



## Representation of the Librarian in the Character of Urano Motosu in the Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose Research.** The librarian profession has often been underestimated. Several studies regarding the media that represents librarians depict the profession negatively. Positive representation is needed to depict the ideal figure of a librarian to reduce the developing negative stereotypes of librarians. This research aims to identify the representation of librarians in the character Myne (Urano Motosu), the main character with a high librarian spirit who carries out her duties as a church librarian. **Research Methods.** The research method used is Roland Barthes' semiotics. **Result.** This research shows that Myne's appearance as a librarian uses a vintage style, no glasses, and half-space bun hair. Myne is described as having a superior character as a librarian and can represent the ideal librarian figure. Myne's librarian's weakness is that she has low social experience. However, over time, he was able to adapt and finally eliminate these shortcomings. **Conclusions.** Myne represents the ideal librarian so that librarians and librarian professional organizations can use her as a role model.

**Keywords:** Representation; librarian; semiotics; anime

### A. INTRODUCTION

The development of the technological era has impacted the increase in the use of various media to support various human needs. One of them is film media, which is intended for public entertainment. In its development, film can represent something with educational value. Representation is a form of reconstruction of the object of study, meaning and reality. In this case, the media becomes a strategic tool to represent reality based on the selection process results from the reality that occurred (Wibowo, 2019). Film is an effective means of conveying this representation. Films can play with space and time artistically, expand and narrow boundaries, and represent things through a systematic plot to get the audience carried away by the storyline (Wahjuwibowo, 2019).

One of the objects of representation in the film is the librarian profession. Studies regarding the representation of the librarian profession are important as a medium for public education and a reference for further research. The positive



depiction of librarians is essential to study to combat negative stereotypes developed in the media and previous research. It is known that until now, many film media represent the librarian profession negatively, for example, in research by Koevoets (2013) reviewing the representation of librarians in Western countries based on the results of analysis of circulating literary and film narratives. Of the eight films, TV shows, and ten fictional literature, librarians are represented negatively. Positive representations of librarians are still rare, so research examining the ideal librarian profession is essential. Stereotypes arise due to continuously forging perspectives, so the existence of media that represents them positively is expected to reduce the negative stereotypes circulating (Dumas & Dunbar, 2016).

*Anime* is a typical Japanese animation that is recognized as an essential icon that signifies Japan's cultural, economic, and political influence (ongyeiwaah et al., 2019). The potential of anime to instil an image through its storyline makes anime a potential medium for representing something. One of the focuses of learning groups in anime is future careers. In this focus, the story in the anime attempts to represent a profession. Anime also has the potential to represent the librarian profession (Little, 2021).

According to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2022), librarians are defined as professional staff who select, order and receive library materials, classify, catalogue, lend services, guide readers to read, and others in prefectural public libraries and municipalities. The qualifications to become a librarian or assistant librarian include taking librarian training and obtaining credits at a university or college.

The anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm* tells the story of Urano Motosu, a lover of science and books who dreams of becoming a librarian. When his dream came true, he died as a result of an earthquake that destroyed the library where he worked. When he awakens, he comes alive in the body of another person named Myne. The anime storyline *Ascendance of a Bookworm* highlights Urano's daily life after she changed bodies to become Myne. He went through various challenges, starting from trying to create media for writing, trying to become a church librarian, and writing his book (Content Engine LLC, 2022). Urano's superior character can be used as a role model for librarians personally and professionally. Librarians not only carry out technical tasks in library management but also must be creative, have broad insight, and have the courage to implement their insights in the community. Several scenes in the anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm* depict other moral values, such as responsibility and a high work ethic.

Based on the foundation above, the author conducted research by highlighting the anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm* as an object. The anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm* has three seasons and two OVAs, but the author only examines season two in this research. This is because season two contains a storyline about how Urano became a librarian and how Urano overcame the problems after becoming a church librarian. This research aims to identify the representation of librarians in the character Urano Motosu, the main character with a high librarian spirit who is carrying out his duties as a church librarian.

## B. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method. The required data was obtained through a literature review. The analytical method used is Roland Barthes' semiotics. Semiotics is included in the science of literature, which seeks to find conventions that allow meaning to exist. The basic concepts in semiotics recognize three basic concepts: signs, codes and meaning. The term sign itself is the unity of a form of signifier with an idea or signified. Signs are divided into three components, namely signs, signifiers and signified. The observed signs are then classified into codes. According to Roland Barthes, semiotic codes are divided into five types: hermeneutic code, semic code, symbolic code, pro-aeratic code, and cultural code. These codes are then drawn and processed into meaning in semiotics, namely the meaning of denotation and connotation. These two meanings are then drawn to a conclusion called a myth.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sign in the Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm is represented by the character Urano Motosu. Myne's (Urano Motosu) appearance in season two is described as follows.



