

A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Alfred University

**Hope and The Librarian**

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My honors thesis is revolving around my senior art show in which I explore memory and emotion through the narrative of Hope and The Librarian.

The narrative revolves around three main characters: Hope, The Librarian, and Libby. These three live and spend most of their time in The Library--a fictitious representation of the space in the human brain responsible for cataloging and storing memories.

Hope is the anthropomorphic personification of hope itself; she was first created as a metaphor in trying to explain my struggles to a friend. In this metaphor I explained that I try not to get my hopes up for potential outcomes that may or may not happen, so I tell my Hope to stay inside and ignore whatever is going on. It is only later, when my dreams are essentially crushed, that I learn that Hope, acting like a rebellious teenager, snuck out of her bedroom window to frolic with my unborn desires and ride on their flying kites just to be struck down by lightning. Had she listened to me and stayed inside and ignorant, the disappointment would have been a much softer blow. Throughout the process of this project, however, Hope has grown from this metaphor into representing a binding force both within The Library and beyond into the other realms of the mind.

The Librarian is the anthropomorphic personification of the filing system within the brain. The Librarian is responsible for sorting memories and putting them away where they belong. She has a particular abhorrence of anything that involves negative emotions or memories; this affects her work ethic and the accuracy at which she does her job. The Librarian tends to try and get rid of the negative documents she is given as quickly as possible, which includes stuffing them in broom closets, under rugs, and

generally anywhere else that she can hide them close by. The outcome of this process can be hazardous due to the accumulation of so much negativity in one space.

Libby is The Librarian as a child; because Libby and the Librarian are the same person, they cannot both exist at the same time; they share a dislike of negative emotions, but mostly function as different people. Where The Librarian is ornery and stubborn, Libby is curious and energetic. She can be found reading books, searching through documents, and overall getting into mischief. While The Librarian and Libby exist within each other, they do not communicate with each other all that well which can result in The Librarian's frustration with her other half. This lack of communication can also be detrimental to Libby, The Library, and the Mind as a whole; when Libby goes exploring in The Library, getting up to her usual mischief, she unknowingly comes upon The Librarian's stashes of negativity and accidentally unleashes a miserable avalanche that spreads it's melancholy through The Library and beyond. It is Hope who comes to Libby's aid and puts a stop to the emotion-storm.

Aside from the three main characters, there are others who inhabit the Mind as well and who visit The Library from time to time. These characters include: Desire--Hope's lover, Joy--Hope and Desire's Daughter, Anxiety and Depression--the creepy twins, Despair--the guardian of the creepy twins, The Story Teller/Creator--responsible for all creativity and overseeing of memory creation, and Blue the Cat--the comic relief.

It is my hope that through the production of a narrative involving these characters I can depict the inner workings of the human mind that viewers can recognize and empathize with. In a sense, every individual has their own Librarian, Hope, Depression, Anxiety, Joy etc. each of whom have their own particular habits and processes. I use

my anthropomorphic personifications of intangible human traits and their actions as allegories to speak about the complexity of the human mind and its great capacity for powerful emotion.

For this project I am creating illustrations of my characters with the intent of creating certain images through collage. I print the completed line drawings either digitally or through the silk screening process on one large sheet of paper. After I have printed several copies I cut out each shape individually. I color the cut outs appropriately and decide among various arrangements. Having multiples of each figure enables me to play with duplication, multiplication and combination. I cut the backing--a stiff foam core--appropriately to size for each picture, including trapezoid-shaped pieces of paper that indicates floor on which the figures sit--the trapezoid shape suggests the perspective of the room receding back in space. After I glue the "floor" to the background paper I'm ready to superimpose my cut out images. I glue some of the shapes directly on to the backing, while I secure others with foam mounting tape and leave them floating a few millimeters off the page.

I displayed these pictures on small shelves mounted on the wall to emphasize their tangible object-like quality. Half the shelves have a pattern of bubble-like circles laser etched onto the surface; this pattern is a reflection of one that appears in a larger scale drawing of Hope, Anxiety, and Despair.

I covered the floor of my show space with book pages; doing this both created a connection between the flooring of my space and the flooring in many of my pieces and created a sense of space that differentiated "The Library" from the shows happening on either side of us. I put a desk in the front of the space on which I placed a lamp, a vase

of flowers (pink frilly ones that matched Hope's hair), and a stack of books; I also placed stacks of books around the space to extend the "library" aesthetic.

I created an introduction for my show on the front wall across from the Library desk. For the introduction I hung a book and pages from the wall so that it looked as though the pages were falling out of the book. Each page contained a black and white drawing of a character and two small pieces of paper superimposed at the top and bottom with text; the piece at the top of the paper in large letters shortly stated the significance of the character while the piece at the bottom provided a longer and more detailed explanation. My artist statement was placed on the front cover of the book.

Lastly, during the opening day of the show I sat at the desk to answer patron's questions and to give out library cards I had designed myself. On each library card I filled in the spaces for the patron's name, the date, and the issue number of the card. The very bottom of the card stated that the owner of the card could take out up to five memories at a time.

Overall, the show was a success. The strongest decision I made was putting the pages on the floor of the space; I got a lot of positive feedback about it from the viewers; it defined the space and elevated the theme. I am happy with the shelves and how they turned out; the display for the piece was very clean-cut, despite the mass of papers covering the floor, and I was told that the design and set up of the space looked very professional. The Library cards were a success as well and I enjoyed handing them out to people while sitting at my desk.

The major downfall of the piece was that only half of the people who came into my show space read the introduction on the far wall. I directed people towards the it,

especially when they came to me with questions about the narrative, and while some people would read it, others would just glance at it and walk away. While that was itself frustrating, I did find that some people really enjoyed my work without reading the introduction at all, which was wonderful. Once those people read the introduction it seemed as though they became even more excited and told me that the concept I was working with was intriguing. I think being stationed in Binns Merrill was a bit of a hinderance too, because many people miss it or gloss over it in the perusal of the art shows, but overall I was happy with the experience and how the audience received my work.

For my work with this piece in the future I will start to convert my images in this show into a book format by scanning them into the computer and adding text to tie them together. I would also like to play with the style I have used for these characters; I broke out of my comfort zone for this piece and made my drawings far more cartoon-like than my normal drawing style. For my exploration of Hope and The Librarian in the future I would like to render them in different ways and expand my story from there. More than one person has suggested that I turn Hope and The Librarian into a web comic, so we will see what happens; the possibilities are endless, really.











*I am the positive outcome  
of hope and desire*



Joy is the offspring of Hope and Desire. She enjoys laughing,  
long crawls on the beach, and hugging the life out of a certain blue cat.

Meow meow meow purr  
(I provide comic relief)



No one knows when the blue cat showed up or where he came from, but he certainly knows how to take the edge off of any situation.



*I am the Storyteller,  
the unit of creativity.*

when the line can showed up or where he came  
y knows how to take the edge off of any situation.









# The Library

Guest

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue date: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue number: \_\_\_\_\_

Card holder can take out up to  
five memories at any given time.





























































































