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The Image of the Nurse in Motion Pictures

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From the days when motion picture shows were a novelty to the present, Hollywood films have helped shape attitudes toward what is acceptable and not acceptable in contemporary life. Thus, one can trace the image of nursing over several decades through this medium.

Overall, judging from representative films as examples of the salient characteristics of nursing, one sees a rise and fall in the image of nursing on the screen, with a high point in the 1940s and a low in the 1970s. This should be of concern to nurses since the current negative image of the nurse in motion pictures is undoubtedly adversely influencing the attitudes of patients and policy-makers alike and, perhaps, is also subtly inhibiting nurses' own aspirations. Certainly such views are having an impact on the attitudes of prospective nurses, since the largest proportion of the more than one billion motion picture admission tickets that are sold each year are purchased by adolescents. How nurses are being portrayed to a group that is in the process of making career decisions ought to be a concern of all nurses.

To document the nurse's image in films, we used

content analysis for our evaluation of 204 English-speaking motion pictures released between 1930 and 1979 in which nurses or nursing were a focus. We analyzed these films both quantitatively and qualitatively.¹ Since motion pictures of the silent era were generally made on nitrate film that decomposed with age (and many have consequently been destroyed), they were not included in the quantitative component of this study, but those that could be located were subjected to qualitative analysis. Nurse and physician characters as well as elements of the overall motion picture were studied.²

We found that most motion picture nurse characters chose nursing for such altruistic motives as caring for others, engaging in a worthwhile activity, and serving one's country. Although 55.3 percent of nurse characters viewed a career in nursing positively, 3.4 percent

¹ This study is part of an overall study of the image of the nurse in various forms of the mass media: motion pictures, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and so forth.

² Three content analysis tools were developed, tested, and used in the coding of motion pictures. Coders who applied the instruments underwent a standardized training program developed for the project. Intrarater reliability was 93.1% and interrater reliability was 91.6%. Validity testing was also carried out. For a further description of study methods as well as statistical findings, see: B. Kalisch, and others. Content analysis of film stereotypes of nurses. *Intern. J. Women's Studies* 3:531-558, Nov.-Dec. 1980.



Jos. L. Plunkett and Frank J. Carroll production.

showed a clear dislike of nursing, and 41.3 percent demonstrated an ambiguous attitude. When nurse characters were compared with physician characters as to career importance, motion picture physicians viewed the career of medicine as much more important to their lives than did nurses. Physicians used their own judgment in patient care situations more often than nurses, and they were also commended more than were nurses.

Overall, we discovered that the image of the nursing profession in motion pictures reached its most positive expression during the 1940s, actually peaking at the height of World War II. Since then, a steady erosion of the strong and positive image of the nursing profession has occurred. A particularly dramatic decline began in the 1960s and intensified throughout the 1970s, as the nursing profession was denigrated and satirized in many important and influential films.

The Silent Era

In the early years of silent film, the scores of nurse characters served more of a symbolic function than any other. Knowledge of the real education and role of nurses was not well presented. A common theme in motion picture drama and comedy was that of the male hospital patient falling in love with his nurse. Amusement was most commonly derived from the antics

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resulting from a nurse being pursued by an ardent admirer. This happened in *Hospital Hoax* (1912), *Billy's Nurse* (1914), *Wanted A Nurse* (1914), and *Good Morning Nurse* (1915) among others.

The nurse's role within these films was influenced by a moral code largely inherited from the Victorian era. Just as in society in general, the image of women in films during this period was chiefly defined by their economic and marital status; in addition, a nurse's image was almost always projected in relation to a man.

From 1916 to 1918, nurses received their greatest attention in the propaganda-laden films of World War I. Nurses almost always appeared as Red Cross nurses and symbolized an idealized almost mythical womanhood—pure, brave, maternal, and free of the corruptive taint of war. The extent of nursing activities portrayed was largely limited to gentle, maternal solicitude for the patient's comfort.

One of the most powerful nursing images from this early period occurred in *Heart of Humanity* (1918), which depicted a young mother's trials and tribulations when she joined the Red Cross to care for French war orphans. The major nurse character, Nanette, personified the ideal of chaste, maternal love. The climactic scene occurred when an evil German officer attempted to rape her while she sought to save an infant's life. Viewers received a distinctive image of the nurse as someone associated with the highest values of humanity contrasted most powerfully with base instincts.

