

## Librarian as Creator

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### Abstract

Through a reflective case study, the author explores how her creation and telling of stories served to provide information, convey messages, and raise awareness, about the issue of violence against women and girls. Her role as a librarian nurtured her creativity. She disseminated information from her creative works via roundtables, read-aloud activities, and presentations of the themes raised in her creative works, both face-to-face and online to students and the community. The author drew upon the literature in her discussion of how librarians may utilise creativity in the dissemination of information. She utilised Rolfe's reflective model in her evaluation of the process. She concurs that the role and function of librarians can nurture creativity. As an interdisciplinary, third-space professional, she believes that writing creatively is not separate from her role as a librarian. She cited challenges encountered in writing and highlighted the significance of disseminating the works created and packaged by Librarians.

**Keywords:** academic librarians; creative writing; creativity; domestic violence; librarians and literary works; roles of librarians; librarians who write; intimate partner violence; sexual harassment; street harassment

### Introduction

*Librarianship is like a thread that weaves its way between a multiplicity of disciplines, gathering, knitting, preparing, and packaging information for its diverse clientele with varying needs. (Petra Pierre – Robertson)*

As a librarian, author, writer, and advocate, I utilise the cultural expressions of the short story and novel writing to convey messages and information on the social issue of violence against women and girls. I use the writing and telling of stories to disseminate information. I reimagine the Caribbean Information Professional in the fast-changing reality of the 21st-century world. In addition to the roles of acquiring, processing, and disseminating information, I imagine the informational professional as a creator and producer of the product we disseminate. I will use my experience as a librarian and an author to share how I was able to step out of my imagination into reality and spread into other areas. I will share how I utilised creativity in the dissemination of information, and how my telling of stories brought awareness to a varied clientele. This will be done against the backdrop of social and cultural trends in Trinidad, more specifically violence against women and girls.

## Literature Review

In my review of the literature, I focussed on two themes: (a) Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and (b) Librarian as Creative Writer. I will share definitions, subcategories, and statistics with regard to VAWG. I will then situate the librarian as a creator. The review of the literature will serve as the foundation for the sharing of my experience as a librarian who writes to share information on VAWG.

### *Violence Against Women and Girls*

Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. The United Nations (1993) has defined violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or...private...” (2). The statistic is alarming. According to the World Health Organization (2021), one in three women globally are subjected to physical or sexual violence by either an intimate partner or non-partner, and that statistic has remained largely unchanged for over a decade. A study done by Pemberton and Joseph (2018) revealed that this trend is reflected in Trinidad and Tobago. One in three women in Trinidad and Tobago have experienced violence from either a partner or non-partner in their lifetime.

Against the backdrop of these global and local estimates, the social and practical value of this presentation is unquestionable. Violence against women is an obstacle to national development. It limits freedom, promotes fear, constrains mobility, limits access to resources, hinders participation in activities, impacts productivity, and affects health, incurring social, economic, mental, and spiritual costs. As a Librarian, I convey information on the issue of violence against women and girls, through the creation, production, and telling of stories, which provide information on the subcategories of intimate partner violence and non-partner violence. I merge the definitions of Hosein (2017) and Warshaw et al. (2013), to define Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as an ongoing pattern of coercive control through a range of sexual, psychological, physical, and economic acts, which vary in severity and chronicity, against adult and adolescent women, by current or former male intimate partners. Non-partner sexual violence has been defined by the World Health Organization (2021, viii) as “Sexual violence by perpetrators other than a current or former husband or partner – including male relatives, friends, acquaintances or strangers.”

