

'He comes back badder and bigger than ever!': Adapting the masculine and negotiating the feminine in treasure-hunting adventure narratives

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Received March 2002

Abstract

Over the last decades, genre fiction has witnessed the invasion of a host of female authors writing from a self-consciously feminist perspective who have shaken the structural and ideological foundations of genres such as romance, detective and science fiction. Some genres such as adventure, however, have remained recalcitrantly impervious to change and the ideological premises from which adventure operates remain essentially masculinist. Taking some recent examples of treasure-hunting adventure narratives as case studies, my aim in this paper is to analyse how adventure has incorporated superficial textual changes while failing to effect a profound transformation in the nature and form of its discourse, remaining a mummified stronghold of patriarchal conventions which are becoming increasingly outmoded.

Key words: Adventure fiction, heroines, masculinity.

Read as truth and regarded as inspirational and educational, the adventure stories produced by authors such as Rudyard Kipling and H. Rider Haggard in the 1880s were part of the imperial informational and propagandistic machinery of the day. Hence, as critics such as Edward Said, Martin Green or John Mackenzie have pointed out, these narratives endeavoured to justify imperial expansion by endorsing British racial might at the expense of 'inferior', 'barbarous' Others in need of direction, supervision and control. According to Elaine Showalter, however, the revival of adventure writing during the last decades of the nineteenth century should not only be regarded as an attempt to propagandise the British imperial project, but also as «man's literary revolution intended to reclaim the kingdom of the English novel for male writers, male readers and male stories» (1992: 79). Written at a time when women were gaining an unprecedented ascendancy over the public and the literary domains, imperialist adventure fictions responded to a perceived crisis of male power brought about by women's higher public profile and a consequent deterioration in patriarchal domestic arrangements. At the same time, they were an endeavour to counter-balance the supposed «debilitating effects» (Bristow 1996: xiv) on popular perceptions of masculinity brought about by novels in the realist or natu-

ralist vein by authors such as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, who, with their works, turned «[p]aternal figures... [into] the great villains of the English novel» (Mason 1998: vi).

In seeking to revitalise a powerful idea of masculinity, late nineteenth-century adventure writers drew on the tradition of chivalric romance as cultivated by authors such as Walter Scott, as well as on its reformulation in the form of juvenile imperial adventure as produced by authors such as George Alfred Henty, to create an updated generic variation. This new form was no longer concerned with «medieval knightly exploits or stories of kings, gods and nobles» (Taves 1993: 61); neither was it exclusively conceived to provide instruction manuals for boys eager to be enlightened in the ways of imperialism. Aimed at boys, but also at white middle and working-class men, these narratives featured an adult, entrepreneurial adventurer constructed to promote an ideal of masculinity as forceful, hyper-competitive, risk-taking, unemotional and impervious to pain and danger. These adventure stories, furthermore, contributed to consolidating patriarchal gender-role differentiation through the advancement of an idea of femininity as meek, submissive and emotional. Finally, they endorsed a manichaeian distribution of both literary and physical space by delimiting the space of adventure – the colonial wilderness – as a solely masculine arena where men could pursue their manly exploits free from oppressive domestic codes of conduct or from feminine interference. The late nineteenth-century adventure tradition, therefore, was, in Richard Phillips's words, thoroughly «committed to the continuous reinscription of dominant ideologies of masculinity» (1997: 5).

The masculinist and patriarchal conventions that characterised imperialist adventure helped to confirm adventure as a 'masculine' genre. These conventions, in fact, congealed into the adventure formula and became the generic foundation at the basis of adventure fictions produced in the twentieth century, which are still constructed around the figure of a male adventure hero whose «actions render him superior to other characters and to the environment in which he moves» (Dawson 1994: 55). Adventure, therefore, was and remains a 'male' genre, and subsequent social and cultural developments have done little to challenge its patriarchal and masculinist ideology. While the impact of second-wave feminism – together with later postmodern reconfigurations intent on transgressing old patriarchal gender-role expectations – has brought about significant transformations in genres such as romance, science fiction and detective fiction, adventure remains essentially reluctant to accommodate a liberal discourse.