Nursing acquired a special aura in the publicity given to Edith Cavell, the British nurse shot by the Germans in October 1915 for helping Allied soldiers escape occupied Belgium. At least seven films about Cavell's life and death, including *The Woman the Germans Shot* (1918) and *Why Germany Must Pay* (1919), received great attention from American audiences. Nursing emerged as women's natural and most noble wartime work.

In all these films, nursing was portrayed as a singularly dangerous occupation in wartime, although it was one with an almost unfailing safety net for moral probity. Of course, none of the Hollywood war films featured nursing as it really was during the war. None of the nurse characters appeared to belong to any military organization, and few spent much time in patient care. But despite the lack of realism, these World War I films created a positive stereotype of the nurse as young, womanly, attractive, brave, and morally pure.

So powerful was the moral aura surrounding the work of the nurse that many fallen women characters in films regained their virtue by becoming nurses. Olga Petrova played *The Black Butterfly* (1916), an opera star and Parisian vamp, who unknowingly fell in love with her daughter's fiancé. When she discovered the truth, she left the city to become a nurse; her self-sacrifice was rewarded when she was reconciled with her long-lost husband who had been searching for her for years.

In *The Splendid Sinner* (1918), Dolores, the pampered mistress of a wealthy but unattractive German, tried several times to reform herself, only to fall back into her wicked ways. Only after becoming a Red Cross nurse was her reformation complete; she accepted death

by a firing squad rather than return to her old life as a pampered mistress.

During the 1920s, nursing served as a stereotypical attribute to ascribe a particular personality to all kinds of heroines (often inappropriate ones). Among the films we considered, not one nurse heroine was also a career nurse. Nursing was assigned as a role outside the mainstream of life; it was excellent for certain of life's contingencies and generally faultless as an indication of a woman's character, but fundamentally, it was out of keeping with woman's only legitimate destiny—marriage.

1930 to 1945

With the collapse of the American economy in 1929, the effervescent, youthful spirits of flapper heroines vanished, and new models for working women emerged. In the more serious, realistic atmosphere of the 1930s, the nurse character received a great deal of positive attention. In general, nursing was portrayed as a worthy, important profession that enabled women to earn a respectable living.

The only feature-length films ever produced that focused entirely on the nursing profession were released in the 1930s. *Night Nurse* (1931), *Once to Every Woman* (1934), *The White Parade* (1934), *Registered Nurse* (1934), *Wife, Doctor and Nurse* (1937), *Four Girls in White* (1939), and *Vigil in the Night* (1939) all featured nursing as a central theme and nurses as the major characters. Some, such as *The White Parade*, *Four Girls in White*, and *Vigil in the Night*, revealed a good deal about the education and work of professional nurses. In these films, attractive young women put the demands of their profession before personal desires.

One of the most popular (and nominated for the 1934 Academy Award for Best Picture), *The White Parade*, starring Loretta Young, gave a realistic, sympathetic portrayal of the difficulties of becoming a nurse in a large hospital school. The story emphasized that not every woman was cut out to be a nurse, and those that were could expect a life of hard work, little monetary reward, but enormous personal satisfaction. The heroine of the film even turned down the proposal of marriage

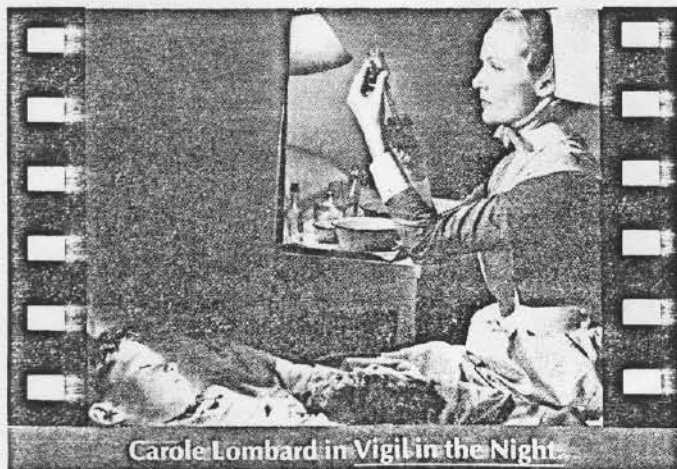
by a millionaire in order to continue her work as a nurse.

In the depression years of the 1930s, such idealism and self-sacrifice meant a great deal. More important, the viewing public came to understand that the nursing profession espoused high ideals and demanded rigorous self-discipline from its students and practitioners. No longer did Hollywood present nursing as a temporary pastime for rich girls interested in a little humanitarian work before marriage.