*Librarian as Creator*

From as early as 1987, Michael Engle a Reader Services Librarian, articulated the need for creativity amongst Librarians. According to him, “We don’t often associate creativity with the work of librarians or librarianship. A look at Library Literature shows that no subject headings containing the word “creative” are used to describe the work and writings of librarians” (629). The topic of the conference out of which this paper developed, “Celebrating Education, Innovation, and Collaboration in an Ever-changing World” and the resulting sub themes, one of which was “Celebrating Caribbean Cultural Expressions as Information Practices: e.g., Storytelling”, highlights the importance of associating creativity with librarianship. My positionality in this paper is that creativity dovetails with librarianship. I am by no means limiting creativity to storytelling and story writing, although they are the focus of this paper/presentation. I concur with Engle (1987) that as librarians we “must continually be performing our own research on topics of personal and professional interest to us and then creating something out of that research—a paper, a presentation, a new understanding...” (629). I also agree with him that “all librarians working with researchers can find inspiration and help in the experiences of creative writers and teachers of creative writing” (629). John Glover (2016), also a Librarian who writes, shared his experience of working with students of creative writing to help them incorporate research into their writing. He shared his experience of embedding information literacy into a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) novel workshop. I, however, go beyond library services and programmes for creative writers. I believe that librarians may not only find creative ways to execute their tasks or assist teachers and students in creative writing modules, but that librarians themselves may also be creative producers of not just a paper, presentation, or understanding, but more specifically stories reflecting life and bringing awareness.

Chepesiuk (1991) drew reference to some librarians who write creatively. These librarians shared how the exposure of working in libraries nurtured their creativity and writing. He referred to the author of the well-known historical work, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Dee Brown, who was a Librarian. Brown indicated his library science skills were pivotal in his writing of more than 20 published books. Chepesiuk also singled out Peter Sieruta a published author with Harper and Row, who once worked as a Cataloguing Assistant with responsibility for cataloguing children’s books. Sieruta indicated his role in the library helped him keep abreast of trends in the young adult field. I concur. My career of over twenty-five years in

librarianship has not only provided rich fodder for creativity but has also helped me to gauge the needs of users. Chepesiuk also drew reference to Cynthia Whealler, a librarian who is a holder of a master's degree in eighteenth-century literature and a Master of Library Science degree. Whealler reportedly indicated that, for her first novel, she relied on her experience as a librarian to locate material and information for the historical period within which she wrote. This highlights my position that as librarians we are surrounded by fodder not just for research, but for creative muses.

Carol Smallwood (2009), a librarian who has co-written, edited, or coedited over 18 books also pointed out how the library profession nurtured her creativity. According to her, "Librarians tend to be creative people... We are surrounded by books, technology, and people, providing the opportunity not only to write for the profession but also to produce poetry, novels, short stories, and creative nonfiction for children and adults" (54).

Librarians' awareness of areas of lack in our collections can also ferment creativity. My creative muse was nurtured not just by the growing incidence of domestic violence, but by the need to provide awareness to clients through the telling of stories they could identify with, whether as survivors, supporters, or bystanders. After my first creative project, users approached me asking where they may source other creative material on the issue. This articulated need of patrons led not only to engagement in a rigorous search for other such creative expressions but also served as a stimulus for me to produce additional creative works. Although it had been my intention to write just one novel, additional books were triggered by gaps witnessed in this particular subject area, as well as feedback from readers and information seekers.

Thomas and Leonard (2014) engaged in a study, seminal to my current positionality. One of the major objectives of the study was a need to "learn more about American academic librarians' scholarship and creative work outside of library and information science" (550). They wanted to glean how it added value to the library operation and institution. There were several distinctive features of this research that bear relevance to my paper. The authors noted that the profession of librarianship values additional education; they expanded the definition of librarian scholarship to include creative activity; they raised the issue of librarians producing culture rather than just documenting it; they noted that creative works from interdisciplinary librarians add value to the library operation; they described library science as a multidisciplinary field and not 'a world unto itself' (555); and they put forward the position

that librarians can utilise qualifications in other areas to advance knowledge. Additionally, like the intent of this paper, the authors posited that “the creative activities that academic librarians are engaged in outside of the library science discipline... is in fact, part of the profession of librarianship” (548). In fact, Thomas and Leonard, described as a ‘positive finding’ (554) the fact that when respondents were questioned why they engaged in creative work outside of library science even though it was not “explicitly written into [their] job descriptions, 20% of them referred to the favourable effect it had on their function” (554), with one participant indicating “creative interests make me a better librarian” (554). I have built on their perspective and findings in my reflection. However, while these librarian-researchers engaged in a survey and exploratory analysis, through this paper, I seek to generate thought based on a reflective case study.