This is not to imply that adventure has not responded, at least superficially, to the demands made elsewhere by feminists and other anti-patriarchal oppositional groups asking for both an equal distribution of space and a reformulation of the conceptions of masculinity and femininity that served as parameters of gender behaviour in patriarchal constructs. In fact, the changes operated in adventure – as a result of new social conditions and of the effects of the cultural imaginaries resonant at the moment of its production – can be

appreciated in some recent examples of treasure-hunting adventure, a genre that is mainly concerned with a hero's quest for «fortune and glory» (*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, screenplay), which he expects to achieve by digging out some sort of long-buried ancient treasure. Throughout the quest, however, the hero learns to give up his mercenary goals and to recognise his obligations to a society in need of his redemptive skills. This generic variation had lain dormant since Compton Bennet's adaptation of Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* in 1950, but was successfully revitalised when Steven Spielberg drew on the treasure-hunter tradition to produce his *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), featuring the incombustible action hero Indiana Jones. This has been followed by, among others, two Indiana Jones sequels – *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) – and, more recently, by the novel *The Seventh Scroll* by Wilbur Smith (1995) and the film *The Mummy* (Stephen Sommers, 1999).¹

The heroes of these narratives – the cinematic Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) and Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) and Smith's Nicholas Quenton-Harper – are constructed with nostalgic reference to a past tradition of adventure and masculine ideals. They are virile, strong and valiant figures committed to action and the pursuit of a noble quest. Furthermore, they are endowed with the characteristics that make up «peerless and magnificent manhood» (Green 1993: 95): courage, sagacity, energy and 'musculinity', which, in Yvonne Tasker's analysis of the body of the action hero, signifies «muscular physical power... an expression of freedom and a form of protection,... bodily invincibility» (1993: 133). Even their attire recalls the iconography of the classical adventure hero as popularised, for instance, by Stuart Granger's persona in *King Solomon's Mines* or Charlton Heston's characters in *The Naked Jungle* (Byron Haskin, 1954) and *The Secret of the Incas* (Jerry Hopper, 1954): rugged khaki pants and shirt, leather jacket and Panama or brimmed felt hat and flapped holster and/or whip; a suitable outfit to go with the heroes' slovenly-shaven, sun-tanned, weather-beaten faces, handsome features and penetrating eyes crowning their solidly-built, athletic bodies. The heroes' quests, as in past examples of the genre, position them in the centre of the narrative action, and their roles as protectors of imperilled communities – or even that of world saviours as is the case in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *The Mummy* – allow them to stand tall among lesser men and to stake out the space of action and adventure as their own manly turf. As Neal King phrases the idea: «[It is in the realm of adventure that the hero] can throw his head back and howl while knives skewer thighs, fists pound faces, and bullets rip flesh. [Heroes] call this manly turf their own. They earn it by killing criminals and playing to live another day» (1999: 201).

1. Henceforth, the films under analysis will be referred to as follows when mentioned in parenthetical position: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (RLA); *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (IJTD); *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (IJLC); and *The Mummy* (TM).

As in the case of nineteenth-century adventure, however, these recent examples of the genre have been gestated in a period characterised by what Paul Smith calls 'male hysteria' or men's feeling of being unable to be in control in a society perceived as increasingly feminised and in which men – at least macho men 'of old' – fear they are being superseded by women and the mild 'New Age Guy' in positions of authority they had occupied undisputed before. The whole 'issue' of men is a matter of public debate, and the outcome of this debate seems to suggest they do not have many avenues of advancement in the future. As Anthony Clary explains, «Serious commentators declare that men are redundant, that women do not need them and children would be better off without them. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are in serious trouble» (2000: 3). Recent treasure-hunting adventure fictions, as products of their times, present apparent modifications in the narrative conventions of the genre that reflect the fact that adventure producers are aware of this supposed crisis of masculinity characterising our *fin de siècle* society. Basically, they respond to the demands made by anti-patriarchal oppositional groups by problematising the notion of heroic male authority; softening the rough edges of tough heroes; highlighting male companionship and assistance in a society in which the old ways of individuality and aggression have only led to loneliness and sterile materialism; and presenting patriarchy itself (especially materialistic, entrepreneurial patriarchal arrangements characterising corporate capitalism) as essentially villainous, while, simultaneously, disentangling the hero from organised patriarchal structures.

