalists, to ignore the rules for a story.

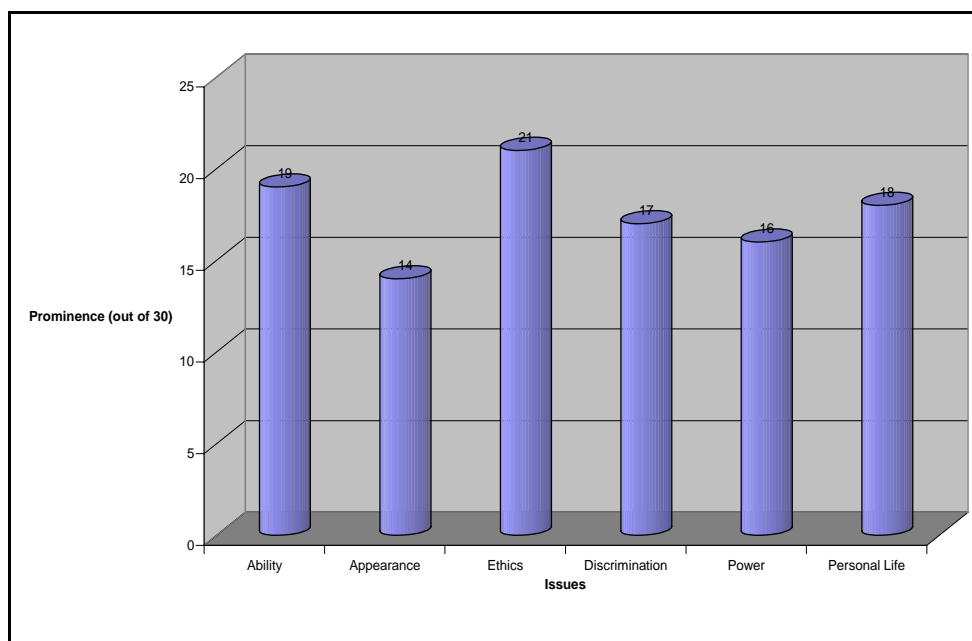


Figure 1: Overall prominence of issues

In reality, 78 % of questionnaire respondents believed that men and women journalists were equally ethical and that they were equally likely to compromise their journalistic integrity although 22% believed women were less likely. This suggests, according to women in the industry, there is very little difference between the ethical behaviour of men and women. Both *Broadcast News* (1987) and *Absence of Malice* (1981) explored this area most prominently through their lead female characters, Megan Carter and Jane Craig.

Craig gives a speech early on in the film denouncing the idea of ‘soft’ and ‘manipulated’ news and then puts this into practice whilst producing a report, saying to her cameraman: “We’re not here to stage the news.” Craig is tested when the man she is in love with, commits an “incredible breach of ethics”. Contrary to Hollywood conventions, she chooses her beliefs over the relationship.

Contrastingly, newspaper reporter, Megan Carter, carries out what could be considered ‘unethical’ acts, throughout *Absence of Malice*. She reads classified information without permission, covertly records a conversation with an interviewee, and writes numerous stories, which cause emotional distress to the subjects, with little consideration. This behaviour is

eventually criticised by the judiciary, but goes unchallenged by Carter's editor. One questionnaire respondent commented on the 'unrealistic' nature of this behaviour.

Journalists are often portrayed in a stereotypical; sell your granny for a story manner, which just isn't true. It seems that the laws reporters have to abide by are also ignored in films...I often feel personally insulted by the portrayal of journalists.

Alicia Clark in *The Paper* (1994) epitomises this. Clark is a powerful, managing editor of a New York newspaper who neglects her journalistic responsibility and is openly flippant of her views in an editorial meeting saying:

We taint them today, we make them look good on Saturday, everybody's happy.

Another questionable ethical area explored is the use of sexuality as a journalistic skill, which Martha Hackett illustrates in *The Paper* when she admits to flirting with a source, just to get information out of him. This coy behaviour is repeated across the five films, and seems inherent in female journalists. Questionnaire respondents disagreed though, with only 13 admitting to having used their sexuality to benefit their career or a story. One newspaper journalist commented:

In the real world...you won't get anywhere trampling on your colleagues' or the public's sensitivities. In many ways women tend to be more compassionate...and compassion, not amorality, ambition or sexuality, is what makes a good journalist great.

Discrimination

"You get the cops, I'll get the poignant shit." – **Carmen**, *The Paper* (1994)

Discriminative behaviour manifests itself in two key ways across these films. In *The China Syndrome* (1979), the oldest of the five films, TV reporter Kimberly Wells is forced to cover 'soft' stories, despite her regular protests. The film's script-writer, Mike Gray commented:

Female news persons were not unusual at that time but they were considered window dressing and that fact was central to her (Well's) character from the outset.

Well's colleagues highlight this point repeatedly, and her managing editor says to her:

I think you're better doing the softer stuff. Let's face it. You weren't hired for your investigative skills...don't try and be something you're not. (See Appendix F – Clip 1)

This discriminatory attitude suggests there are huge prejudices that surround newsrooms, and control the types of stories women can cover.

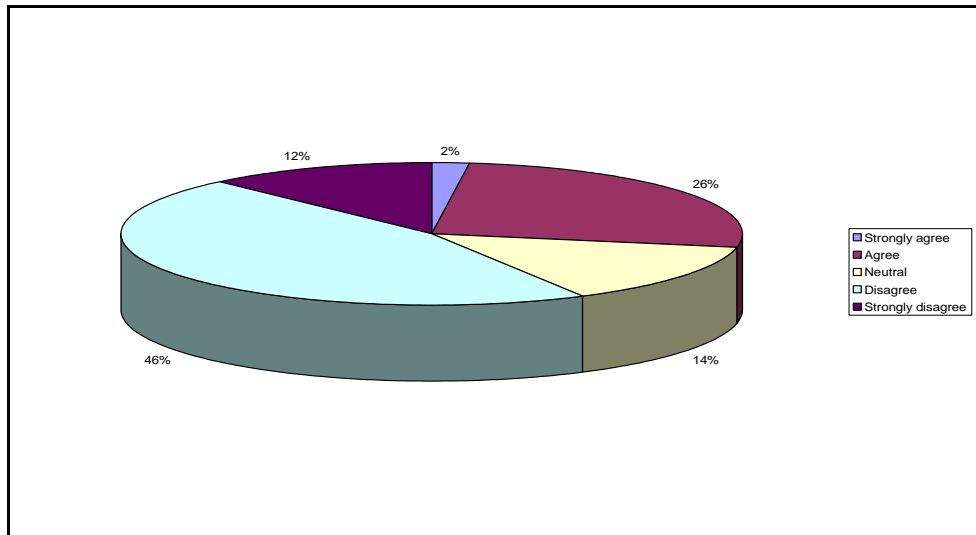


Figure 2: Response to statement: "Female journalists are not taken as seriously as their male colleagues"

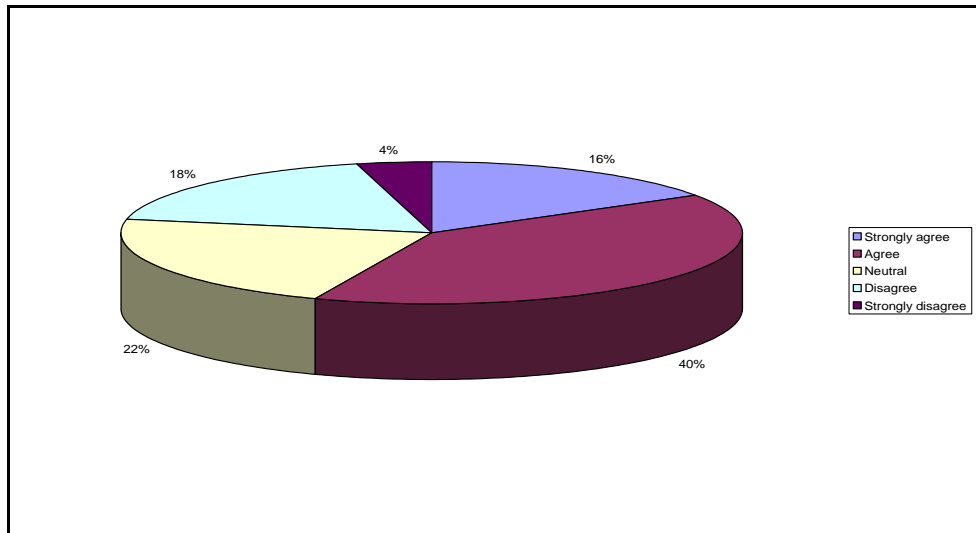


Figure 3: Response to statement: "Female journalists are treated as equals in the newsroom"

The questionnaire data suggests the opposite is true for real female journalists. Of the 50 women questioned, 58% disagreed with the statement: "female journalists are not taken as

seriously as their male colleagues,” while 56% agreed that: “female journalists are treated as equals in the newsroom.” (See figures 2 & 3) Furthermore, the survey indicates that 64% of women journalists have never felt discriminated against, and 70% have never had any preferential treatment because of their sex.

These figures indicate a split within the industry regarding discrimination and a comparative difference between film portrayals and real journalists. Dr Karen Ross, Director of Mass Communications at Coventry University argued the reason for these inequities lies in a female reluctance to complain about discrimination, she said:

If we accept that our sex DOES impact on our career chances, then this puts us in the position of impotence. I do NOT believe that women in journalism have never experienced sexism or other - isms, they just don't want to admit it.

One interviewee respondent was adamant discrimination did not take place, but mentioned a time she received a rejection letter from a British news agency saying they were, “sorry we do not have a suitable role for you at this time, even if you do have the biggest tits this side of the River Adur.” Although she made it clear, “an employer wouldn’t dare commit such comments to print these days,” recent film portrayals would suggest otherwise.

Treatment of *Up Close and Personal's* (1996) Tally Atwater, is exemplary of this less subtle sexualised harassment. On her first day at work, editor, Warren Justice, repeatedly calls her ‘sweetheart,’ and she endures underhand comments from male colleagues, (see Appendix F – Clip 2). When Justice arrives at her home to offer her a promotion and leaves with the words: “Thought I came by to fuck you didn’t you?” there is an acceptance by Atwater that this might have been the case, but no real question of its impropriety.

Power

"I didn't know how isolating it would be. There aren't exactly a lot of laughs round my office nowadays" – **Alicia Clark**, *The Paper* (1994)

Of the ten characters analysed, four were in positions of relative power, and were responsible for making important editorial decisions. These films suggest female journalists who are in lower positions should not assert themselves or try to be powerful, as they usually receive a negative response. A clear example of this is in *Up Close and Personal* when Atwater refuses to cut her hair at her male editor's request. In the next scene we see her with a new hair cut, (see Appendix F – Clip 3) Similarly in *The China Syndrome*, when Wells suggests a course of action for a story she is told by her editor: "She doesn't make policy, she's a performer." These indicate there is a patriarchal news system that openly exerts its control over female employees.

There is a confused message derived from the more powerful female representations. In *Broadcast News* Craig is applauded for her skills as a producer by her superiors, but achieves success through erratic, bullying, and rude methods. She shouts at a co-worker: "Not, 'you'll try,' you'll do it, or I'll fry your fat ass," to which a senior colleague replies: "I had no idea she was this good." (See Appendix F – Clip 4)

The commonly visited image of a powerful female journalist, is more negative, described by one questionnaire respondent as: "Cold, bitchy, power-crazed and void of emotion." Although we can see this recurring portrayal in the smaller role of Marcia McGrath in *Up Close and Personal*, it is most effective in *The Paper's* Alicia Clark, a part originally written for a man. (Schindler, 2005)

As a managing editor Clark holds most of the executive power, but unlike the newspaper's male editor, gains very little respect from her colleagues, who ignore her orders, avoid her conversations, and insult her behind her back. Metro editor, Henry Hackett, wants to stop the paper printing, because of an untrue story; Clark disagrees and the two fight. Although she loses the physical confrontation she uses her power to get her own way, continuing the print run, to which Hackett remarks: "Congratulations, you've officially become everything you used to hate." (See Appendix F – Clip 5) Clark has ignored her journalistic values to settle a personal

dispute with a colleague, and although she eventually rectifies the situation, the extremely isolating, unappreciated nature of Clark's work suggests hostility towards powerful female journalists.

According to President of Women in Journalism, Eve Pollard, this treatment is mirrored in the industry. She commented:

There is a 'masculinisation' of every woman in power. Men do not like women who say no... You're not their girlfriend, even if they do fancy you. You're not their mum. You're not their daughter. So the only way they can deal with you, is to 'monsterise' you.