Film biographies, a popular Hollywood product of the 1930s, tackled several nursing heroines: *The White Angel* (1936), *Nurse Edith Cavell* (1939), and *Sister Kenny* (1946). Kay Francis starred as Florence Nightingale in Warner Brothers' tribute to the founder of modern nursing, *White Angel*. The film told Nightingale's story from her early attempts to free herself from her parents' loving restrictions to her triumph over the horrors of the British medical establishment in Scutari during the Crimean War. *Nurse Edith Cavell* retold the inspiring story of the World War I heroine.

Rosalind Russell, who had taken a personal interest in Australian nurse Elizabeth Kenny's work in rehabilitating polio victims, played Sister Kenny. Sister Kenny's greatest foes were the medical men who refused to believe that a nurse "without the benefit of a medical education" could possibly do more for polio patients than the orthopedic surgeons. These three nursing heroines demonstrated nobility, self-sacrifice, and relentless determination to pursue the right course of action despite enormous opposition.

The birth of the Dionne quintuplets in 1934 prompted a long series of films centered around the country doctor who delivered them. Jean Hersholt, who played the kindly country doctor who delivered and cared for the quints (based on the actual physician, Dr. Allan Roy DaFoe) tried to buy DaFoe's rights to *Country Doctor* (1936). When he failed, Hersholt simply changed the name of the character, continued the series as Dr. Christian, and made six more films between 1939 and 1941. In all the *Doctor Christian* films, nurse Judy Price served Christian with filial loyalty. This nurse shared in Dr. Christian's concerns and enjoyed a warm and mutually respectful friendship with him. Although



Carole Lombard in *Vigil in the Night*

Courtesy of RKO General Pictures



Rosalind Russell in *Sister Kenny*

Courtesy of RKO General Pictures

the nurse never challenged her boss's wisdom or knowledge, the audience recognized her as a valuable ally for the physician.

Between 1937 and 1949, MGM made fifteen *Dr. Kildare/Dr. Gillespie* movies—all centering on the heroic, idealistic efforts of young Jim Kildare and his superior, Dr. Leonard Gillespie. Three nurse characters recurred in these films: Nurse Molly Byrd, the nursing director of Blair General; Mary Lamont, a young staff nurse; and occasionally, Nurse Parker. The image of nursing in this popular series was mixed. The most important character, Mary Lamont (played by Laraine Day), enjoyed Kildare's admiration and thus stood as a sympathetic and admirable young woman. As a nurse, however, she was quite docile, never indicating much initiative or ambition. She and Kildare became engaged soon into the series, with Mary happily promising to wait five years for her doctor.

Although a supporting character, Molly Byrd had a stronger professional position than Mary. As supervisor of nurses, she appeared to be authoritative, competent, vastly skilled, and temperamentally matched to the grouchy, bossy character of Leonard Gillespie. Despite surface conflict between Byrd and Gillespie, the viewer realized their deep admiration and trust for each other. In all, however, the nurses paled in comparison with the omniscient and aggressive physicians.

The largest category of films to feature nurses as major characters were detective and crime stories in which the nurse generally contributed to the resolution of the mystery or the vindication of a falsely accused man with whom she had fallen in love. The Mary Roberts Rinehart character "Miss Pinkerton" and Mignon Eberhart's "Sarah Keate" became popular screen characters. These nurse detectives worked as private duty nurses for wealthy patients and naturally became embroiled in the mysterious goings-on of the mansion's other occupants.

Although these films usually ended with the nurse in the arms of her boyfriend, often a police detective, they were not primarily romantic stories. The nurses often displayed great wit, mental acuity, and courage. These nurse-detectives were worldly wise, not easily taken in by outward appearances, and yet were sympathetic and kindly women. Limited attention to actual nursing care occurred in these stories—at most, the nurses administered medications, took temperatures, and delivered meals.

By focusing attention on nurses as sleuths in complicated mysteries, however, Hollywood offered countless examples of nurses being appreciated for their intelligence, logical powers, and bravery. None of these films was particularly memorable in the history of films, yet they were quite popular, and one or two new ones came out every year in the decade before World War II—*Miss Pinkerton* (1932), *While the Patient Slept* (1935), *Murder By an Aristocrat* (1936), *The Murder of Dr. Harrigan* (1936), *The Great Hospital Mystery* (1937), *Mystery House* (1938), *The Patient in Room 18* (1938), and *The Nurse's Secret* (1941).