Figure 1. Urano Motosu as librarian Myne

Source: MyAnimeList

In season 2 of the Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm, Urano Motosu starts working as a church librarian. Urano's appearance when working is wearing a blue robe with long sleeves, and the bottom part forms a knee-length skirt, long white socks and brown shoes, no glasses, and hair in a half-space bun. In the Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm, several scenes reflect the ideal behaviour of librarians, including:

1. Contract negotiations while Myne works at the church
2. Myne's love of libraries
3. Myne teaches soft skills and hard skills to the grey robe priests
4. Myne's appreciation for those who are willing to work
5. Myne's knowledge and skills in library science

## 6. Myne can face problems well

### *Scene during contract negotiations while Myne works at the church*



Figure 2. Scene during contract negotiations while Myne worked at the church

Source: *Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm*

#### **Denotation**

On the day Myne signed her contract to become a church librarian, Myne, accompanied by her parents, negotiated with Ferdinand. They put forward conditions Ferdinand had to fulfil as long as Myne worked for the church. Then, in the next scene, Myne meets Ferdinand to coordinate work on her first day. Ferdinand gave him an additional task: making Myne his assistant, who would later take care of the documents. In the third scene, Myne begins to act like royalty. Seeing the difference in Fran's response before and after she acted like a noble, Myne concluded that actions and speaking style were essential. In the final scene, Benno says that Myne is a genius, friendly, and generous but needs more social experience and knowledge of the temple's values and nobility.

#### **Connotation**

In the first scene, even though she has a lower status, younger age, and position as a worker facing her boss, Myne still dares to express her opinion. He argues with logical reasons and can find a middle way to the problems he faces. The second scene shows that Myne is believed to be able to manage documents very well as a librarian. In the third scene, Myne, who is still unfamiliar with the new world where she is reincarnated, observes the cultural differences between her home world and her current place. He pays attention, tries to understand the cultural situation he is facing, and then tries to adapt to that culture. In the last scene, as a librarian, it is essential to have a friendly and generous character to serve users optimally so they feel comfortable with the librarian's services. Social experience and knowledge of the work environment are also no less critical in providing optimal performance.

## Myth

Librarians are professionals who can master public speaking skills in the negotiation process. In line with Ford (2019), literature encourages librarians to develop public speaking skills, especially in presenting things. Apart from that, librarians are professionals with solid information management skills. Efforts to implement information management systems such as document management and electronic records are examples of librarians' processes in managing the document and information management life cycle (Wise et al., 2011).

Professional librarians must be able to adapt quickly because, as time goes by, the work environment allows it to continue to change. For example, adaptation to library technology is reviewed in research (Murgu, 2021). In this research, it was stated that librarians who could not adapt to technological developments experienced technostress, a stress phenomenon caused by the increase and use of more sophisticated technology in the workplace.

Librarian services are one of the library assessment factors from the user's perspective. This is explained in research (Bodaghi & Cheong, 2015). This research (Bodaghi & Cheong, 2015) explained that greetings, friendly conversation, tone of voice, a sense of understanding, communication, and the state of the library environment are the keys to describing the sense of empathy users feel. To provide optimal service, intelligence is needed to understand the environment and library needs, as well as the friendliness and generosity of librarians.

## Scene Myne teaches soft skills and hard skills to the gray robe priests (low caste group in the church)



Figure 3. Scene when Myne teaches the gray robe priests

Source: Anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm*

## Denotation

In the first scene, Myne gives Fran, Gil, and Delia a whiteboard. In the second scene, Myne scolds Rosina, but Rosina refuses to do other work because it will



hurt her hand. Myne intends to hear other opinions before deciding on Rosina. In the third scene, at the orphanage, Myne, Lutz and Tuuli teach the orphanage children to bind books by sewing them. In the final scene, Myne emphasizes the rule that they have to work if they want food.

### **Connotation**

In the first scene, Myne is known as someone who can educate and appreciate the performance of the people around her. He always gives appreciation in the form of primary materials or objects that can support increased literacy. In the second scene, in dealing with problems between her subordinates, Myne acts professionally and firmly by daring to reprimand Rosina for acting out of bounds. Before making a decision, Myne is willing to hear the opinions of her other friends so that the decisions she will make in the future are full of consideration. In the third scene, as a librarian, Myne is also creative by making books. He involved orphanage children in manufacturing to provide them with skills and jobs. He also asked external parties who are experts in their fields to help. In the final scene, Myne teaches independence to the orphanage children to take care of their place and cleanliness.