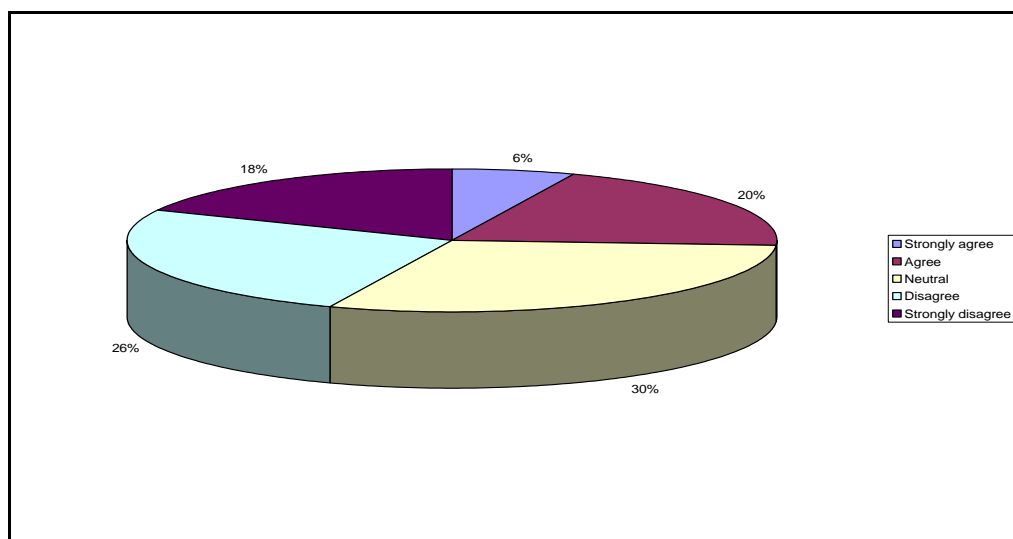


Figure 4: "Female journalists find it harder to succeed in journalism than men"

The questionnaire results, suggest female journalists are undecided over the issue. As figure 4 shows, respondents were divided over whether it is harder for women journalists to succeed than men. This was supported by the fact half the respondents felt it is not hard to gain respect as a woman editor, and that there is no difference in the way editorial men and women were treated, (see Appendix D Figures 5 & 6). One BBC assistant editor commented that:

Journalism is one of the few areas where women are in the ascendancy. My boss is a woman, her boss is a woman, our anchor presenter is a woman and we only have two regular male presenters.

This was supported by Vernon Stone, Research Professor at the School of Journalism, University of Missouri who said:

Films tend to stick to safe stereotypes, but that one (women seen only as powerless cub reporters) is pretty much outdated. The reality is that women now have a strong and recognized presence at every level in newsrooms and in media management.

Ability

"I'm sorry I'm not very objective." **Kimberly Wells**, *The China Syndrome* (1979)

'Ability' was the second most prominent issue raised by the content analysis (see figure 1) as each film, at some point brought the journalist's competence into question, often through discriminatory means as explored above. All of the representations were shown to be capable of doing their jobs as reporters, newsreaders and producers, but occasionally their tenacity or enthusiasm was mocked by characters. For example when suspected criminal Michael Gallagher says to Carter: "One of those up-front ladies huh?" to which she replies, somewhat ashamed: "I try to be."

Although there is a recognised determination in some characters to get the story; most teasingly in *The Paper's* 8 ½ months pregnant Martha Hackett, there is an accepted convention, that at some point in the film, the woman will rely on a man's help, this is most noticeable in *The China Syndrome*, where Wells' story exists predominantly because of her cameraman's actions.

84% of the journalists surveyed strongly disagreed that women always need the help of their male colleagues, and many commented on the independent nature of many of their peers. Even though generally the representations are strong-minded, self-determining women, it is the most contemporary portrayal (Tally Atwater, *Up Close and Personal*) that admits this reliance to the greatest degree.

I'm exactly the way you made me. Do it this way, do it that way, do it my way – until I don't even know how to do it without you. (See Appendix F – Clip 6)

American reporter and anchorwoman Sandy Gallant (*The Week*, NBC) referred specifically to Atwater's ambition. She said although many women in the industry demonstrate this:

The film is not a realistic example of how one climbs the ladder in broadcasting. Having someone without a college degree get her first job at a major station...is truly fictional. Most women have to work their way through a number of television markets before even coming close to working at the network level.

Gallant also commented on the competition involved between journalists, this is captured in the same film when Atwater confronts chief reporter and anchorwoman, Joanna Kennelly, saying: "How would you do it?" Kennelly replies: "Perfectly."

For the characters that excel in their work, there is little satisfaction. Loathed by her colleagues, the fact Alicia Clark (*The Paper*) is doing 'miracles' in her job is unappreciated, and there is nothing but pity in this exchange between *Broadcast News*' Jane Craig, and her boss:

Paul Moore: You must be absolutely right and I'm absolutely wrong. It must be nice to always believe you know better, to always think you're the smartest person in the room.
Jane Craig: No it's awful.

Despite Craig's powerful position, and journalistic talent, she is the most emotionally unstable character; shown crying, often ritualistically, seven times in the film. This is reminiscent of older representations where strong-willed female 'sob sisters' would eventually cry because a man did not love them, or they were not good enough. (See Appendix F – Clip 7)

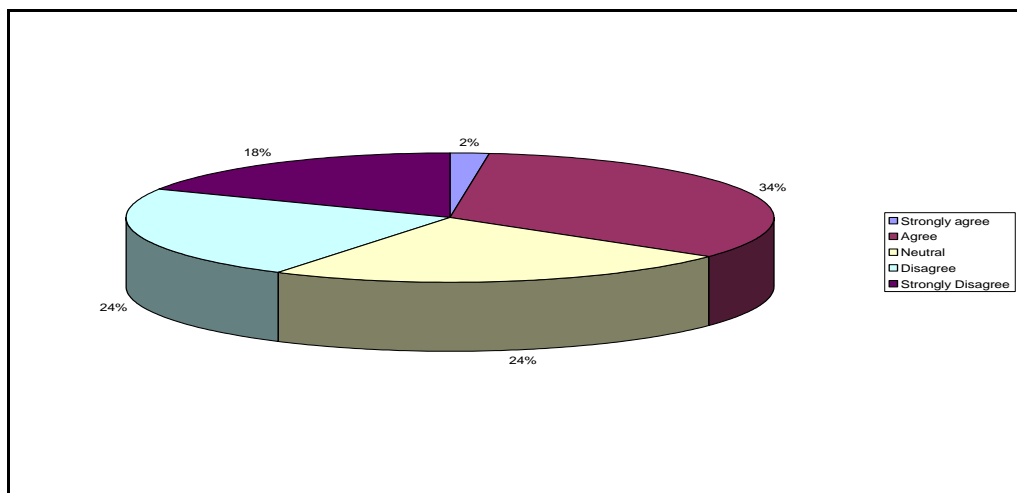


Figure 7: "Female journalists react more emotionally than men when they make a professional mistake?"

How realistic this emotional reaction is, divided questionnaire respondents as figure 7 shows, but academic and author, Dr Cynthia Carter (School of Journalism lecturer, Cardiff University), understood this range of opinion:

Some might say that this isn't a problem, because it shows the human side to the female journalist. I suppose it depends on the context - tears might be just the right thing to show in certain circumstances, but where this is used to simply reproduce stereotypes, then it is not.

Appearance

"This isn't about lipstick, this is about them" – **Warren Justice**, *Up Close and Personal* (1996)

Eve Pollard's impression of the cinematic female journalist was:

Someone that manages to be a journalist and go to exercise classes on a daily basis, not to mention the hairdresser, manicurist, the pedicurist, etc. So of course, they're glamorised.

Although this is true of some representations, in the analysed films, this is not the general rule. Both *Absence of Malice's* Megan Carter and *Broadcast News's* Jane Craig are intentionally unglamorous in their apparel. Both characters are dressed plainly, in feminine, but practical clothing, and their image is not a focus of the films, although this could be in part, because their characters are not on television.

In *The China Syndrome*, however, Kimberly Wells' image is the subject of debate in the opening sequence. The decision to dye her hair red; taken by her managing editor, due to market research, has boosted ratings. Wells' hair is referred to at several points in the film, with one character referring to her as, "the red head," emphasising the importance of image in the television news industry. American reporter and anchorwoman, Sandy Gallant believed this was true in reality saying: "Looks do play a part more so in this business than any other."

This is more prominent in *Up Close and Personal* where Tally Atwater's hair and clothing is altered at various stages to suit the 'market' she is working for. There is no similar attention paid

to male appearance in the film, and anchorman, Rob Sullivan, seems deliberately unattractive in comparison with Atwater. Anchorwoman, Marcia McGrath, emphasises the struggle older women have in the industry, after she is fired and replaced by the younger, more attractive Atwater saying: “This is the way it is?”

Many questionnaire respondents commented on the glamorisation of film representations. One US anchorwoman did not identify at all with Hollywood depictions in this respect, she said:

They are trite, unrealistic and make it look easy to “make it” in this job. For each of the few who build a career in front of the camera, there are thousands who do not. The majority of us are extremely bright – not TV bimbos.

Despite comments of this nature, there was little evidence to support these claims. Although all the characters analysed were conventionally ‘attractive’ and occasionally sexualised they were not projected as unintelligent.

The conflicting masculine image of *The Paper’s* Alicia Clark brings to light a ‘cross-dressing’ convention, whereby powerful female characters mirror their male counterparts in clothing and in behaviour. The only time we see Clark dress femininely, is when she asks her boss for a salary increase, she has no control and is unsuccessful, (See Appendix F – Clip 8). This suggests she must look, and act like a man in order to be treated as one. Linda Steiner (Associate Professor, Journalism & Media Studies, Rutgers University, New Jersey), recognised the origins of this confused judgement in reality:

I think that femininity, sexuality, and modern womanhood (including the notion that women can and should work outside the home) are still troublesome for a lot of people, and that popular culture representations point to that unsettled and unsettling problematic.

Personal life

“I’m great when I’m helping your career, but when I’m a woman for a second I get immediately fucked around by you?” – Jane Craig, Broadcast News (1987)

Although not all of the films focus heavily on the lives of these characters outside of the working environment, what they do show indicates how real female journalists might juggle working commitments and relationships. There appears to be a silent agreement, that those women who choose a successful career, will not be able to sustain that success in their personal life.

The most common way this is illustrated is through failed relationships, or an inability to control a relationship formed during the film.

Both Jane Craig (*Broadcast News*) and Megan Carter (*Absence of Malice*) start up and proceed to destroy romantic partnerships with male characters. Both relationships are ended because of a conflict of ethical interests, whereby the woman is forced to decide, what is more important, her values, or a man. Early on in the film Craig defines an obsessive as, “someone who doesn’t have anything else in their life.” Despite her best efforts, and the possibility of future relationships, ultimately she has become obsessed with her career and its successes, sacrificing ideals of love and family life.

Carter raises the concern that she has become an embodiment of her work, and little else, when complimented by her editor Mac:

Mac: You’re a good newspaperwoman Meg.

Megan Carter: And if you delete newspaper? (See Appendix F – Clip 9)

Dr Cynthia Carter believed this was true of female journalists:

In real life, you find that the more successful women are in journalism, the less likely they are to have a stable relationship and even less likely to have children than their male counterparts.

Although many women working in journalism would not want to admit to such injustices some of those surveyed commented of the impossible juggling act due to deadline pressures, and long hours, which is worsened with relationship or family commitments.

Eve Pollard, who has edited numerous publications, tells fellow women journalists to forget about living in a nice environment and instead be as near to the office as possible, but she realised why many women do not want this. She said:

Which woman I know, works, has children and has time for hobbies. You barely have time to get to the dentist. You have to sacrifice something. And most editors screw up that marriages or their health.

One character that chooses to sacrifice her career is Martha Hackett in *The Paper* who gives birth at the end of the film, with the former promise from her female friend that:

Once you have kids a man's best work can still be ahead of him, but a woman's is very definitely in the past.

Although it is not said directly, it is implied that Hackett will not go back to work. While her husband is rewarded with a wife, child and a front page exclusive story.

In *Up Close and Personal* where Tally Atwater has both a successful career and a happy marriage, her husband is killed, leaving her without the latter. This suggests that although it might be possible for women to 'have it all' this goes against traditional societal roles, and is not a wholly accepted part of dominant gender ideologies.

Ending

"I'm only here for one reason, to tell the story. My husband told me that, not so long ago." – **Tally Atwater**, *Up Close and Personal* (1996)

No matter how or if the above issues have presented themselves throughout the films, it is the characters' fate and ending, that leave a lasting impression. And despite the different routes

each representation takes to reach its film's climax the result is less varied and recognisable from film to film.

Of the ten portrayals analysed, four stereotypical groups (for lead characters) can be identified: the *single star*, the *miserable bitch*, the *unethical fool* and the *maternal deserter*.

The *single star* accounts for characters who are justly rewarded with professional success at the end of the film, and although liked by their peers, have no substantial relationship status. The film's ending focuses primarily on their achievements, as in *Up Close and Personal* where Tally Atwater, is honoured for her work at her new network's award ceremony and *The China Syndrome* where Kimberly Wells' producer praises her final report.

Alicia Clark (*The Paper*) falls into the *miserable bitch* group, as a powerful character with career success, a failed marriage, but no evidenced admiration or respect from her colleagues. Rather than be rewarded, Clark is shot in the leg, which could be seen as a symbolic punishment for her behaviour.

A less common extension of this, is the much-pitied *unethical fool*; a woman who has sacrificed romantic happiness, or job credibility in pursuit of a story, usually through unethical means, but who is liked by her peers. In *Absence of Malice* we see Megan Carter do just this with no promise of a more positive future. She admits her failings when she says:

I know you think what I do for a living is nothing. But it really isn't nothing, I just did it badly.

This closing speech shows repentance, but punishment still exists in the loss of her relationship with Gallagher and her damaged journalistic reputation. (See Appendix F – Clip 10)

Finally, we can see the rare contemporary image of Martha Hackett, also in *The Paper* as a *maternal deserter* choosing a family life over her career as a journalist.

However professionally or personally successful these women are, all these familiar images seem to do is enforce the previously mentioned suggestion that women cannot sustain both professional and personal life success. This is summarised by Jane Arthurs, Cultural Studies Principal at the University West of England:

Women in post-feminist popular culture are always shown engaged in a struggle between their desire to be economically independent and successful and their desire to be desired by a man. It is an ideological message that women can't have it all and if they try they will be miserable. It is a means to devalue the gains made by feminism to try to undermine women's growing independence from men.