Nurses also lent their support to innocent men or reformed criminals embroiled with the law. For example, in *Mayor of Hell* (1933), a nurse not only worked to



A First National and Vitaphone Production.

improve conditions in a boys' reformatory but also inspired a borderline gangster into dropping all ties with the underworld. In *Fight to the Finish* (1937), a nurse in love with a cab driver involved in gang warfare encouraged him to stop the fighting and prove his own innocence to the police.

In all these gangster and prison films, the nurses seemed to be noble women and democratic in their choice of mates. The nurses bore no prejudices against men who had been in prison or who dabbled with the underworld—as long as the men demonstrated their desire to reform.

Another genre of films prevalent in the 1930s were aviation and ocean liner films. These adventure yarns routinely climaxed with characters adrift in the air or out at sea and faced with the need to resolve overwhelming problems with their own limited resources. Because the airlines wanted only registered nurses as stewardesses during the early days of commercial flying and because many sea-going vessels included a nurse among the crew, quite naturally the nurse could play an important role. Although the nurse-characters often had little nursing to do—especially in the aviation films—they emerged routinely as intrepid women, willing and able to perform critical tasks under great pressure, for example, perform emergency surgery with only wireless instructions, as in *King of Alcatraz* (1938), and *The Storm* (1938); or fight a raging cholera epidemic aboard ship, as in *Pacific Liner*, (1939).

With the coming of World War II, the value of the professional nurse to American society increased enormously. This was reflected on the screen as nursing assumed a patriotic, activist character never before or since matched in feature films. In 1943, at the height of the war and with the need for nurses at its most acute, the major studios produced their greatest tributes to the nursing profession. *So Proudly We Hail* (1943), a Paramount release based on the actual experiences of nurses caught on Bataan and Corregidor when war broke out in

the Philippines, was one of the biggest moneymakers of the year. The image of nursing in this movie was overwhelmingly positive: several beautiful young nurses displayed a great measure of heroism, self-sacrifice, and stamina as they battled overwhelming odds that culminated in the largest military surrender of troops in American history.

Even though these were attractive women who enjoyed romantic relationships with suitable men, the films emphasized their professional work and the *esprit d'corps* that characterized their relationships with each other. Nurses demonstrated enormous physical bravery; in *So Proudly We Hail*, Veronica Lake took a live grenade into a Japanese squad and exploded it; Claudette Colbert ran into a burning building in an attempt to rescue a severely wounded nurse. In *Parachute Nurse* (1942), a group of attractive young nurses endured, cheerfully, the rigors of parachute training in preparation for a new combat role that called for being dropped into inaccessible areas to rescue wounded soldiers.

During the 1930s and until the end of World War II, Hollywood presented nurses and nursing positively. The profession itself emerged as a valuable one, with requirements and standards for its practitioners. Nurse characters retained their romantic function in film, but not to the exclusion of other activities. In this "golden age" of nursing films, women appeared able to practice nursing while at the same time pursue interesting personal lives. Even if marriage spelled the end of the nursing career, the career itself mattered to these young women, who recognized the value of their own contribution.

1945 to 1959

The high level of independence and even aggression found in nurse characters in films of World War II could not be sustained in a postwar society that sought to return women to their "rightful" place—tending children in their happy homes in the suburbs. Filmmakers repeatedly cast female characters as passive, docile, stay-at-home creatures, willing to live vicariously through the exploits of their men.

Most nurse characterizations in films of the late

1940s and 1950s featured nurses seeking romantic, marital, and domestic fulfillment. Invariably, their nursing careers terminated abruptly when some measure of domestic stability was found.

In *Possessed* (1946), Joan Crawford played a private duty nurse who formed an obsessive, romantic attraction to a man who did not return her love in equal measure. Spurned by her lover, the nurse soon married the husband of her patient, who had committed suicide. Immediately, the nurse quit her job and enjoyed the material security and comfort of her new husband's position. Although this nurse character was apparently a competent nurse, she clearly found no personal fulfillment in her work.

Not As a Stranger (1955) was another melodrama to feature a nurse (played by Olivia de Havilland) seeking to escape her career into marriage and motherhood. Ms. de Havilland played a rather naive but competent nurse who, partly out of fear of spinsterhood, fell in love with an opportunistic medical student who needed someone to pay for his education. After putting her new husband through school, she quit her job to settle down and have a family, but he began having second thoughts about his marriage. They separated but eventually reconciled when the insensitive young physician finally realized the depth of his dependence on his wife's maturity and compassion. Again, this nurse appeared to be a good, well-respected nurse, making noticeable contributions to the welfare of her patients and her colleagues. Nevertheless, the film made it clear that professional respect did nothing for the nurse's personal satisfaction and that nursing and family life were incompatible.