Yet, perhaps the most obvious evidence of the genre's preoccupation with (or at least an awareness of) the demands of oppositional groups in society and the pre-eminence of the New Woman, both in society and in the representational arts, is the incorporation (together with the reformulation) of the heroine in adventure, either as the hero's partner or sidekick or as solo adventurer. «In responding to feminism», Yvonne Tasker explains with reference to action cinema since the 1970s, «image makers sought to present women as active and powerful, mobilising already-existing types and conventions, images that were an established part of popular culture» (1993: 19).² Adventure, like action cinema, has also mobilised prototypical representations of femininity and given them a new, more liberal outlook. Adventure heroines, therefore, are mostly built on the premises established for the con-

2. Over the last decades, powerful and active heroines have indeed been incorporated into the representational arts in roles that had been exclusively masculine in the past. Examples of apparently empowered females proliferate: Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) in *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991); Thelma Dickinson (Geena Davis) and Louise Sawyer (Susan Sarandon) in *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991); M.J. Monahan (Holly Hunter) and Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver) in *Copycat* (Jon Amiel, 1995); Marge Gunderson (Frances McDormand) in *Fargo* (Joel and Ethan Cohen, 1996); Samantha Caine (Geena Davis) in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* (Renny Harlin, 1996); or Lieutenant Jordan O'Neil (Demi Moore) in *G.I. Jane* (Ridley Scott, 1997).

struction of characters such as Elizabeth Curtis (Deborah Kerr) in *King Solomon's Mines*. Like Elizabeth, heroines are often depicted as sexy and marginal figures who, for various reasons, find themselves compelled to undertake a quest in the wilderness. Unable to cope with alien locations on their own, they recruit the assistance of (or simply find themselves matched up with) an adventure hero whose function is that of organising and leading the expedition and protecting the lives of the heroines. These heroines, however – with the notorious exception of characters such as Willie Scott (Kate Capshaw) in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* – incorporate elements of strength and authority in their personalities that could not be found in earlier examples of the genre. Even though they are often relegated to a secondary position as the hero's sidekicks, their status is not subservient.

Heroines not only maintain a position of financial control over the heroes, which their status as employers confers upon them, but also display an intellectual dimension that is equal – if not superior – to that of the hero. Equipped with a high education or presented as naturally bright, heroines often supply the brains to the hero's brawn, and their intellectual skills, expertise or natural ingenuity are functional to the development of the action. They also incorporate other personality traits that set off their strength and reckless spirit – characteristics that have often been catalogued as male. They, for instance, love adventure and feel comfortable in the wilderness. Like the heroes, heroines also display outstanding guts and are given to 'tough-talking' and 'wise-cracking' in the purest 'wise guy' tradition. Finally, they not only 'talk trash' and 'kick butt' (almost) as expertly as the hero himself but also negotiate their right to participate in adventure by sheer force of character, harshly informing about their intention to prevail as solo adventurers or as capable sidekicks every time the hero tries to sideline them or leave them behind.

All in all, heroines in treasure-hunting adventure have been substantially adapted to resemble the New Woman envisioned by feminists. Yet it is in adventures conceived from an obvious feminist perspective that these transformations become more patent, as is the case in Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody novels. Peters makes Amelia an active and independent, thirty-something, nineteenth-century woman who, after inheriting her father's fortune, decides to leave her native England and see the world. Her interest in archaeology leads her to Egypt where she faces various mysteries involving hidden treasures, archaeological excavations, cursed mummies, extortion and murder. Amelia is tough, decisive, active, courageous, intelligent and rational. Furthermore, she disrupts stereotypes of femininity by disparaging domestic scenarios and privileging an adventurous life-style in the wilderness:

Bucolic peace is not my ambience, and the giving of tea parties is by no means my favourite amusement. In fact, I would prefer to be pursued across the desert by a band of savage Dervishes brandishing spears and howling for my blood. I would rather be chased up a tree by a mad dog, or face a mummy

risen from its grave. I would rather be threatened by knives, pistols, poisonous snakes, and the curse of a long-dead king. (Peters 1981: 1)

Apart from being a born adventurer, Amelia is also a feminist who despises patriarchal institutions, male chauvinism and sexist conceptions of femininity. She acknowledges her nature «does not lend itself to the meekness required of a wife» and disapproves of matrimony as a matter of principle, since, as she puts it, «Why should any independent, intelligent female choose to subject herself to the whims and tyrannies of a husband?» (Peters 1975: 4). She does not regard herself as a «man-hater» but believes that «few persons of the male sex [are] to be trusted» (1975: 21). However, she is curious about sexuality, eventually marries Raleigh Emerson, enjoys love-making and condemns prudish approaches towards sexuality in the following terms:

I have always felt that the present-day sanctimonious primness concerning the affection between the sexes, even between husband and wife – an affection sanctified by the Church and legalised by the Nation – as totally absurd. Why should a respectable, interesting activity be passed over by novelists who pretend to portray ‘real life’? (Peters 1981: 36)

Even though she marries for love and loves her husband deeply, she is not blind to his defects: «No one can accuse me of being an uncritically dotting wife. I am fully cognisant of Emerson’s many faults» (130). Domestic life makes her restless, and neat and tidy rooms make her «feel quite depressed» (9). Finally, she is equally critical about motherhood. Her love for her son, Ramses, does not amount to «fatuous adoration», though she has «a certain affection for the boy» (11). In fact, she regards the prospect of getting away from ‘the creature’s’ demanding attitude and unending activity with pleasure and does not miss him at all when she leaves him behind in England to pursue her adventures in Egypt: «The thought that several thousands of miles separate me from Ramses inspires a sense of profound peace such as I have not known for years. I wonder that it never occurred to me to take a holiday from Ramses» (41).

Adventure writers and producers – if we are to judge the genre from the examples of treasure-hunting adventure discussed above – have responded to a changing social climate by altering some of its narrative conventions. Space has been made in adventure for heroes whom Susan Jeffords defines as «more internalised versions of their historical counterparts» (1993: 245). In addition, the adventure heroine has increasingly been turned into a fantasy figure that facilitates the politicised vision of the New Woman in society. However, for all the genre’s attempts to open up to pluralist aspirations in society by problematising sexist gender-role expectations, it remains reluctant to alter its essentially masculinist policies. Basically, the genre does not allow women to challenge the centrality of the hero in adventure or to undermine the importance of men’s combatant skills and their reliance on values such

as aggression or violence in order to achieve heroic status. In fact, the genre's unwillingness to accommodate more liberal policies can be fully appreciated if we consider the extent of the heroines' success in adventure in spite of the elements of strength, energy, intelligence and determination they are endowed with. Ultimately, the genre allows women to appear as figures of power, while, simultaneously, it «places limits on the effectivity of women's new-found power, and hedges on its blanket opposition to the rule of men» (Pfeil 1993: 53).

Thus, heroines are constructed as cultured and authoritative, although, at the same time, a subplot of female incompetence that belies their proficiency is introduced in the narrative. Evelyn, for instance, may boast an impressive curriculum in Egyptology, but can do little to shake off the impression of ineptitude she produces when, the first time she is introduced in *The Mummy*, we see her literally destroying the Cairo Museum of Antiquities' library trying to replace a volume on one of the library shelves. The curator, on contemplating the mess, exclaims, «Look at this! Sons of the Messiah! Give me frogs, flies, locusts. Anything but this! Compared to you, the other plagues were a joy» (TM, screenplay). He wonders why he puts up with Evelyn at all, and when she lists all the skills that make her an invaluable librarian he promptly corrects her: «I put up with you because your mother and father were our finest patrons, that's why, Allah rest their souls. Now straighten up this mishevah!» (TM, screenplay). Elsa Schneider (Alison Dooly) in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, to mention another example, is a doctor like Indiana himself. Even though she is an expert archaeologist, she cannot locate the entry to a knight's tomb containing the instructions to the whereabouts of the Holy Grail. It takes Indiana a few seconds to realise that the huge X-mark on the library floor in Venice – a building Elsa has been inspecting for days – points at the exact spot where the tomb is placed. Elsa exclaims, «My God, I must be blind» (IJLC, screenplay). And, indeed, she is blind, rendered hopelessly short-sighted in order to compete with the hero's apt, domineering and all-seeing gaze.