Jokes, pressure, standards and the unattainable reflection

The results of the questionnaire also indicated that women recognise they do not dominate the profession and 56% felt they had to work harder than men to get to the top. Figures suggested that the majority of women have been the object of a sexual joke, and 38% believed they were more likely to face sexual harassment than their male peers. Respondents were divided over whether female journalists often use their sexuality to help them with a story, but 74% disagreed or strongly disagreed that women journalists have sexual relationships with colleagues to further their careers. Regarding their ability, 35 of the 50 respondents strongly disagreed that women found deadline pressure harder than men, and 29 believed men and women journalists were equally manipulative. 44% said they felt more vulnerable in a dangerous workplace, because they were a woman.

Of the 50 women surveyed, only eight could name a film character that encompassed their idea of the female journalist. None of these eight respondents referred to the 10 analysed characters specifically, one mentioned *Broadcast News* as a realistic interpretation, and the others noted Lois Lane (no specific interpretation) from the *Superman* films, (*Superman*, 1978; *Superman II*, 1980; *Superman III*, 1983; *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace*, 1987) and Veronica Guerin from the film of the same name, (*Veronica Guerin*, 2003) Arguably, this could be because the majority of respondents worked in radio and local newspapers, the former, not shown in these films, and the latter, in the form of large city-wide newspapers, possibly dissimilar to their own working environments, (see Appendix D, figure 8). However, this implies that the vast majority of

women in the industry do not believe these images to be accurate, and that 84% cannot find any that are.

Although she now believes the images of television reporters to be contrived works of fantasy, Sandy Gallant said they played a large part in her decision to pursue a career in television news and that “realistic” and “accurate” portrayals are “very important” in order for people to have a “true understanding” of the industry.

Paul Schindler developed this argument further; he suggested that although these women find film portrayals unrealistic, at the same time, they might unknowingly adopt them as a standard to live up to:

When women are shown as helpless, clingy and in need of rescue, that becomes the societal role model and the expectation of female journalists. As well, it tends to make women who come into the field feel that's the way I should be. I always thought I should be more like Clark Kent; I guess most female journalists assume they should be more like Lois Lane.

Conclusions

“Among all professions, that of journalism offers perhaps the most impressive example of women’s intrepid persistence in the face of professional hostility.” (Banner, 1974)

“The contemporary newswoman, while regularly cast as a tough, talented pro, often bears the burden of being depicted as an emotionally empty Super Bitch of Super Whore.” (Ghiglione, 1990) - (Both cited in Saltzman, 2003, pg 5-8)

Since the first ‘talkie’ appearance of a woman journalist on screen in 1929, the female ‘hack’ as a central character has continued to inspire film writers and directors proving popular with audiences through the decades. Initially, it would appear that the cinematic interpretations of women in this profession have evolved dramatically since the sharp-tongued sob-sisters and masculine cub reporters of the 1930s; alongside developments made within the real news industry, but portrayals that reflect these changes are scarce, and updated repetitions are in abundance.

Not only is there much disparity between the circumstances surrounding the careers of on-screen journalists and those in reality, there is an inconsistency among the views of real women journalists. Jane Arthurs (Cultural Studies Principal, University West of England), believed the use of stereotypes as a tool of audience familiarity makes it difficult for film characters to represent a group of women who are inevitably diverse, but this study suggests that in spite of Hollywood glamorisation and a mixture of respondents with varied experiences it is possible to recognise shared characteristics that make up the image of the female journalist on screen, and that of her real-life contemporaries.

This research has shown apparent division over views surrounding the power, and influence women have in news organisations. Although films suggest a prevailing societal belief that women cannot command control successively, and the power they do possess is destabilized by personal sacrifice or discontentment. Questionnaire responses indicate this viewpoint is not subscribed to be everyone, which was justified by Linda Steiner, (Associate Professor of Journalism at Rutgers University, New Jersey):

I think that femininity, sexuality, and modern womanhood (including the notion that women can and should work outside the home) are still troublesome for a lot of people, and that popular culture representations point to that unsettled and unsettling problematic.

Steiner also referred to the idea that popular culture portrayals are masculinised, or shown flaunting their sexuality to retain any power they receive to enforce prevalent notions of gender. Although the majority of questionnaire respondents here said they had not used their sexuality to benefit their careers, there is much other evidence to support the masculinisation of women in the newsroom.

This compromise of femininity is most evident at the top of the power hierarchy. Where Karen Ross (Director of Mass Communications, Coventry University) argued, although there have been more women reaching higher positions, many of these women do not want to make changes to the industry, and behave as their male predecessors have, continuing the same patriarchal tradition they took over, which can be seen clearly in characters such as Jane Craig (*Broadcast News*, 1987) and Alicia Clark (*The Paper*, 1994) where they adopt masculine identities in order to maintain the appearance of power.

Parallels also appeared lower down the ranks where there was a recurrent tendency to find characters being delegated simple tasks, and 'weaker' stories, rather than encouraged to take on more serious investigative roles, as in *Up Close and Personal* (1996). Some questionnaire respondents commented on the realistic nature of this behaviour, and noted that gender sometimes, even subconsciously, played a role in story assignments. This was supported by Dr Cynthia Carter (Journalism lecturer, Cardiff University):

There is still a tendency to find women clustered in reporting certain kinds of soft news and not others. Part of this has to do with longstanding sexist traditions in journalism.

There was little argument over the existence of these sexist traditions in relation to the sacrifices made by women journalists, with both previous research and this study suggesting obvious similarities between fiction and reality. Unlike the 'fairytale' conventions laid-out for most female characters in Hollywood film, of the 10 women analysed, none had both a happy relationship and successful career at the end which reiterates the conscious choices made by women in a male-dominated industry. All interviewees questioned about this notion of sacrifice in reality, felt it remained difficult for women to 'have it all'.

Although other studies have commented on masculinised power roles and female sacrifice, observable discrimination in the work place is an area relatively untouched by other research into this field. Vernon Stone (Research Professor, University of Missouri) believes that today hiring is based almost entirely on credentials as opposed to gender and that discrimination is diminishing, but the women journalists surveyed and film interpretations would suggest otherwise. Questionnaire respondents agreed they were more likely to face discrimination as women journalists, and discrimination was one of the top three most prominent issues covered in the films.

Many respondents commented on the 'unrealistic' nature of the set-up of these films. Concluding that it was hard to compare the representations of female journalists with themselves, because of the Hollywood-isation of the newsrooms, dramatic stories covered and famous actresses playing their screen counterparts, leading to comments such as:

It certainly isn't as glamorous as it's made out to be. I bet Lois Lane never endured hours of boredom at a District Council budget meeting!

This could have limited personal comparisons within the research. Jane Arthurs believes that rather than assessing the realism involved it is far more productive to assess the "politically progressive" characteristics of these representations.

This could include fantasy scenarios that would be very unrealistic but which would represent women in more powerful roles.

Of the characters studied, arguably none of them are in "fantasy" situations, but those that do take on uncharacteristically powerful roles, serve more to enforce existing stereotypes than to develop, or encourage change of societal conventions.

In the end, it doesn't matter whether these images are true or not. They make up the image of the journalist in which we believe and upon which we act. (Saltzman, 2002, pg 56)

Saltzman's somewhat defeatist attitude here shines light on the very reason these representations are of so much import. They create an internationally received impression of the world's news gatherers; determining trust, respect, and acceptance of many generations of journalists.

When interviewed, Saltzman developed these views, explaining that popular culture plays a vital role in shaping public perception of the media. He blamed the "anger and lack of confidence" most Americans have towards news organisations partly on these images.

Much of the image of the female journalist as a money-grubbing, selfish, arrogant, often stupid scoundrel is based on images from movies and television.

Much research points to the unrealistic expectation that films can accurately portray the workings of the industry, but others are more optimistic, referencing Jane Craig and Alicia Clark as characters, although not wholly positive in their representation, reflect many of the realities facing women in journalism. (Schindler, interview - see Appendix E)

None of the female characters analysed were identical in their experiences, and this variety was prevalent in the responses from real journalists, who detailed the differences in their treatment and behaviour. The majority trends that emerged in real life were compared to the 4 main stereotypes identified within the films. Loren Ghiglione recognised five stages of representation, (see Appendix G) that have occurred over the decades. His research supports the findings of this study, that earlier depictions have not been replaced by developed clichés, instead they are joined by them resulting in several conflicting images throughout popular culture, (Ghiglione, 1991, paragraphs 22-29).

Further study into this area might explore the recent development of the *sexual success* as another recognisable stereotype. Although not apparent in the examples used for content analysis, films such as *I Love Trouble* (1994), *Life or Something Like It* (2002), *Never Been Kissed* (1999) and the *Scream* trilogy (1996 - 2000) have shown confident women achieving in journalism, whilst maintaining positive relationships with men. Some might consider this

development as revolutionary, but all these characters are heavily sexualised, and the films focus more on their relationships, than their journalistic ability.

Other developments that might be of interest are those in *Shattered Glass* (2003); where three minor roles portraying female journalists, make little or no reference to their sex, sexuality, discrimination or power. This de-sexualisation is also noticeable in *The Life of David Gale* (2003) where the attractive Bitsey Bloom is focused on her work throughout and openly fights back against the discriminatory treatment of women journalists.

Successful female journalists end up with nothing less than the male journalist's present successes and failures, and future nightmares. (Saltzman, interview)

Although pessimistic, this viewpoint suggests there is a fair treatment of women however inaccurate. Recent 1970s newsroom satire *Anchorman: the legend of Ron Burgundy* (2004) highlights the prejudices that used to exist for female journalists, but the light-hearted way it mocks 'the way things were' only serves to emphasise the similarities in more 'realistic' portrayals. (See Appendix F – Clip 11)

This study suggests for a woman journalist to be successful she will have sacrificed, to some extent, her femininity, personal life, or ethics, and could still have to endure disrespectful colleagues and discrimination. If it remains questionable as to whether these representations have developed in recent years to reflect the changes in the media, and with evidence to support many accurate parallels between them and the realities of the industry, it feeds doubt as to whether the newsroom really does provide that 'fair treatment' to female journalists.

I'm a man who discovered the wheel and built the Eiffel Tower out of metal and brawn. That's what kind of man I am. You're just a woman with a small brain. With a brain a third the size of us. It's science. – Ron Burgundy, *Anchorman (Anchorman: The legend of Ron Burgundy, 2004)*

Word Count – 9,977

Appendices

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Appendix A(1) – Content analysis: Qualitative coding sheet

Film Content Analysis

Film Title:

Date:

Director:

Character name:

General points

Tone of the film – What is the approach of the film towards the subject matter? Is it realistic, satirical, farcical e.t.c?

Position of female journalist in film – How much of a central character is she?

What is her job? What responsibilities does she have? How does her career change over the course of the film?

Ethics

How ethical is the character?

Does the character carry out unethical practices?

Is the character trusted and respected by her colleagues?

Is her journalistic integrity challenged? If yes, how?

Discrimination

Does she face discrimination in the work place? If so, how?

Is the topic of discrimination raised?

Does she accept the discrimination or does she fight against it?

Is she assigned to different tasks because she's a woman?

How is she treated by fellow female colleagues?

Power

Is she in a position of power?

If yes, is she respected by her colleagues?

How is she treated by those more/less powerful than her?

How does she treat those more/less powerful than her?

Is she a positive/negative figure of power?

Ability

Is she good at her job?

How much is she praised and criticised for her work?

Does she have self-confidence in her journalistic ability?

Is she shown as better/worse at her job than other colleagues?

How important is 'getting the story' to her?

Does she use her sexuality in the workplace as a journalistic tool?

Appearance

Does she fall into an obvious visual stereotype?

Does this distinguish her from the appearance of other characters?

What sort of clothes/hairstyle does she have?

How much attention is paid by other characters to her visual appearance?

Is the way she looks a focus of the film's plot?

Does her appearance change at all throughout the film? If so, why?

Is it important for her to look a certain way in the workplace?

Personal Life

What is her relationship status throughout the film?

If she develops a relationship through the course of the film is it a happy one?

Is her relationship with a colleague? Is that colleague senior to her?

How is the relationship viewed by colleagues? Is she treated differently?

Does she prioritise a personal relationship over a professional obligation?

Is the relationship a dominant plot point, that detracts from journalistic practice?

How does the relationship end?

Ending

What is the outcome of journalistic work?

What is the outcome of other plot points, e.g. relationships?

Is the final impression of the character positive or negative?

Is she recognisable as any previously established stereotypes? (refer to Ghiglione, 1991)

Other information

Include any further material that is specifically relevant to this character, or film.

Quotations

Include any quotations that illustrate any of the above points, and the representation studied.

Appendix A(2) – Content analysis: Prominence scale

The China Syndrome (1979)

Issues	Issues – in order of prominence	rating
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Ability	Ability	6
Appearance	Discrimination	5
Ethics	Appearance	4
Discrimination	Ethics	3
Power	Power	2
Personal Life	Personal Life	1

Absence of Malice (1981)

Issues	Issues – in order of prominence	rating
Ability	Ethics	6
Appearance	Ability	5
Ethics	Personal Life	4
Discrimination	Power	3
Power	Discrimination	2
Personal Life	Appearance	1

Broadcast News (1987)

Issues	Issues – in order of prominence	rating
Ability	Ethics	6
Appearance	Personal Life	5
Ethics	Ability	4
Discrimination	Power	3
Power	Appearance	2
Personal Life	Discrimination	1

The Paper (1994)

Issues	Issues – in order of prominence	rating
Ability	Power	6
Appearance	Ethics	5
Ethics	Discrimination	4
Discrimination	Appearance	3
Power	Personal Life	2
Personal Life	Ability	1

Up Close and Personal (1996)

Issues	Issues – in order of prominence	rating
Ability	Personal Life	6
Appearance	Discrimination	5
Ethics	Appearance	4
Discrimination	Ability	3
Power	Power	2
Personal Life	Ethics	1

Overall Prominence of issues:

Issues	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total rating
Ability	I	I	I	I		I	19
Appearance			II	I	I	I	14
Ethics	II	I		I		I	21
Discrimination		II	I		I	I	17
Power	I			II	II		16
Personal Life	I	I	I		I	I	18

Appendix B – Sample Questionnaire

I am a final year undergraduate at Bournemouth University, writing a dissertation on the representation of female journalists in films. If you could take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire I would be most grateful.