### **Myth**

The case Myne faced was similar to the conditions in research (Spiranec & Pejova, 2010). This research (Spiranec & Pejova, 2010) highlights the low literacy conditions in Southeastern Europe. The meeting with UNESCO, which was held to increase positive literacy in Southeast Europe, resulted in several policies, one of which was librarians' efforts to face obstacles and appropriate literacy promotion efforts.

As librarians who have the responsibility to lead a human resources group, librarians are required to be able to make appropriate decisions both in their behaviour and in resolving a problem. Research (Butt et al., 2023) states that a library leader is expected to be able to practice and follow a participative leadership style, which is also known as democratic leadership.

A librarian is required to have innovation power, especially in creating programs that can improve the library's progress. The implementation of this program can be supported by expertise and collaboration with external library parties. This is to the literature (Istiqomah, 2019), which exemplifies one of these innovative programs, namely Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The ability to direct and lead the people around him in offering prayers and giving thanks to God is one characteristic of someone with high spiritual leadership. This is by the explanation in the literature by Widayati (2016), which explains that spiritual leadership is realized by the ability of librarians to lead themselves and others with direct supervision from God.

### **Scene of Myne's appreciation for those who want to work**



Figure 4. Scene of Myne's appreciation for those who want to work

Source: Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm

#### **Denotation**

Gerard, Lutz, and Tuuli took the grey robe servants and orphanage children to the forest to look for food. On the way, Gil chats with a child his age and says he is grateful to be by Myne's side.

#### **Connotation**

Myne tries to educate her subordinates to be independent by finding their food with the capital of freedom. Myne's treatment made her subordinates, who previously opposed her, respect her. Apart from being able to educate effectively, Myne also gives praise and appreciation.

#### **Myth**

In Japan, the term *Shisho-kyouyu* refers to a teacher librarian. Teacher librarians act as educators in addition to being librarians. This is based on statements in the literature (Nishimaki, 2018). In a general context, a librarian is expected to be able to educate the people around him. The most common thing to do is teach readers to search for information as described in the literature (Stricevic, 2022).



### **Scene that shows Myne's knowledge and skills in library science**



Figure 5. Scene showing Myne's knowledge and skills

Source: Anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm*

### **Denotation**

In the first scene, in the secret room, Myne explains the Japanese Decimal Categories created by Melvil Dewey. He also explained about the figure of Melvil Dewey. In the second scene, Ferdinand says that Myne cannot clean up the library because the placement of documents is based on the receipt date. Myne says that she will clean up the library in her way. Then, he realized it was his opportunity to implement the 10 Japanese Decimal Categories. He also looked pleased. In the third scene, Myne invites the servants to clean the library. He organized procedures and guided them so the library could be organized according to Japanese Decimal Categories. In the last scene, Myne makes karuta with the help of Wilma, the illustrator. Orphanage children play Karuta to pass their free time and learn the alphabet in a fun way. Benno, who was interested in karuta, bought the patent for the game from Myne.

### **Connotation**

In the first scene, as a librarian, Myne is an educated and broad-minded person, as evidenced by her mastery of the Dewey classification system and understanding of the biography of Melvil Dewey. In the second scene, Myne acts as a solution by implementing the knowledge she has. A librarian can organize a library by implementing a classification system, which groups books in the same category into certain shelves. In the third scene, Myne, the librarian, is responsible for coordinating the servants in organizing documents in the library. Myne applies the values of cooperation and cooperation from external library parties. In the final scene, Myne attempts to eradicate illiteracy in the surrounding environment by introducing a fun way of learning the alphabet. Besides introducing the alphabet,



Myne also uses these products to sell and become a source of income. From these activities, Myne has a solid entrepreneurial librarian spirit.

## Myth

Melvil Dewey is a significant figure in the world of library science. His name is well-known, and his theory is studied in library learning. The classification system that Melvil created became a theory taught in library science learning (Intner, 2020). Knowledge of classification systems is one of the core lessons in library science. In Japan, a classification system applies, namely the Nippon Decimal Classification (NDC) (Patmadiwiria, 2010).

In the literature, Rath (2022) states that a librarian is required to not only have theoretical knowledge but also practical knowledge. As a librarian, Myne provides an example of how she can implement her library science knowledge. Utilizing innovation into products with selling value is one form of practical entrepreneurial ability. The librarian's entrepreneurial ability is known as librarianpreneur. This term refers to librarians who can produce products with selling value, especially regarding their competence as librarians, which can be helpful to society. Librarians need these entrepreneurial skills to increase professionalism in their profession (Mahdi & Ratnasari, 2021).