Adventure filmmakers and novelists also seem determined to undermine the heroines' alleged guts by subjecting them to additional torments to those inflicted on the hero in the form of snakes, bugs or rats, which have (almost) no effect on men but make women hysterical. Women who show substantial courage when facing uglies armed to the teeth, even supernatural mummies, and who are even allowed to shoot a few baddies themselves, are simultaneously shown to be unable to cope with minor repulsive threats which paralyse them and force the hero to rise to the occasion and perform his traditional role as the saviour of damsels in distress. In fact, heroines in present-day adventure are constantly portrayed as what Yvonne Tasker calls the «hysterical figure who needs to be rescued or protected» (1993: 16). Heroines are still positioned as 'sacrificial lambs' – tied with ropes, flesh exposed – awaiting torture, rape or even death at the hands of villainous monsters, giving heroes the opportunity to show off their superior strength. Again, it is only

thanks to the hero's prompt and timely intervention that heroines are spared this dreadful fate. In *The Mummy*, for instance, Rick O'Connell has to rescue Evelyn from the paws of the mummy itself, the undead high priest Im-Ho-Tep, who sees her as the reincarnation of his beloved Anck-Su-Namun. Even though women are not always presented as Andromedas tied to a rock awaiting rescue from Perseus, they are unable to cope with strenuous situations without the assistance of the hero. Royan in Smith's *The Seventh Scroll*, for instance, suitably twists her knee after a gelignite explosion that sets masses of rock in motion against both Royan and Nick. Unable to stand on her feet, Nick has to carry Royan on his back, which is no great effort since she is only a «[s]kinny little thing» (231) and, after all, «her safety [is] his main concern» (222).

Finally, heroines are depicted in such a way as to give the term *femme fatale* a new but unfortunately disempowering dimension. Unlike *femme fatales* in, for instance, the noir and the hard-boiled detective tradition, female adventurers are not «women who seek to advance themselves by manipulating their sexual allure and controlling its value» (Krutnik 1991: 63). Even though they function as the romantic interest of the hero, heroines do not consciously use their sexuality to manipulate him. In fact, they are even described as plain, uninteresting, somehow 'masculine' and/or completely unconscious of their physical beauty. The hero does not regard them as a sexual distraction, but as burdens that hamper his advancement. Often, it is only after the heroines expose some of their flesh – when caught in unguarded moments wearing sexy nightgowns – that the hero makes a pass at them. Heroines remain, therefore, sexually passive.³

Consequently, if they are *fatale* at all, it is not because of their powerful, threatening, sexuality, but because they invariably, unwittingly and clumsily unleash chaos as they go and create problems that place world security at risk. Evelyn, for example, unwittingly resurrects Im-Ho-Tep by reciting an incantation from the *Book of the Dead*. Royan, to mention another example, blames herself and Nick for the massacre at the monastery of St Frumentius in *The Seventh Scroll*. Nick and Royan have taken polaroids which, when stolen by von Schiller, the villain of the story, lead him to the monastery. Once there, he and his men raid it, killing most of the monks, in an attempt to find the clues they need to locate an ancient tomb Schiller desperately wants to find. As Royan says: «Now there is more blood on our hands.... We started this whole thing.» Nick nonchalantly tries to unburden Royan of her guilt, while implicitly denying his own involvement in the massacre. After all, it is the role of women to be *fatale* and he has no doubt about who is ultimately responsible for disruption in the narrative, because, indeed, he is not. He

3. Elsa in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* is the only female who consciously uses her sexuality to obtain information from both Indiana Jones and his father, Dr. Henry Jones. Unsurprisingly, and given her threatening sexuality, she is the only heroine who does not survive the ordeal and perishes at the end of the film.

says, «Hell, Royan, how can *you* take responsibility for von Schiller's madness? I am not going to let *you* punish *yourself* for that.» (295, italics added)