1. Which sector of the journalism industry do you currently work for? (Please tick)

- Newspaper (national)
- Newspaper (local)
- Magazine
- Television
- Radio
- Other (please state) _____

2. On a scale of 1-5 how much do you agree with the following statements about women journalists? - Where 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree (Please circle)

Female journalists...

- A) Dominate the journalism profession 1 2 3 4 5
- B) Are treated as equals in the newsroom 1 2 3 4 5
- C) Are not taken as seriously as their male colleagues 1 2 3 4 5
- D) Always need the help of their male colleagues 1 2 3 4 5
- E) Often use their sexuality to help them with a story 1 2 3 4 5
- F) Find deadline pressure more difficult than male journalists 1 2 3 4 5
- G) React more emotionally than men if they make a professional mistake 1 2 3 4 5
- H) Find it harder to succeed in journalism than men 1 2 3 4 5
- I) Face sexual harassment in the newsroom more than male journalists 1 2 3 4 5
- J) Have sexual relationships with colleagues to further their careers 1 2 3 4 5

3.ETHICS

A) Do you think female journalists are more ethical than their male counterparts? (Please tick)

Yes No Equally ethical

B) Some film portrayals show women journalists to be manipulative. In reality are female journalists more manipulative than their male counterparts? (Please tick)

Yes No Equally manipulative

Journalists are not manipulative

C) Are female journalists more/less likely to compromise their journalistic integrity for a good story than their male colleagues? (Please tick)

More likely Less likely Equally likely

4. DISCRIMINATION

A) Have you ever felt discriminated against because you're a female journalist? (Please tick)

Yes No

B) In your opinion, do women journalists have to work harder than men to get to the top of their profession? (Please tick)

Yes No

C) In your opinion, have you ever been given preferential treatment by a senior employee because you're a woman? (Please tick)

Yes No Unsure

5. SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKPLACE

A) Have you ever been the object of a sexual joke in the journalistic workplace?

Yes No Unsure

B) Have you ever used your sexuality to benefit your work (i.e to convince an interviewee to talk to you/ to get given a better assignment by a senior employee)

Yes No Unsure

6. POWER

A) Do you feel more vulnerable in dangerous work situations because you're a woman?

Yes No Not applicable

B) As a senior journalist/editor have you ever found it hard to gain respect from male colleagues?

Yes No Not applicable

C) Do journalists (both male and female) take male editors more seriously than female editors?

Yes No No Difference

7. FILMS

Can you name any films or film characters that encompass your idea of the female journalist?

Yes (Please specify) _____

No

8. If you have any other comments you feel might be appropriate around this subject feel free to add, or attach them here (continue overleaf if necessary)

Thank you for taking the time to help me with my research. All responses are anonymous and will be used for internal research only. Please return this completed questionnaire via email to:

sarahherman@hotmail.co.uk

Or by post to: SARAH HERMAN, 112B Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, UK. BH1 1LU

Appendix C – List of interviewees

Jane Arthurs – Cultural Studies Principal, University West of England (Bristol)

Dr Cynthia Carter – Lecturer, School of Journalism, Cardiff University

Sandy Gallant – American reporter and Anchorwoman, NBC *The Week*

Mike Gray – Screenplay writer, *The China Syndrome* (1979)

Eve Pollard – President of Women in Journalism UK and journalist

Dr Karen Ross – Director of Mass Communications, Coventry University

Joe Saltzman – Director of the Image of Journalists in Popular Culture

Paul Schindler – Journalist and journalism film enthusiast

Linda Steiner – Associate Professor, Journalism & Media Studies, Rutgers University, NJ

Vernon Stone – Research Professor, School of Journalism, University of Missouri

Appendix D – Graphs & Figures

Figure 1 – Overall prominence of issues

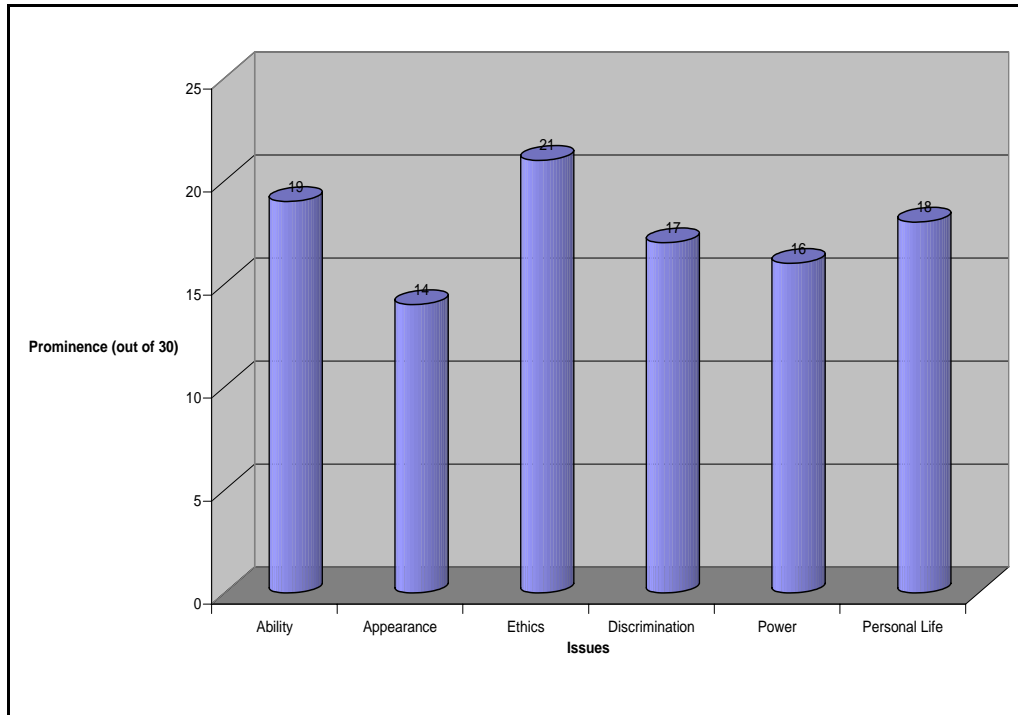


Figure 2 – Response to questionnaire statement: “Female journalists are not taken as seriously as their male colleagues.”

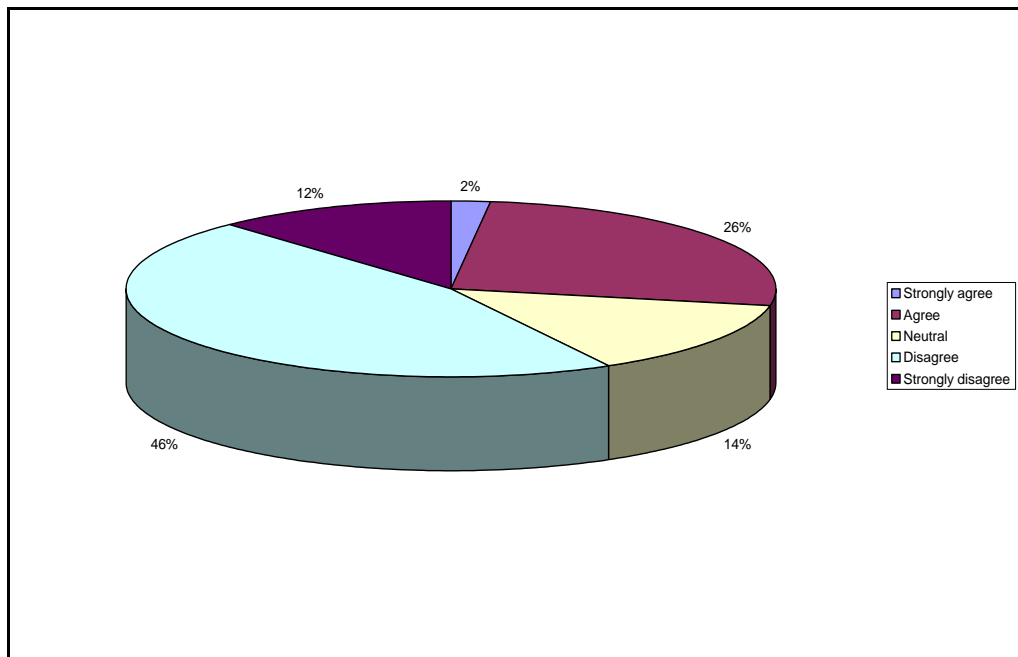


Figure 3 – Response to questionnaire statement: “Female journalists are treated as equals in the newsroom.”

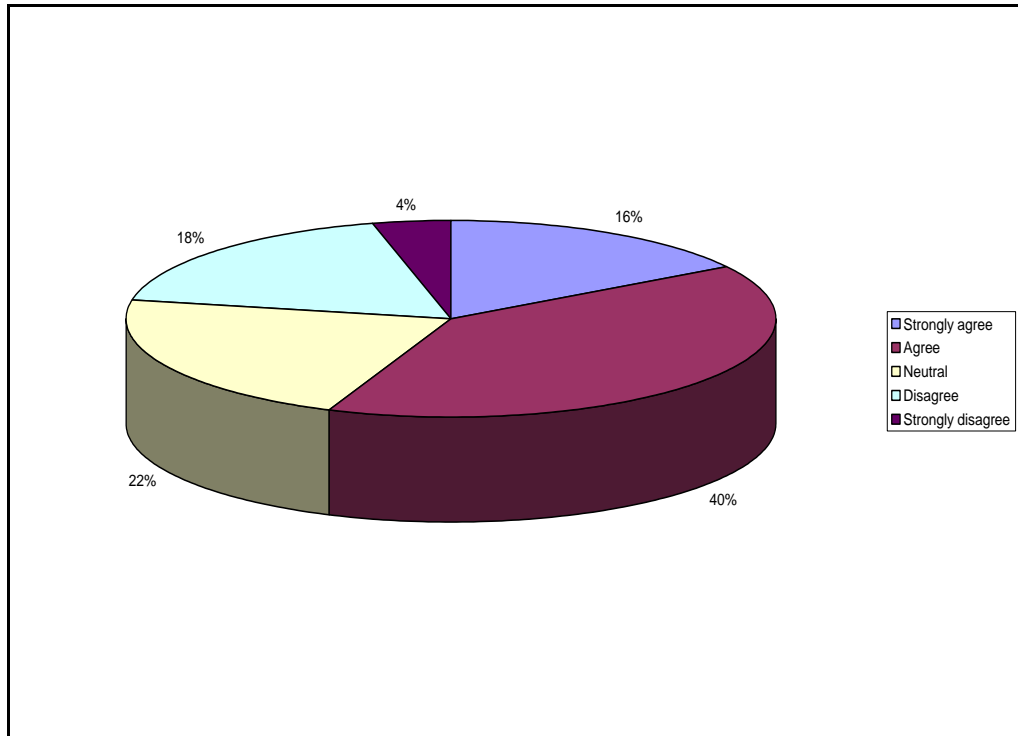


Figure 4 – Response to questionnaire statement: “Female journalists find it harder to succeed in journalism than men.”

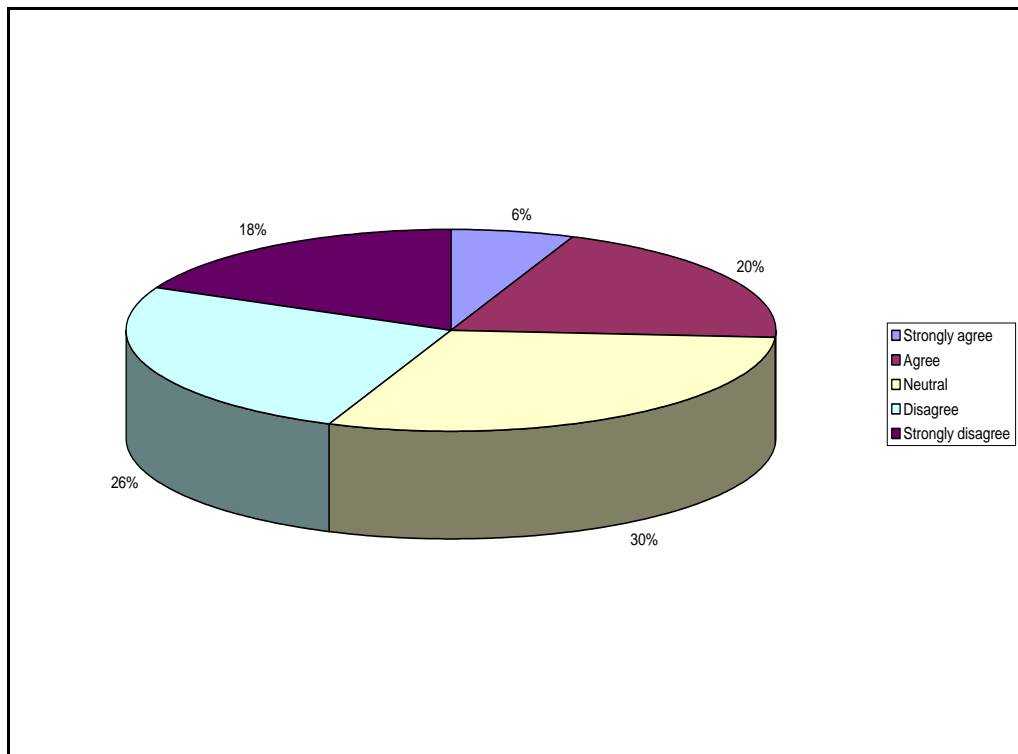


Figure 5 – As a senior journalist have you found it hard to gain respect from male colleagues?