## *The scene when Myne is able to face problems well*



Figure 6. Scene when Myne is able to face problems well

Source: Anime *Ascendance of a Bookworm*

## Denotation

In the first scene, Myne humbly responds to Schicicoza's impolite attitude. Damuel represented Schicicoza in apologizing. In the second scene, Myne comes when Gil and Delia are worried that Myne will be furious seeing the mess in her library. Beyond expectations, Myne looked happy. This is because the library is messy, and he has the opportunity to organize it according to his wishes. He was so happy that he wanted to thank the perpetrator and offer God prayers.

## **Connotation**

In the first scene, although she is ridiculed as a lowly person, Myne is not emotional. He faced the situation with a cool head. Responding to Schicicoza's taunts, Myne apologized because she did not want to get into trouble just because of something trivial. Because her main job is to help the knights hold ceremonies, Myne only focuses on carrying out her duties and does not want to be provoked by problems outside her job. In the second scene, apart from her duties as a church librarian, Myne also serves as a blue-robed monk. This position made him more religious and always grateful to God for the blessings he received.

## **Myth**

As a librarian oriented towards providing services in the library, you need a professional attitude, especially when dealing with unpleasant users. Journal (Garewal, 2021) shares the author's experiences dealing with uncomfortable conversations. What must be done in dealing with this situation is to be humble and take efficient action. There is no need to prolong trivial problems because librarians' orientation in serving is user satisfaction.

Myne described that a librarian must have spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership is defined as individual librarians who can become their leaders with direct control from God (Widayati, 2016).

## ***A scene that shows Myne's love for libraries***



Figure 7. Scene showing Myne's love for libraries

Source: *Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm*

## **Denotation**

In the first scene, Myne arrives at the library. He seemed happy to see the view of the library, which was full of books and document archives. In the second scene, Ferdinand examines the ceremonial dress worn by Myne and finds a book



symbol. Myne explains that it is a symbol of her workshop. In the last scene, Fran, who sees Myne gloomy, takes her to the library to calm her mind.

### **Connotation**

In the first scene, Myne sees the library as a place of recreation. In the second scene, Myne uses a book and ink symbol as her business logo. This illustrates that outside of her work as a librarian, namely as a businesswoman and nun, she still upholds her profession and love of books. In the last scene, after becoming a librarian, people around Myne realize that the library is a place of recreation. So when Myne looks gloomy, the people around her will take her to the library.

### **Myth**

These scenes reinforce the statement in the literature by Adepegba & Adedokun (2022), which states that libraries have a role as a place of recreation, which is realized by providing interesting reading books so that they can become a place of entertainment.

A librarian is expected to be able to understand the meaning and concept of himself as a form of professionalism in his work. This is the basis for forming a librarian spirit in librarians. Librarianship can be characterized by pride and meaning in one's self-concept as a librarian (Oktaviani et al., 2018).

Apart from being a centre for information resources, libraries are also known as places of recreation. This applies not only to librarians but also to users. Adepegba & Adedokun (2022) state that all types of libraries play five leading roles in knowledge management: research, information, custodian (preservation), education, and recreation. This recreational role is realized by providing interesting reading books so that they can become a place of entertainment.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis of the representation of librarians in Anime Ascendance of a Bookworm season 2, it can be concluded that Myne (Urano Motosu) is an exemplary librarian figure who can bring about changes in the surrounding environment for the better. The representation of a librarian in the anime Ascendance of a Bookworm season 2 is: The librarian's appearance uses a vintage style, no glasses, and half-space bun hair. She used flower hairpins and book and ink symbols as motifs for her ceremonial dress.

The librarian Myne's character is described as someone friendly, generous, firm, and able to respect other people's opinions. He was able to educate the people around him to be independent and become literate. On several occasions, he expressed his love for libraries so that he could tell people around him that



libraries are pleasant places. He also has spiritual leadership, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a strong librarian spirit. Librarians are also described as intelligent individuals with extensive knowledge in the field of libraries. In carrying out his role, he demonstrated several superior abilities, including good public speaking skills, information management, environmental adaptability, and innovation. Myne's librarian's weakness is that she needs to gain more social experience. However, over time, he was able to adapt and finally eliminate these shortcomings. Myne represents the ideal librarian figure so that librarians and librarian professional organizations can use her as a role model.

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