Perhaps the most positive image of the profession in the 1950s can be found in *The Nun's Story* (1959) in which Audrey Hepburn played a young nursing nun torn between her religious vows and her restless spirit of professional curiosity as well as intimations of a romantic attraction to a physician. This nursing nun was intelligent, articulate, and possessed of scientific curiosity; she found her religious obligations hampered her development as a nurse and scientist. She eventually left the convent in pursuit of greater freedom.

Films such as *Operation Pacific* (1951), *Battle Cir-*



Nan Grey performing surgery in *The Storm*.

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Laraine Day in *The Secret of Dr. Kildare*.

From the MGM release *The Secret of Dr. Kildare* © 1939 Loew's Inc.

cus (1953), *Hellcats of the Navy* (1957), and *South Pacific* (1958), all featured military nurses during war, but long gone were instances of nurses making important contributions to the war effort. Instead, these pretty and sympathetic nurses concentrated their attentions on finding husbands and/or comforting their lovers. Female bravery now consisted of keeping a stiff upper lip when the man went into battle—a far cry from the courageous exploits of World War II film nurses.

A comic series, based around a talking mule named Francis, featured veteran comedienne ZaZu Pitts as a fluttery, silly, and breathless older military nurse who also became involved in dealing with Francis and in helping Donald O'Connor, a hapless soldier with the misfortune to have been chosen Francis's confidante.

1960 to 1980

The last 20 years have witnessed the complete destruction of the once proud and noble film image of the nurse. The decade of the 1960s, a watershed in contemporary American social history, introduced a subtle erosion of the nurse's good moral character and precipitated the more recent films that have denigrated the nursing profession in exaggerated ways. In 1960, two popular films, *Operation Petticoat* and *The Bramble Bush*, began what would become an all too frequent association—nurses as the focus of sexual titillation. *Operation Petticoat*, a lighthearted farce starring Cary Grant, told the tale of an almost derelict submarine assigned to noncombatant duties in the South Pacific during World War II. Its commander, Grant, and crew wanted to distinguish themselves as worthy of greater assignments, but their efforts were hampered when they rescued a group of comely Army nurses who had been stranded on an island. The comic tension of the film arose from the living situation aboard the submarine—love-starved men sharing close quarters with beautiful young women who hung their drying lingerie all over the sub. The professional importance and value of these nurses rarely surfaced.

The *Bramble Bush* was a sort of a New England "Peyton Place," where sin and corruption lay close to the surface of respectable middle-class lives. Angie Dickinson played a beautiful, blond nurse who enjoyed a fine professional reputation in the community. However, her facade of professional composure masked a seething, passionate, secret life—motel-room romances and being blackmailed into posing nude for photographs. All the advertising for the film featured a half-dressed Fran (Ms. Dickinson) muttering, "I'm not a motel room tramp..." Ms. Dickinson would play a nurse character at least three more times in the 1960s (*Captain Newman, M.D.*, *Jessica*, and *Sins of Rachel Cade*) and each time her competent nurse characterization also exuded a definite sleazy personal quality.

And, in still another popular film of the decade, *The Interns* (1962), student nurses appear to be fair game for the romantically inclined young physicians. Called "nurslings" by their own instructor, the young nurses serve only as party-time diversions for the physicians.

If nurse characters of the 1960s suffered from their



Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story*

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lightweight, sexually charged image, at least they were largely benign characters, unable to inflict harm on anyone else. *Catch-22*, a popular and critical success of 1970, featured two sexually attractive nurses whose personal and professional demeanor revealed them to be sterile, cold, unfeeling, and ineffective.

"Hot Lips" Houlihan, played by Sally Kellerman, in the film version of *M*A*S*H* served as a sexual joke as well as a hypercritical, narrow-minded, and authoritarian woman. Only total humiliation in front of the entire camp could dent her armor-plating and make her acceptable to the other members of the camp.