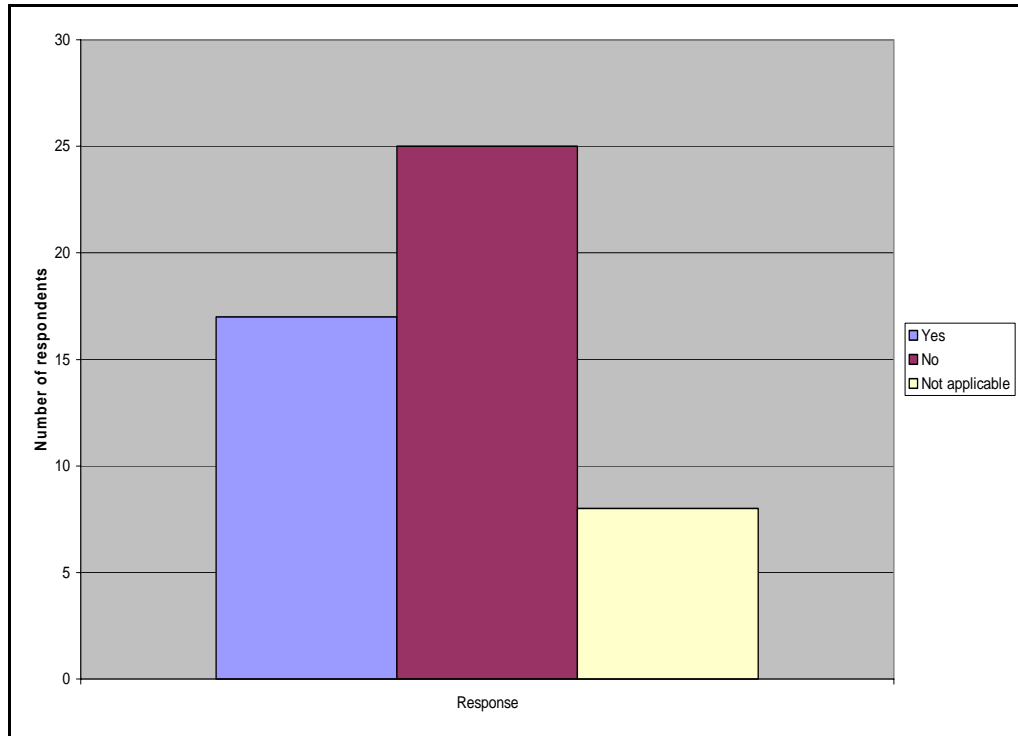


Figure 6 – Do journalists take male editors more seriously than female editors?

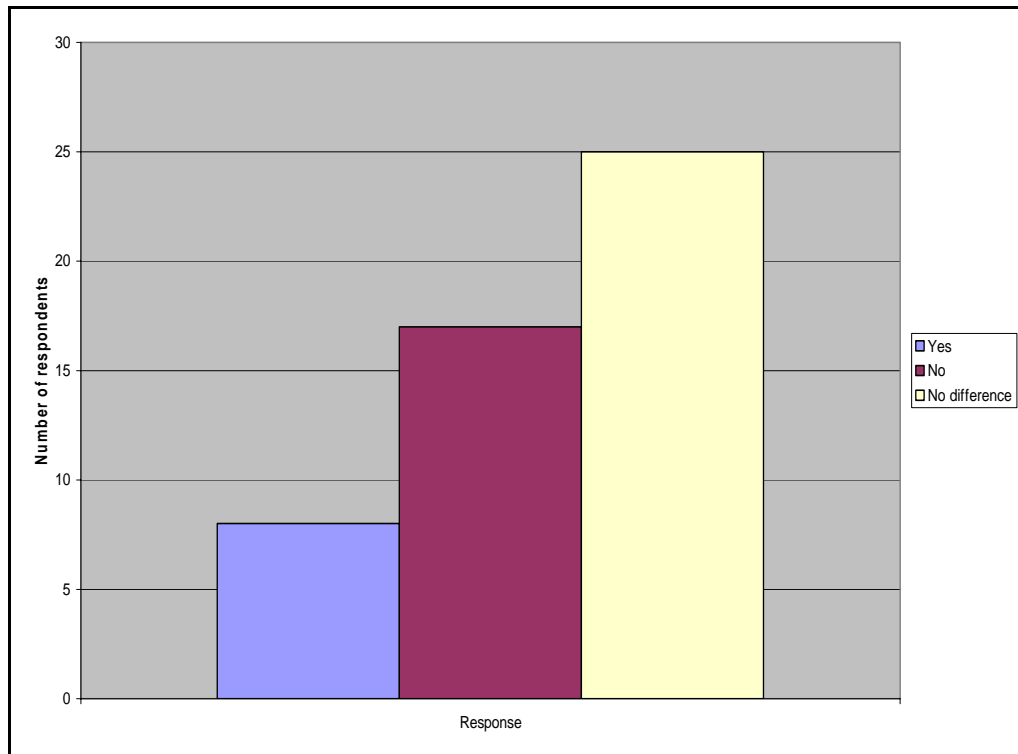


Figure 7 – Response to questionnaire statement: “Female journalists react more emotionally than men when they make a professional mistake.”

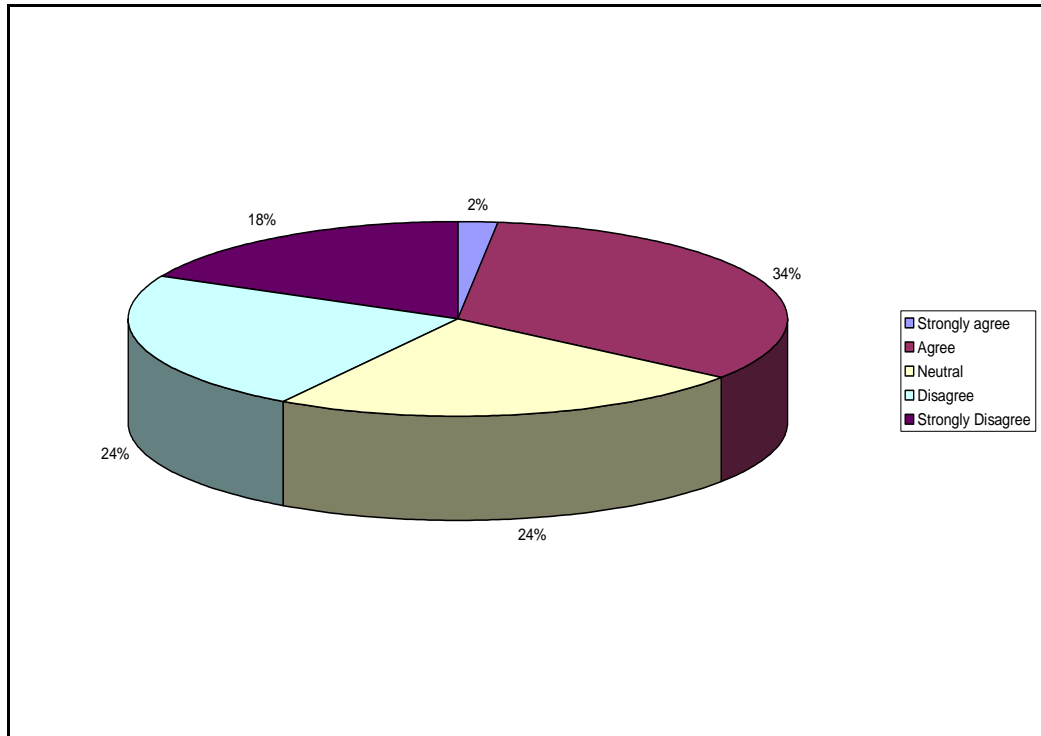
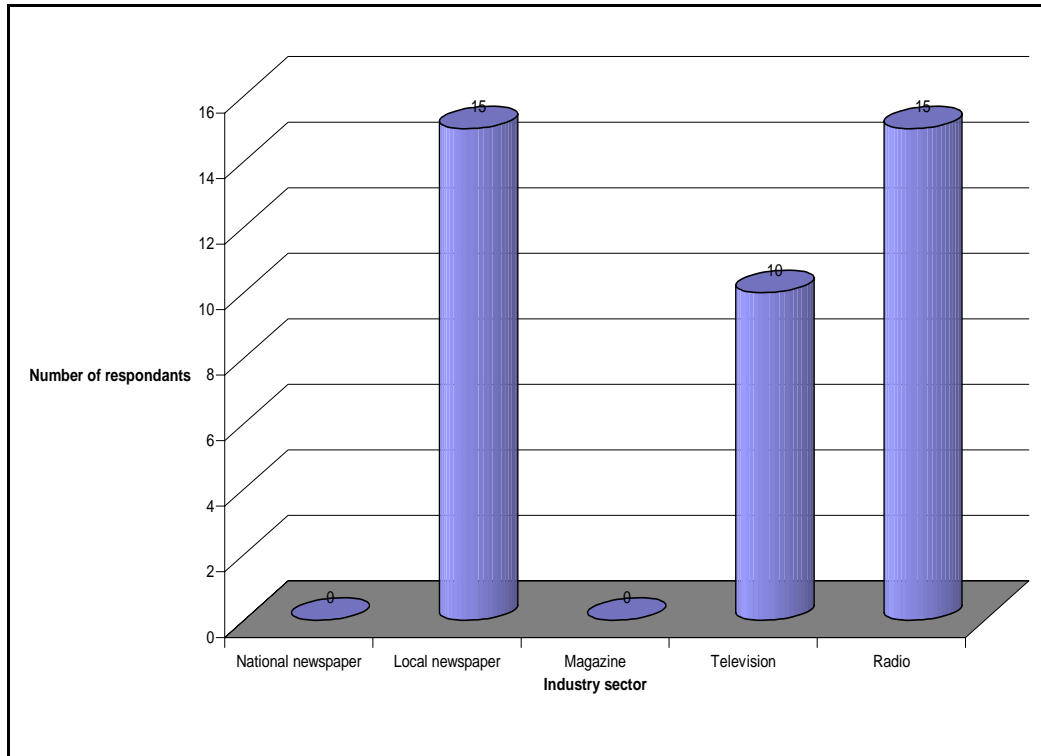


Figure 8 – Professional origins of surveyed journalists.



Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Jane Arthurs – Principal of Cultural Studies, University West of England

1) How important is it that popular culture, especially film, shows women journalists in a realistic light?

I don't think that realism necessarily matters- no one agrees about what constitutes a realistic portrayal anyway as it all depends on what image you have in your head about what women journalists are really like. Where does this image come from if not from other media portrayals. Or if it is from everyday life then how would you translate those people's lives into an entertaining narrative? The demand that individual characters should represent a whole group of women who are necessarily diverse is impossible anyway. What is more important a question I think is whether any of the portrayals are politically progressive in the way that women journalists are portrayed. This could include fantasy scenarios that would be very unrealistic but which would represent women in more powerful roles- such as heading up a multinational news organisation for example.

2) Over the last century the position of women in the newsroom changed dramatically but interestingly the sob sisters and naive female cub reporters surrounded by a male staff have dominated Hollywood's portrayal of the industry. Why do you think this is?

Recurrent character types and conventional narrative structures are an inevitable component of popular film which appeal because of their familiarity. First there are the standard conventions of Hollywood film that designates certain roles for heroic men as the ones who drive the narrative to its conclusion, whereas women are either their helpmate or the problem he has to solve. Above all else their narrative function is to be the object of the male character's desire. At a more specific level genre conventions develop around particular narrative situations, character types and plot trajectories that are not easily shaken off. Films about journalism relate to each other rather than to real life, although they may transform some elements to give it a veneer of contemporary relevance

3) Female journalist characters often struggle between the pressures of work and their private lives, ultimately one being sacrificed for the other. Why is it women are forced to sacrifice romance for work or work for romance, (as in NETWORK, ABSENCE OF MALICE) where male protagonists (as in THE PAPER and BROADCAST NEWS) are rewarded with both?

Women in post-feminist popular culture are always shown engaged in a struggle between their desire to be economically independent and successful and their desire to be desired by a man. It is an ideological message that women can't have it all and if they try they will be miserable. It is a means to devalue the gains made by feminism to try to undermine women's growing independence from men. It has been repeated so often now that it is embedded as a convention in any film dealing with women who have a career. (Try to think if there are any exceptions to this in films that are made outside of the industry mainstream). It is certainly not specific to films about women journalists.

4) Why is the film industry bound to use stereotypes, rather than opting for realism, especially with regards gender roles and representation?

The only way that you will get films that do something different is if more women are involved in making them and if they are addressed to non mainstream audiences with an assumed difference from the norm in their assumptions about gender. Or else if its a comedy in which case the transgressive gender performances will be excused because they are funny.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Dr Cynthia Carter – Lecturer, School of Journalism, Cardiff University

1) How important is it that popular culture, especially film, shows women journalists in a realistic light?

It depends what you mean by 'realistic'! What is more important, I think, is that they show women doing their jobs well and that their position isn't undermined on the basis of their sex, and when it is, that they are seen to be able to challenge the sexism.