Belittled, disarmed and romanced, heroines in adventure work on tight reins. And not even Elizabeth Peters' feminist adventurer Amelia Peabody manages to disqualify the myth of men's superiority in adventure. Ironically, even though Amelia is constructed in such a way as to demonstrate that women can function effectively in the wilderness, it is only at the expense of depicting Amelia as exceptional among an array of clumsy, prudish, evil or weak women who, all together, present a poor enough picture of 'standard femininity'. Thus, for example, Miss Pritchard – Amelia's chosen chaperone – is a clumsy, over-dressed, pitiful female whose «stupidity [is] so intense it [verges] on simple-mindedness» (Peters 1975: 6). Travers, Amelia's maid, is a «round, cheery-faced little person with the soul of a dried-up spinster» (11). Lady Harold, one of Amelia's neighbours and a leading social figure, is an impossibly fat, envious, silly woman who «combines malice and stupidity to a degree» Amelia has not encountered before (Peters 1981: 10). Her lady followers, meanwhile, do «nothing but titter and nod at her idiotic remarks» (11). Lady Baskerville, the villainess in *The Curse of the Pharaohs*, is a self-seeking, vain, and abusive fortune-hunter and a murderer who looks like the «damnable lovely lamias and vampires of legend» (26), and acts like one, «baring her long white teeth as if she thirsted to sink them in» other people's throats when displeased or offended (79). Madame Berengaria is a «mentally deranged» (201) old woman given to raptures of mysticism and fits of hysterics who is in the habit of wolfing down vast quantities of food and drinking «herself into a stupor» (166). Furthermore, she dresses in a thread-bare, dirty linen robe that betrays «a truly appalling extent of fat pallid flesh», wears a black wig «surrounded by a cloud of small insects» (126), and uses strong perfume that does «not entirely cover the unmistakable olfactory evidences of her lack of interest in the most rudimentary personal cleanliness» (216). Even though she displays outstanding courage when in the company of Amelia, Evelyn Barton-Forbes is a fragile lady fashioned in the purest sentimental tradition. She boasts a pathetic past of seduction by charmer-Italian gigolo and consequent social repudiation; often breaks into «[storms] of weeping» (Peters 1975: 50); has fainting fits, and shows a «morbid love of martyrdom» (223). Although she had considered the possibility of spending her life as a spinster in her role as Amelia's companion, she is better suited to be a wife and soon terminates her adventurer's existence to marry, produce a profusion of children and live a contented life in England.

To conclude, adventure, if we are to generalise from the examples analysed in this paper, remains a masculine preserve. As Yvonne Tasker explains, «the kinds of fantasy investments at work in the pleasures taken from the cinema [as from other representational arts] cannot be controlled by conscious political positions in the way that some criticism seems to imply» (1993: 136). Feminism has indeed exerted considerable influence on the realms of adventure, leading to significant transformation of the narrative conventions of the

genre. Yet feminism has not managed to alter its policies. The genre furnishes its readers and audiences with pleasures derived from watching a larger-than-life hero (if often artificial in his self-conscious articulation of old-style masculinity) triumphantly overcoming obstacles and dangers in wild, uncivilised landscapes. The genre's main aim is still to eulogise the masculine body and the white male supremacist policies which this body epitomises. Females, meanwhile, exist mainly to set off the hero's qualities and skills. If allowed to go solo, women never manage to appear as anything but exceptions to a rather pathetic-looking feminine 'norm'.

Captain Winston Havlock in *The Mummy* may complain about being the last of an adventurous race «gone down in a flame of glory»; or about remaining an old relic in a new world where the only thing left for him to do is «[to sit] around..., rotting from boredom and booze» (TM, screenplay). Yet new adventurers such as Rick O'Connell, Indiana Jones or Nicholas Quenton-Harper exist to resurrect the genre and, with it, heroic masculinity. No wonder that heroines like Evelyn Carnahan in *The Mummy* cannot negotiate their status as adventurers⁴ or provide an answer to the question «What's a place like me doing in a girl like this» (TM, screenplay), as she drunkenly puts it. No wonder Evelyn Barton-Forbes in *Crocodile on the Sandbank*, when first meeting the adventuress Amelia Peabody, bursts out, «I can't believe you're real!» (Peters 1975: 19). Indeed, heroines face a hard time in making a niche for themselves in a genre which is still conceived, as O'Connell matter-of-factly expresses the idea, around a hero whose function is to «[r]escue the damsel in distress, kill the bad guy, save the world» (TM, screenplay).

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Films

- Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Steven Spielberg, 1989)
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (Steven Spielberg, 1984)
King Solomon's Mines (Compton Bennet, 1950)
The Mummy (Stephen Sommers, 1999)
Raiders of the Lost Ark (Steven Spielberg, 1981)

4. When O'Connell asks her what she is doing in Egypt, she says: «Oh, look. I may not be an explorer, or an adventurer, or a treasure seeker, or a gunfighter, Mr O'Connell. But I'm proud of what I am.» O'Connell prompts her, «And what is that?» She proudly exclaims, «I am a librarian.» (TM, screenplay).

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