The decade of the 1970s also added a new dimension to the professional image—a propensity toward malevolence and sadistic personality, heretofore only occurring in rare and limited instances. In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched, in her direct confrontation with a patient



Louise Fletcher, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

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named McMurphy, epitomized the soul-destroying, castrating mother-figure. What made her so effective and so frightening was the fact that Ratched looked and sounded like a soft-spoken, reasonable woman, with her patient's best interest at heart. But her actions belied her appearance. In the film, the nurse abused her role as psychiatric nurse to supply cruel punishments: arranging shock treatments to punish some patients for a harmless, enjoyable outing; shaming one patient into committing suicide; and finally having McMurphy lobotomized to prove, once and for all, her ultimate power over her patients.

One *Cuckoo's Nest* could influence many people, but, unfortunately, this film represented only part of the overall trend of the 1960s and 1970s to draw the professional nurse along unflattering and often frightening lines.

In Mel Brooks' *High Anxiety* (1977), Cloris Leachman played a sadistic nurse administrator named Charlotte Diesel. Among her many interests, Nurse Diesel affected a talent for murder, extortion, and fraud, as well as interest in the kinkier forms of sexual experience. Dressed in a Nazi uniform and thigh-high boots, Nurse Diesel supplied the discipline and bondage that her lover, Dr. Montague, so craved. Nurse Diesel was a vulgar joke in anyone's opinion, but the effectiveness of this joke rested upon the audience's familiarity with the nurse administrator character parodied by Diesel: the aging, unmarried megalomaniac, sexually abnormal woman in power.

During the 1930s and 1940s, nurses frequently became involved in criminal activities, usually as righteous young women anxious to see justice done. However, during the 1970s, Hollywood cast the nurse as an obvious villain, often involved in carrying out criminal activities—some downright grisly. *The Honeymoon Killers* (1970) featured a drastically overweight nurse working with her lover, an aging gigolo, in fleecing unsuspecting women of their money and then murdering them with whatever blunt instrument was handy.

In *Scream and Scream Again* (1970), a beautiful but deadly nurse willingly assists a mad doctor in gruesome experiments and commits murder as a matter of course. In *Coma* (1978), a nurse plays a key role in the business aspects of a murderous scheme to sell needed transplantable body organs to unscrupulous surgeons.

Throughout the entire history of film, the 1970s represent the lowest point for nurse character intelligence, rationality, sociability, toughness, altruism, kindness, sincerity, and warmth. Film nurses in this decade also scored the lowest in their value for duty, self-sacrifice, achievement, integrity, virtue, intellect, and religion.

In terms of nursing activities, the 1970s showed the lowest point for the appearance of nurses providing emotional support to patients and their families, acting as a professional resource, carrying out nursing process activities, and providing physical comfort to patients.

Altruism as a motive for choosing nursing as a career also fell dramatically in the 1970s. Sadistic nurse portrayals reached an all-time high in that decade, and at the same time, physicians were portrayed in motion pictures to be just as nurturant as nurses.

During the past two decades, the contribution of nurses to society has been greatly undervalued in motion pictures. While some films have shown the nurse to be competent, the scope of that competence has been limited. Nursing has largely been presented as a self-subordinating, quintessentially feminine profession.

Nurses almost always appear as the sexual mascots of the health care world, appearing more interested in linen closet trysts than in professional development. And when this traditionally feminine imagery is not in focus, the brusque, officious professional who on occasion becomes sadistic and lethal emerges. Presentations of individual achievement and personal autonomy among nurses were virtually nonexistent in 1970s motion pictures.

There may be a dim light at the end of the tunnel, however, regarding the image of nursing in feature films. A handful of sympathetic, positive nursing characters has dribbled out of Hollywood in the past year. Confined to minor, supporting roles, nonetheless, these few nurses have shown that Hollywood can present nurses and nursing in a positive fashion.

In *Elephant Man* (1980), which was set in Victorian England, a hospital nursing director, Ms. Mothershead, and her young staff nurses provide not only exemplary nursing care for this man but eventually offer him their friendship—a far more rare and valued commodity for poor Merrick. In *Fort Apache, The Bronx* (1981), an attractive, Puerto Rican nurse who becomes Paul Newman's lover is a caring, well-liked young woman. Unfortunately she is addicted to heroin and dies from an overdose at the end of the film. Although this image is mixed, at least the nurse is meant to be admired and pitied when she dies.

In *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* (1981), two nurses, while cast in the shadow of a glamorous female physician who assumes much of the nursing care, do appear sympathetic to the wish to die of one of their patients—a quadriplegic sculptor. Although the physician in charge of the patient refuses to listen to his patient or to accept his decision to be allowed to die, the nurses—while powerless to help—treat the patient as a rational, total human being.



Kiki Hunter in *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*

From the MGM release *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* © 1981 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Co.