2) Over the last century the position of women in the newsroom changed dramatically but interestingly the sob sisters and naive female cub reporters surrounded by a male staff have dominated Hollywood's portrayal of the industry. Why do you think this is?

3) Of the films I have studied for this thesis, the majority of lead female protagonists at some point show a very emotional side, unlike their male counterparts. Assuming there are women journalists out there who don't cry over their newscopy(!) why do you think it is films feel compelled to show strong professional women in this light?

Good question. It's still much more acceptable to show women being emotional in this way than men - men's emotions are typically portrayed in terms of aggression rather than tears. Some might say that this isn't a problem, because it shows the human side to the female journalist. I suppose it depends on the context - tears might be just the right thing to show in certain circumstances, but where this is used to simply reproduce stereotypes, then it is not.

4) What is Hollywood missing? How would you describe the position of female journalists today, considering their editorial roles, treatment and responsibilities in newsgathering and reporting?

This seems to be two different questions. On the first one - what they are missing is portrayals of women who have really made a difference in journalism - the women who have been there when there have been wars, human disasters small and large-scale, female reporter's intervention to highlight social deprivation/injustice, highlighting their contribution to bringing certain topics (like rape as a form of warfare in some conflicts), political scandal, etc. not enough of this is shown in Hollywood film.

On the second question - there is no doubt that in the UK, USA and other western countries (and I'm certain this also applies to many non western countries too, but don't feel competent to comment on this) that women have made great inroads into journalism, personally and as a group. However, in most instances, women still rarely reach the very top of their profession where the real decision-making power resides. And many of the women who have made it are white, middle class, etc. women of colour have not made the same advances as some white women have. And, there is still a tendency to find women clustered in reporting certain kinds of news ('soft' sectors, features, lifestyle, etc) and not others ('hard' sectors - politics, business, economics, war, etc.). part of this has to do with longstanding sexist traditions in journalism, but another part has to do with the demands of the job, where it is easier to juggle a personal life and a journalistic career doing journalism that has typically been regarded as 'feminine'.

5) *The main issue raised in most journalism-based films is that of journalistic ethics. The majority of female characters are shown to be more ethical than their male counterparts. Assuming real journalists are equally ethical, why do you think this is?*

I guess I'd have to know more about the films to which you're referring before being able to answer this one.

6) *Female journalist characters often struggle between the pressures of work and their private lives, ultimately one being sacrificed for the other. Why is it women are forced to sacrifice romance for work or work for romance, (as in NETWORK, ABSENCE OF MALICE) where male protagonists (as in THE PAPER and BROADCAST NEWS) are rewarded with both?*

See my response above on this - but is also has to do with the fact that in the wider culture there is still the expectation that women are the ones who are most responsible for the health of private life (partner, children, home). As such, in real life, you find that the more successful women are in journalism, the less likely they are to have a stable relationship and even less likely to have children than their male counterparts. In fact, stats in the UK and US show that the more successful a man is, the more likely he is to be married and have kids.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Sandy Gallant – American reporter and Anchorwoman, NBC, *The Week*

1) *What sort of picture do you think films such as UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL and BROADCAST NEWS paint of women who work in journalism?*

I would say the character of Tally Atwater in "Up Close and Personal" represents fairly well the actual ambition many women in the business demonstrate. HOWEVER the film is not a realistic example of how one climbs the ladder in broadcasting. Having someone without a college degree get her first job at a major station in Miami is truly fictional. Most women have to work their way through a number of television markets before even coming close to working at the network level. In terms of "Broadcast News," not all of us are manic under a deadline.

2) *How accurately would you describe these portrayals?*

Not very.

3) *How important do you think it is that female journalists are portrayed as realistically as possible in Hollywood films?*

Well considering the two films mentioned above played a small part in my decision to pursue a broadcasting career, I would say it's somewhat important. The more realistic the character - the better. That way any young women watching that film will have a true understanding of what this business can offer.

4) *A lot of these films show women using their sexuality and unethical means to climb up the ranks in the newsroom - to what extent is this sort of behaviour rooted in reality?*

Not really. Looks do play a part more so in this business than any other. I have yet to see any female I work with seduce anyone in the workplace.

5) The movie industry uses these generic representations to increase box-office potential, but does reinforcing stereotypes through such a powerful media form, stifle the efforts of women in the industry, and to some extent encourage backward thinking?

I don't think too many women in the business have time to really care how they are or are not portrayed on the silver screen. Let's face it; movies are part of an industry that strives to make money. Sex sells.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Mike Gray – Screenplay writer – *The China Syndrome* (1979)

1) How would you describe Kimberly Wells?

I wrote the original screenplay for the "China Syndrome" and when I made the deal with Douglas, I was slated to direct the picture starring Douglas, Richard Dreyfuss, Jack Lemon, and an unnamed female star. Then Dreyfuss appeared in "Jaws," became an overnight megastar -- one of the first -- and demanded that we double his salary. For Columbia, that was a deal breaker. Fonda found out about the picture -- she had tried to interest Columbia in a fictionalized version of the Karen Silkwood story but that failed to take off, so Sherry Lansing -- then head of Col Pix -- suggested she get together with Douglas.

At that point Fonda was at the peak of her career and there was no way she would agree to a first-time director -- a point that I clearly understood and never faulted her for. James Bridges was hired as director and he took on the task of expanding the female part -- which in my original version was important but not star scale. In my version, Kimberly Wells was the "sound girl" in the documentary crew. Bridges postulated that this was a couple of years later in her career after she had left the documentary crew and taken a job at the TV network. That gave him room to expand her role to a size fitting a star of Fonda's stature.

2) Was her character based on anybody, where did you get the inspiration for her?

The original character -- when she was part of the film crew -- was based on a real character. Bridges expanded on that.

3) Throughout the film there are no direct references to the fact that Wells is a woman, although in a 1970's newsroom, she is somewhat of a special case. Was this deliberately politically correct, or did you not think it would be commented on by her male colleagues?

Female news persons were not unusual at that time but they were considered window dressing and that fact was central to her character from the outset. She's sent to cover fluff stories and desperately wants to be taken seriously.

4) When Don Jacovich tells Wells she wasn't employed for her 'investigative skills' is he implying she was employed because she's a good-looking woman, if so, is Wells a token female anchor, as opposed to a equally qualified, legitimate member of the news-team?

She wasn't an anchor. She was an obvious token desperately trying to be taken seriously.

5) No other female journalists are shown throughout the film, is this intentional?

All the news babes at that time were tokens. We only needed one.

6) What we do see of Well's personal life, is fairly mundane. Did you intend for the audience to believe Wells has sacrificed relationships, and personal happiness for her career?

Absolutely. It was tough enough for guys. Much worse for women.

7) If yes, then this in itself is quite conventional of older journalism films, where 'sob sisters' are forced to choose between the love of their job and the love of a man, would it not have been equally plausible for Wells to have a husband, or boyfriend, or make any reference to a personal life?

Yes. But why?

8) In addition, no romantic storyline is explored between any of the lead characters - making, I think, for a more realistic, and better film, although this did surprise me on my initial viewing a few years ago, I am interested to know how this fact fared with producers, and test audiences - were they not keen to see a love interest?

With Michael Douglas as producer -- he was then riding on the incredible success of "Cool World's Nest" which was nominated for five Academy Awards -- it was not necessary for him to make

commercial compromises of this nature. He could do pretty much whatever he wanted. There were no test audiences of any kind until the film was finished. He would not have allowed it.

9) Earlier on in the film Wells refuses to put her job on the line for the sake of the story, unlike Richard Adams, and is very respectful of her superiors, is this a necessary tactic for female reporters to succeed, rather than being a hot-headed, impulsive; possessing more masculine traits?

If she had behaved like Richard Adams she would have been fired immediately.

10) Do you think the film would have worked if the central character of Wells had been male? If not, why?

Why have a picture with no women in it?

11) Wells remains calm and relatively objective before her final interview with Jack Godell, is this a masculinisation of the character, or is she just being professional?

Just being professional. She was presented as an interesting woman who is doing her best to make it in an all-male environment. It was a different world at that time. Note that when she goes back to the station to write her notes she does not sit down at her computer. She's using an IBM Selectric typewriter. It was the '70s, not the '90s.

12) Why was the decision made for Wells to cry at the end of the film? Was this written in the script?

No. That's why you hire great actors and great directors.

13) Although the voices of the station's producers tell us that Wells has done a good job at the end, her inability to remain objective still haunts me, what is being said really? She did a good job, for a woman?

Her inability to remain objective is proof that she's a human being. She just saw her main source for the story get blown away by security guards for no reason. If she had remained calm, cool and collected she would have been inhuman and detestible. Not a formula for filmic success.

14) Furthermore, the visual juxtaposition of praise for Wells' report, next to the advertising image of women cooking on the right hand screen, raises the question of a woman's role, and whether she is really cut out for the world of hard news, do you agree? and was this visual decision intentional?

That was an editing and directorial decision by James Bridges and I cannot imagine a better way to deal with it. She just witnessed a murder. Only a dunderhead like Bill O'Reilly could witness something like that and simply hand it off to the weatherman.

15) Would you say this is a journalism film featuring issues about nuclear energy, or a nuclear disaster film, featuring journalism?

The latter.

16) How do you think the Wells character shaped contemporary 1979 perceptions of women working in the news industry? Can you remember anyone commenting on the character being female?

No.

17) How do you think the Wells character is received by modern audiences, given the contrast in newsroom male/female ratios?

Your questions in themselves indicate the vast change that has overtaken the news business. Women at that time were considered window dressing. That's obvious from the outset when Kimberly is fighting to get a serious assignment rather than report on turtle births at the zoo.

18) When writing the film, how much and in what ways did you take into consideration the realities of the journalism industry, especially with regards to women, and their role in newsrooms?

We were intimately familiar with the news business at that time. This film was one of the most thoroughly researched pictures of the era. That's why it rings true.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Eve Pollard – President, *Women in Journalism*

1) How important is it that popular culture, especially film, shows women journalists in a realistic light?

I think it's very important. For a start, although we all have our laughs about journalism, a free press, does signify the difference between a democratic and an undemocratic country. A free press is more important than we all probably acknowledge, except when occasionally, perhaps a journalist is murdered doing their job or something like Valerie Guerin happens. So it's very important that number one, journalists are shown in the right light, ie not always negative, and ie facing some of the dangers and the problems that they do, and number two it's very important that female journalists are, because they're more of us, we do more important work than we ever did before, and we feel that we should be treated as equal by other governments, other people, by the world.

2) And how would you describe the typical Hollywood female journalist?

Well, firstly she's someone that manages to be a journalist and go to exercise classes on a daily basis, not to mention the hairdresser, manicurist, the pedicurist, etcetera. So of course, they're glamourised. Number two of course, very often they have been the side-kicks of male journalists, or the sidekicks of policemen. They are seen as secondary, very rarely are they seen as primary movers in stories. And thirdly, stories seem to fall into their laps.

The best film about journalism I guess is *All the President's men*, because it does show how long, and boring, and the legal problems, and the management don't like it and it shows what really happens.

3) Can you think of any examples of female journalists that encompass anywhere near what you see as realistic?

Not one. I'm sorry I've not seen Veronica Guerin. But most of them, you're a joke. Or a slightly glamorous joke.

4) Although in real life more women are going into journalism and there are more women editors. Why is it that Hollywood resorts to the stereotypical representations from the beginning of the last century?

Because that's how many men in the newsroom would like us to be. Either glamorous, pouting and desperate for their attention. Or we are sob sisters; either dealing with human emotions, which of course, is never regarded as more important than politics or we're bitches.

5) Do you think that's because a lot of these films are made by men?

Yes, written and directed by men. And the other thing you have to remember is that films really do well now if they're world wide. And there are many continents, that still regard women as being an inferior being. Do I have to name the countries to you, no I don't think I do. When you know that Anne Leslie, for example she goes to write stories in Saudi Arabia, she has to have a driver she's not aloud to drive herself. She is an emancipated British woman, you know how far behind we are.

So the form has got to resonate to men, all over the world, because it's men who have the money, and it's men who will buy the tickets.

6) How would you describe the position of female journalists in reality now?

I think female journalists in reality are slowly becoming more powerful. I mean someone like me, I became an editor in 1987, I was lucky I came under the wire. I think management thought, "Oh yes, we'll try out one of *them*! See what they can do." Because it started to be understood that often women paid the newspaper bill, often women were the ones that said: "I want that paper, because I like that writer, or that astrologer," so they thought they would appeal to women.

Since then of course, men in newsrooms have realised the danger of women. And there is quite

an obscenity by some men towards women, who think for some reason that we have an unfair advantage, because we're girls.

7) How far would you say, you had to use the fact you're a woman to get ahead in your career?

Not at all. I mean, did Rupert Murdoch give me a job because I was a woman? No, well I was the launch editor of Elle for him, I suppose he might think a man might have found it difficult, but that was a woman's magazine. But becoming editor of the Sunday Mirror, the Sunday Express, no.

8) What would you say to the argument that male editors surround themselves with women so there will be no other men to vie for their position?

I think there is an interesting situation, we have two or three female number twos. We have one at the Guardian, the Telegraph, and another. Maybe one of them will take over the big job. I think for a start, successful men, and clever men, especially men at newspaper, will have some senior women, because when I used to look round the newsdesk on a Friday night, at both newspapers I edited, who was mostly left there? Mostly the women. Because the women are doing the fiddly bits, because they can't go home to bed until they've done them. Women will see the detail. Women take care of detail. And in newspaper, the devil is in the detail. So that's number one. Number two, women do influence which paper is bought by the household. Women are much more loyal. If you can grab a writer that women really like, they will stick with her or him in a much bigger way than men. So I think they surround themselves with women, partly in a self preservation, I think that's right. And partly, because, there's still a very masculine-club like atmosphere about newspapers. They play golf together, they go to Spearmint Rhino together. And I think in my day it was the culture of alcohol, how drunk could you get while still trying to do your job. I think that's changed a bit now. And of course there is also that testosterone atmosphere that goes with it. Rash, doing things at the last minute, anything can change, we're important, aren't we well-paid, haven't we got nice cars. A woman doesn't go round thinking that, men think that's important.

9) Do you think women have to adapt themselves more to the newsroom environment?

Of course you have to. When I was editor of the Sunday Express I had a news editor and a features editor who were both women. And those two had the most revolting lives of all, because the men would say:

“I’ve got to listen to her” pointing at my office, “but don’t think I’m gonna listen to you too honey!”

They had a very difficult time. And yes, women do have to adapt, but then people say that you’ve become a little man. There is a masculinisation of every woman in power, because you’re going to have to say to somebody – “I think that copy sucks, you think that’s a headline? Or a layout?” You may not say that, but the fact you say: “I think we’ll do it like this,” means they’ve heard a no. Men do not like women who say no. Men do not like women whom see their weakness. Men shy a way from that. You’re always compared to, you’re turned in a nanny Thatcher monster. You’re not their girlfriend, even if they do fancy you. You’re not their mum. You’re not their daughter. So the only way they can deal with you, is to monsterise you.

There are amazing legends about me driving past a shoe shop in my car, and getting the driver to take a picture of the shoes, and then I’d buy my shoes. But that was a story about me. And even when I work with people I really like they’d say: “Tell me about the shoes.” And I’d say it never happened. It was never going to happen. I would never buy a pair of shoes in my life, unless I’d tried them on. And of course there’s no fun in buying shoes like that. But they all believed it because they wanted to believe I had those sort of balls.

10) Why are women forced to make the sacrifice between personal life and their careers in films, whereas men in similar roles, can have it all?

It’s like women in life. The fact is, you have to be, if you think about a woman being on the road. A woman doing 15-16 hour days. I always joke, “I married a journalist, because who else would have had me?!” I worked on Saturdays for so long. When I stopped I had to have Saturday lessons. People had to take me to Portobello market and say, this is what people do on Saturdays. Most men could not put up with that, most men could not deal with that. Most men couldn’t deal with...it’s also the society you live in, so you go out for dinner and your husband’s

there and he says: "oh Eve will turn up at 10" and most men would say, "oh yes, what's she up to." But of course if most people you know are journalists they don't say what's she up to, they assume you're doing the Pope, or the Royal Wedding or the election or something. You almost don't have to say. And the other trouble is, women are naturally nosy, which is why journalism is such a wonderful job. And you find out too much. You find out a little about a lot. And a lot of men don't like the fact you know more than them. They don't mind clever women, but if you're clever, be a clever scientist. But thing about journalism it goes into everything. It's a threat. And the hours. You're away.

11) Do you think these films make the point a woman can't have both.

I was of the generation that were so great we had jobs we hung on to them through death and destruction. My daughter who's a TV presenter, does not have the same attitude towards jobs. Jobs are there for fun, jobs are there to bring in money. They are not there for status, because women have achieved that already. I don't think you think it's as important as we do, to carry on, work full on, get the t-shirt.

12) Do you think there will come a time when women will be able to equal men in their position in the newsroom?

I think there will, because there'll be enough of them, and I think they'll start doing the serious stories. I say to women, forget about the lawn and big house, live in a dump round the corner from your office. But a lot of women don't get that. You can't have everything. I did! I did, but I didn't. You can't have it all. I was lucky I lived. My first house, you had to pick your way through the Guinness bottles on a Sunday morning. My mother came to the house once and cried. But I wanted to be near the office, so I was near The Mirror, and that's where I worked as woman's editor. And that's what I wanted. I didn't care that I didn't have a lovely garden and things. And in the end it was the right thing to do, cos my salary went up and I moved to somewhere and had a slightly bigger house. I didn't entertain for years, accept the odd Sunday lunch. I was too tired. I had no hobbies. Which woman I know, works, has children and has time for hobbies. You barely have time to get to the dentist. You have to sacrifice something. And most editors

screw up that marriages or their health. And I have a dodgy slipped disk problem from years of sitting over reading papers, do I regret that? No have I had a riveting, interesting life, yes.

The trouble is, as far as I can see, men seem to be fine with girls until they get to jobs, and then some killer instinct takes over.

I can remember going into newspapers, where there were no women at all. There may have been a woman editor or a book's editor and that would be it. And I remember for years they kept women in the ghetto of fashion and women's pages. Now you go into newspapers and there are loads of women. It's a great job to do. Very unsociable hours, but it will fit in with your children. There are loads of women reporters. But it's taken much longer than I thought. The most there's ever been are 4 women editors of the 20 daily and Sunday newspapers. It's sad there have never been 10. So it's taken a lot longer than I thought, but I think it is happening. And I think journalists are well paid enough now, so it's more practical.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Dr Karen Ross – Director of Mass Communications at Coventry University

1) Research shows evidence that 'gendered inequities' and discriminatory behaviour are prevalent within the journalism industry,(Mahtani 2005) but as part of my research I have surveyed a small sample of working journalists, many of whom, have failed to recognise any form of differential treatment or negative practices. This did strike me as odd, considering the content of my literature research, including your own article. Can you shed any light on why this might be?

- False consciousness

- Refusal to accept that biology determines career/experiences, particularly since we can't change our sex and if we accept that our sex DOES impact on our career chances, then this puts us in the position of impotence

- I do NOT believe that women in journalism have never experienced sexism or other - isms, they just don't want to admit it

2) Are powerful women journalists, or rather women journalists, in powerful positions, nothing more than puppets to their string-pulling male publishers and proprietors, or do they harness real gate-keeping power?

I don't think they are puppets but there are a number of issues for women in powerful positions, including other people's (including my own!) expectations. There is no reason, actually, why women editors should be more pro-women, pro-family or feminist, than men: such sentiments are to do with personal politics not simply sex; there is also a serious problem of credibility, when women assume senior positions in male-dominated contexts, where they are easy to pick off without significant support, from women and men colleagues.

But the fact is that there HAS been change as a consequence of women achieving senior positions, but not all women want to make such changes: as I say, it is more to do with politics

than sex. So, someone like Rosie Boycott has made a difference, or Jenny Abrahams, but someone like Rebekkah Wade has continued the same tradition that she took over.

3) In the films I am studying for my dissertation, powerful female characters are usually shown to have an achilles heal, or tragic flaw (most commonly, their lacking of journalistic ethics, or their inability to juggle their private life with their career) How realistic would you say this is?

Drama needs dramatic content, far too boring to have flawless heroes. If we believe that only Buddha is perfect, than anything which represents imperfection has to be real! I think that women's flaws may be different to those of men, but I think it's a matter of focus.

4) What effect, if any, do you think generic portrayals of female journalists in Hollywood films serve to reinforce existing stereotypes?

Most Hollywood films are directed by men - go figure.

5) Is it a assumption based in truth, made by films, that for a female journalist to be a success she must either masculinise herself, or take the other extreme of overt femininity, parading her sexuality to climb the ranks?

Most women journalists who recognise that sex matters would say that they either downgrade their femininity to be taken seriously or they leave mainstream media for more supportive environments such as freelancing or working in women's media such as magazines. Few women will f**k their way to the top because the media are very indiscrete and her actions would be common knowledge within 24 hrs and her career over. This isn't to say that women will not use their feminine charms to try and manipulate their male managers but this is not that different to letting the boss win on the golf course -it's all about stroking....

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Joe Saltzman – Director of the Image of Journalists in Popular Culture

1) Contrary to the realities of the industry, earlier cinematic portrayals of newspaperwomen showed them tackling investigative jobs, and real 'hard' news stories. Some would argue that these representations were unrealistic, but ahead of their time. Now more women are employed in newsrooms, and they are no longer resigned to working on 'women's' stories, their film counterparts should be playing catch-up. Do you think that the film female reporter has really progressed far beyond her origins?

The female reporter in the early novels and silent films of the 20th century was usually an independent, feisty journalist in one of the few occupations in which women could work as an equal with men. There were enough real-life prototypes to substantiate this fictional conceit. But no matter how independent the female reporter was during the majority of the film or novel, in the end she usually gave up her career for love, family and children – just what the audiences of the 1920s through the 1950s wanted. Torchy Blane, for example, a sob sister of the 1930s who appeared in a series of B movies, always out-scooped the male competition and the police in solving crimes, but in the last five minutes she pined for the stupid policeman she dominated throughout the film. This was typical of the female journalist depicted in movies throughout the century. Since the female reporter was so far ahead of her times, the image hasn't changed all that much even though newsroom reality has. But female journalists in movies today worry about juggling career and family matters.

For many sob sisters, in film and real life, there is a bittersweet aftertaste of giving up a bit too much to achieve equality with males. After all, the image of the male journalist in popular culture was never that appealing to most people, never much of a complete life with domestic comforts and achievements.

Most journalists in fiction lead a rather unappealing, self-centered existence filled with deadlines, alcohol, danger, loneliness, lies and distortions, bitter frustrations and either an exciting death on assignment or a sad end to a long career filled with broken dreams and

endless what-might-have-beens. Successful female journalists end up with nothing less than the male journalist's present successes and failures, and future nightmares.

Female and male journalists, reaching a kind of equality and truce in the battle of the sexes, find themselves in fiction wondering if a lifetime filled with the daily stress and pressure of getting the story and getting it fast and right was worth it. Does any journalist currently knocking out newspaper, magazine and TV news stories really want to do that for the rest of his or her life? Would most journalists rather be writing novels or movie and TV scripts or non-fiction books?

The age-old dilemma of a career in journalism vs. a private life with family seems to still be unresolved since most successful journalists find that the only way to be a success is to work at it 24 hours a day, leaving little or no time for personal relationships, marriage, parenting, or anything else that takes time from the seemingly unending professional work.

Many sob sisters have won equality in both image and achievement, but at what cost? At the end of a long day or even worse, a long career, does anyone really want to be Hildy Johnson chasing after one more story or Lois Lane crying her eyes out because the person she loves is out saving the world and doesn't have time for domestic tranquility or Mary Richards, widowed and penniless, trying at the age of 60 to make one more comeback in television news, or Murphy Brown raising a child and battling breast cancer while still holding on to her number one position in TV news, a position any young sob sister or brother would be eager to take away from her?

The images of female sob sisters and male newshounds may differ in particulars, but in the end, they are among the most exciting as well as depressing characters in fiction today.

2) In the films I have studied, the majority of powerful female journalists are forced to sacrifice social contentment for their careers (or in some cases, they are punished for their ambition). Although in reality, most female journalists would argue it's harder for a

woman to juggle their work with their family life, than it is for men, in this fictitious context, why is Hollywood so unwillingly to let women journalists have it all?

The audiences in the 1930s through the 1950s were unwillingly to have a woman give up what they cherished most – love, family and children. They would tolerate an independent women going toe-to-toe with the male competition, but when it came to the happy ending, there was only one happy ending – find a good man, get married and have a family. Only prostitutes and other women of dubious morality could do anything less. If the female reporter didn't go after the best man available, she would be doomed.

3) Anchorman (2004), as a satire of the 1970's newsroom, sheds light on the discriminatory attitudes of the day. More importantly, however, I would argue that its depiction of a female anchor, is not far from the more 'realistic' portrayals of ambitious newswomen shown in Up Close and Personal (1996) Broadcast News (1987) and to To Die For (1995) would you agree?

You might have a point with Anchorman. But the great majority of portrayals of female anchors in film after film – including many films that have nothing to do with journalism, but throw in a female TV reporter as part of the media coverage of the story – are portrayed in a negative light, usually as not-very-bright females. Or they are depicted as part of the women-in-jeopardy genre – chased by some killer or rapist or criminal. To really understand the image of the female TV journalist, you must study films that are not about journalism, but include female reporters in the course of other dramas and comedies. It is here the female TV journalist, especially the anchor, is ridiculed and criticized – far more than in any film or TV program featuring journalists as key characters.

4) I chose to study Shattered Glass (2004) because although the main protagonists were not female, the women journalists included within the plot do not conform to the generic stereotypes of the other case studies. Do you think it is possible for this to cross over into a film with a female lead?

Yes.

5) *All The President's Men (1976) is heralded as being one of the most realistic film portrayals of the work of journalists, why do you think Katharine Graham (WP publisher) was left out of the film?*

Interesting question. You would have to go to the principals – writers, directors – for a definitive answer. As you point out, in the film the Jason Robards-Ben Bradlee role represents management.

6) *What effect, or impression, if any, do you think film representations of women journalists have on social perceptions of the industry?*

I think the image of the female journalist in popular culture (broader than just film) is extremely important on the public's perception of the news media.

The conflicting images of the female journalist contribute to the love-hate relationship between the public and its news media that is at the center of the public's confusion about the media today. The anger and lack of confidence most Americans have in the news media today is partly based on real-life examples they have seen and heard. But much of the image of the female journalist as a money-grubbing, selfish, arrogant, often stupid scoundrel is based on images from movies and television.

Surveys continue to show that most Americans, for example, want a free press that is always there to protect them from authority and give them a free flow of diverse information. But those same surveys also show that most Americans harbour a deep suspicion about the media, worrying about their perceived power, their meanness and negativism, their attacks on institutions and people, their intrusiveness and callousness, their arrogance and bias.

Unfortunately, much of what we see in the image of the journalist on film and TV is black and white, often emphasizing the worst examples of the news media's incompetence and wrong-

headedness. It is not easy to depict the real work of the journalist, the long hours of research and reporting, the difficulty of piecing together complicated stories under deadline pressure, the tyranny of the clock and of a nation's obsession with pictures and quick sound bites and short stories.

If the public loses its respect and faith in the news media – and female TV newscasters are becoming more and more of the public image of that news media – then nothing less than a democracy is in trouble.

7) In light of this, how important do you think it is that these images are accurate, or as realistic as the form allows?

The public doesn't care if the image is accurate or false, realistic or fake.

The public's perception of the news media is made up of the images it sees in movies, on television, in fiction and other aspects of popular culture (comic strips, cartoons, comic books, commercials, etc.). Obviously it is important that the images be accurate and realistic, but it is folly to think that this will ever happen.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Paul Schindler - Journalist

1) Contrary to the realities of the industry, earlier cinematic portrayals of newspaperwomen showed them tackling investigative jobs, and real 'hard' news stories. Some would argue that these representations were unrealistic, but ahead of their time. Now more women are employed in newsrooms, and they are no longer resigned to working on 'women's' stories, their film counterparts should be playing catch-up. Do you think that the film female reporter has really progressed far beyond her origins?

I do. Glen Close, for example, got to play an actual newspaper executive, virtually unprecedented in cinematic depiction of women (except, of course, for the omnipresent widow of the founding publisher, ala Mrs. Pynchon in the Lou Grant television show). By the way, according to what I have read, her role was originally written for a man. I think this piece of casting was inspired.

Of course, for every step forward, especially for women, there seems to be a step back. Marissa Tomei faces great difficulties in juggling her pregnancy and her leave from the newspaper. And don't get me started on Julia Roberts in "I Love Trouble." There are some wonderful and accurate depictions of newspaper work in this film, and then there is Roberts in spike heels at a crime scene.

In a sense, the film female reporter has progressed beyond her origins, in that she is a regular part of the news team and depicted as such, rather than being a sideshow attraction or a source of astonishment and merriment, as she was in the 20s through the 60s. On the other hand, the stories covered by women journalists in the 30s cinema are still rarely surpassed by women today--Jane Fonda in China Syndrome being the exception that proves the rule.

2) In the films I have studied, the majority of powerful female journalists, are forced to sacrifice social contentment for their careers (or in some cases, they are punished for their ambition). Although in reality, most female journalists would argue it's harder for a woman to juggle their work with their family life, than it is for men, in this fictitious context, why is Hollywood so unwillingly to let women journalists have it all?

The biggest difference today is that a female reporter does not have to marry the male reporter in the last reel in order to lead a fulfilling life (Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte to the contrary notwithstanding). On the other hand, did Holly Hunter appear to have a great life in store at the end of Broadcast News? Professionally yes. Personally, no.

Hollywood won't let women journalists have it all because it won't let any working woman have it all. I am a movie buff in general (and a journalism movie buff in particular), and I have nearly always found this to be the case. If the woman isn't married or in love by the end of the film, she is miserable and appears likely to remain miserable. Betty Friedan would tell you this is cultural propaganda to convince women they made the right choice when they decided to stay at home and serve their husbands.

A more valid opinion on the general nature of this phenomenon might be available from someone like Roger Ebert--but don't ask him more than one or two questions.

3) As a narrative tool of cinema, most of these films, use a romantic thread to carry the story (or as a subplot) Often this relationship results in the once strong female character relying on the intelligence or physical help of their romantic interest to succeed in the end. What sort of impression does this create?

The same one that most entertainment creates and maintain: without a man you're not a complete woman.

4) *Anchorman (2004)*, as a satire of the 1970's newsroom, sheds light on the discriminatory attitudes of the day. More importantly, however, I would argue that its depiction of a female anchor, is not far from the more 'realistic' portrayals of ambitious newswomen shown in *Up Close and Personal (1996)* *Broadcast News (1987)* and *To Die For (1995)* would you agree?

Absolutely. I worked my way through college as a technician at commercial television stations in Portland, Oregon and Boston in the early 70s. There were no female anchors, and the handful of women reporters were treated with a level of condescension and sexism that would be appalling to most people today.

5) I chose to study *Shattered Glass (2004)* because although the main protagonists were not female, the women journalists included within the plot do not conform to the generic stereotypes of the other case-studies. Do you think it is possible for this to cross over into a film with a female lead?

Of course, there have been several films with female journalist leads. Someone could (and should) make a film about Meagan Marshak (the woman with Nelson Rockefeller when he died who became an AP reporter), or Janet Cooke (the "Jimmy's World" fraud). But until women are able to play bad journalists as readily as men they won't really have made the transition into non-stereotypical leads.

6) *All The President's Men (1976)* is heralded as being one of the most realistic film portrayals of the work of journalists, why do you think Katharine Graham (WP publisher) was left out of the film?

I have always assumed that the traditional Hollywood practice of elision--elimination of characters from books to make movies simpler and simpler to understand--was the root of this, rather than deliberate sexism.

7) What effect, or impression, if any, do you think film representations of women journalists have on social perceptions of the industry?

I think all popular entertainment affects our views of all industries other than our own. I know how inaccurate the depictions of women in journalism are because I have been a journalist most of my adult life. I have no idea how badly female doctors, lawyers or policemen are portrayed, because I haven't been in those fields.

When women are shown as helpless, clingy and in need of rescue, that becomes the societal role model and the expectation of female journalists. As well, it tends to make women who come into the field feel that's the way I should be. I always thought I should be more like Clark Kent; I assume most female journalists assume they should be more like Lois Lane.

8) In light of this, how important do you think it is that these images are accurate, or as realistic as the form allows?

I always appreciate it when we get a Holly Hunter or Glen Close depiction of female journalists, to wash the taste of a Julia Roberts out of my mouth. In a perfect world, every profession would be depicted as accurately as possible, so that the inevitable effect of popular entertainment on our view of worlds we don't know personally would be educational and appropriate.

Women should be shown as editors, photographers, reporters, section heads and publishers because they fill all these roles in real life. They should be shown succeeding and failing, because actual women journalists succeed and fail. They should be shown as noble and venal, because both those traits are exhibited by women journalists. In short, the cinematic portrayal of women should range as widely as does the portrayal of male journalists.

Until it does, movies will create inaccurate images of female journalists which colour both the perception of them in the culture and their self perception as they enter the field.

Of course, cinema can never do anything half as awful to the image of women as the Harvard Business Review female reporter who married Jack Welch of GE after having an affair with him. Reality, alas, often trumps fiction.

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Linda Steiner – Associate Professor, School of Journalism, Cardiff University

1) Research shows evidence that 'gendered inequities' and discriminatory behaviour are prevalent within the journalism industry,(Mahtani 2005) but as part of my research I have surveyed a small sample of working journalists, many of whom, have failed to recognise any form of differential treatment or negative practices. This did strike me as odd, considering the content of my literature research, including your own article. Can you shed any light on why this might be?

I don't think that the women suffer the same kinds or certainly the extent of discriminatory behaviour as they did through the 1970s. Moreover, women journalists--given the nature of journalism and the culture of the newsroom--are reluctant to complain about sexism, and loathe to see themselves as victims of sexism. Furthermore, to the extent there is discrimination against women, it is pronounced in some beats/areas (such as sports) and in upper levels of management; but this may not be true of the "working journalists" you interviewed.

2) Are powerful women journalists, or rather women journalists, in powerful positions, nothing more than puppets to their string-pulling male publishers and proprietors, or do they harness real gate-keeping power?

Both men and women who are reporters--and even editors, for that matter—are both, and probably equally, frustrated by the economic problems of journalism, and the interests of owners in satisfying stockholders and therefore in maximizing profit. This is not, then, largely a matter of sex.

Rather, it has to do with long-simmering and now boiling problems in journalism. Put the reverse, they are not puppets to string-pulling publishers, but neither do they harness the kind of power they need (and on which democracy requires!).

3) In the films I am studying for my dissertation, powerful female characters are usually shown to have an achilles heal, or tragic flaw (most commonly, their lacking of journalistic ethics, or their inability to juggle their private life with their career) How realistic would you say this is?

I'd say that everyone has an Achilles heal or tragic flaw or many. So, what is unrealistic is that everything comes down to one tragic flaw.

That said, I do think that women are expected to juggle private/domestic life/responsibilities with work (and that men are not expected to do this), and that this juggling is very difficult. This problem is not unique to women journalists--but again, the juggling act is, in my personal experience, very hard to do.

4) Is it a assumption based in truth, made by films, that for a female journalist to be a success she must either masculinise herself, or take the other extreme of overt femininity, parading her sexuality to climb the ranks?

I think that femininity, sexuality, and modern womanhood (including the notion that women can and should work outside the home) are still troublesome for a lot of people, and that popular culture representations point to that unsettled and unsettling problematic. And one of the ways is to make femininity and masculinity clear and seem settled is to make them opposites, such that women who want to be and try to be successful, whether doctors or journalists or lawyers, are represented as either acting like one of the guys, or flaunting their sexuality (or, in fact both).

Appendix E - Interview Transcript

Vernon Stone – Research Professor, School of Journalism, University of Missouri

1) Much of your research shows a steady, and continuous rise in female management in American newsrooms, but many journalism films still show women to be an outside, underdog force. What are the realities of the newsroom - as far as female presence is concerned?

Films tend to stick to safe stereotypes, but that one is pretty much outdated. The reality is that women now have a strong and recognized presence at every level in newsrooms and in media management. We're seeing women more and more as TV general managers, newspaper GMs and publishers, and in comparable positions outside the mass media. Media decision-makers, often women themselves in 2005, have learned that women perform as well as men. Hiring is now most often based on credentials than on gender.

2) After the FCC allowed its affirmative action rule to apply to women in 1972, many newsrooms were almost forced to employ more women. Now there is more of a balance, are women still being hired to make up numbers (for show) or are they holding their own against male counterparts?

They're now most often being hired and promoted on merit rather than quotas.

And yes, they're holding their own against male counterparts in performance.

Women have the ability to do the job, and always have had. It's just in recent years that they have had the opportunity.

3) In your opinion, despite discrimination laws, and employment regulations, do women have to work harder to get prominent roles within a newsroom environment?

Yes, but the cause is not discrimination by the media, but the woman's role in society. She's typically the mother, the caretaker of children, the housekeeper who cooks, launders, and nurses the sick. So, yes, she has to work harder for success in a career, because she has two jobs drawing upon her energies -- workplace and home. She may also drop out of her career field for a few years for motherhood, and that puts her behind professionally. Increasingly, husbands are sharing duties traditionally done by wives, and employers are finding it's good policy to be generous with family leave time. But in general, the typical career woman who's also a wife and mother carries a heavier load than her male counterpart. And is handicapped in her career by her biology and related role in society.

Appendix F – Video and list of video clips

Clip 1 – *The China Syndrome* (1979)

News chief, Don Jacovich talking to *Kimberly Wells* about her work

Clip 2 – *Up Close and Personal* (1996)

Anchorman, Rob Sullivan giving colleague *Tally Atwater* some 'professional' advice

Clip 3 – *Up Close and Personal* (1996)

Tally Atwater's boss Warren Justice, suggesting she change her appearance.

Clip 4 – *Broadcast News* (1987)

Jane Craig executive producing a live broadcast

Clip 5 – *The Paper* (1994)

Metro Editor Henry Hackett fights with Managing Editor *Alicia Clark* to stop the paper printing

Clip 6 – *Up Close and Personal* (1996)

Tally Atwater telling her boyfriend and former boss (Warren Justice) she is a failure.

Clip 7 – *Broadcast News* (1987)

[Montage] *Jane Craig* showing her emotional side at various stages of the film.

Clip 8 – *The Paper* (1994)

Alicia Clark at a black-tie event trying to convince her boss to give her a pay-rise

Clip 9 – *Absence of Malice* (1981)

Megan Carter evaluating her unethical behaviour with her editor 'Mac'.

Clip 10 – *Absence of Malice* (1981)

Megan Carter ruining her relationship with Michael Gallagher and coming to terms with her unethical ways.

Clip 11 – *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* (2004)

[Montage] Clips from the recent 1970s newsroom satire, illustrating the prejudices facing women in the newsroom.

Appendix G – Ghiglione's female journalist stereotypes

GHIGLIONE, L., 1991. *The American Journalist: Fiction Versus Fact* [online]. Chicago, Illinois, USA., Northwestern University, American Antiquarian Society. Available from <http://www.ijpc.org/ghiglione.htm> [Accessed 10 January 2005] paragraphs 22-29

Below are the five stages of representational stereotypes recognised by Ghiglione:

The Martyr:

"The fictional newswoman from a century ago usually was an impoverished single mother or widow, victimized by a tawdry, tough male world."

Cheerleader to a newsman:

"Whatever journalistic success she achieved, she really sought to marry the man she loved."

The Fast Talker:

"(She was) not only as talented but just as tough as her male counterparts. Often, as in Hollywood movies, she out-wise-cracked, out-drunk, and out-reported newsmen."

The Bitch/temptress:

"The newswoman achieves professional success--she even climbs the ladder to editor, publisher, or owner--but remains an unfulfilled, unfeeling, personal failure. Often she panders and philanders, assuming the role of the seductive temptress, or she lets her aggression and ambition run wild, earning the reputation of superbitch."

The Independent:

"The newswoman no longer measures her success by her relationship to a man. She is more independent both as a journalist and as a human being. She takes on the toughest assignments, whether in big-city combat zones or war zones abroad."

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