### **Methodology**

Through a reflective case study, I explore how the creation and telling of stories served to provide information, convey messages, and raise awareness, about the issue of violence against women and girls. Price (2017) described the reflective case study as “a past event analysis [where] the practitioner evaluates what was learned from [an] experience” and allows for “reporting experiences [and] insights” (38). I share how I integrated creativity into my librarian role through the authoring of novels and short stories that treat with violence against women. In particular, I also share experiences gleaned from the dissemination of information via roundtables, read-aloud activities, and presentations of the themes raised in the novel ‘Second Chances’. For my evaluation of the experience, I utilised Rolfe’s (2001) reflective model, by addressing the questions What? So What? Now What? I engaged in these sessions both physically and online via Zoom, YouTube, and other social media channels. These sessions allowed for the dissemination of information I created and produced as an interdisciplinary, academic librarian.

### **The Experience**

In addition to my librarian roles of acquiring, processing, and disseminating information, I have also taken on the role of producer of the material with which I interface. I am a librarian who has produced scholarship and creative works outside of the field of library science. In addition to serving as the Managing Editor for a peer-reviewed journal in the field

of Education. I am the author of academic and literary publications. I have authored academic book chapters, articles, and short stories for print and online journals. My literary publications currently include five novels, three of which are romance novels. I can be described as an interdisciplinary, third-space professional, possessing both academic and professional credentials as well as fulfilling roles that span the same. As such, I continuously seek ways of weaving together my triple interests: librarianship, literary, and gender studies. Because of my interest in the subject of violence against women and girls, four of my novels provide various depictions of violence against women in a society where women are pursued and harassed by men. Interwoven into the plots are themes of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, street harassment, and intimate partner violence.

‘Second Chances’ captures the theme of violence against women and girls and zeroes in on domestic violence, a subcategory of violence against women. In the Domestic Violence Act 1999, in the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, domestic violence “includes physical, sexual, emotional or psychological or financial abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, any other person who is a member of the household or dependant” (6). In ‘Second Chances’, I utilised the vehicle of romance to carry the sordid theme of domestic abuse. I utilised the genre of romance since it is not a static genre (Davis 2013). The content evolves to keep pace with changing social realities (Jagodzinski, 2014). Professor Paula Morgan (2017) describes ‘Second Chances’ as a Caribbean romance novel that grapples with a number of issues including domestic violence. ‘Second Chances’ has served as a foundation upon which I share information on violence against women, in its various manifestations. The main protagonist faces abuse from her father as well as sexual harassment in the workplace. A foil character faces the brutality of intimate partner violence. A child fantasises to fit in and be normal, and bystander intervention is critical to the resolution of the plot.

Although started twenty years before it was published, the completion of ‘Second Chances’ was triggered by the growing incidence of domestic violence. At the time of its publication in 2017, there was an increase in the incidence of domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago. 2017 was also the year that the report of Trinidad and Tobago Women’s Health Survey (WHS)—a national, quantitative, cross-sectional survey of 1,079 women ages 15–64—was presented. The WHS was the first prevalence estimate of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence against women in Trinidad and Tobago (Pemberton and Joseph 2018, xiii). These growing incidences of violence against women and girls in these two

categories fuelled my muse and determination to use creativity and produce material to provide information and bring awareness about this societal ill.

During the period 2017 - 2021, I hosted sessions both physically and online via Zoom, YouTube, and other social media channels. In addition to information on the various manifestations of violence against women and girls, I also shared the definitions, statistics, and manifestations of domestic violence, the effect of domestic violence on children, and the reasons why it is difficult for victims to stay, along with information on support for survivors. These sessions took the form of book launches, roundtable sessions, read-aloud, and other reading sessions by the author, in religious gatherings and community sessions. These were conducted as follows:

- **Book Launch:** The novel was introduced to over 150 participants at a university in east Trinidad, in 2017.
- **Read Aloud and Authors Readings:** Select portions of the novels were read at read-aloud sessions and literature week to university students at two libraries, in 2018, and online, in 2019.
- **Roundtable:** 35 participants engaged in discussions on the themes emanating from the novel at a face-to-face session held at a university in east Trinidad in 2018.
- **Youth Programs:** 5 discussion sessions were held in east, south, and west Trinidad; 2 face-to-face sessions were held in 2019 and 3 were held via Zoom in 2020 and 2021. A combined total of over 250 persons attended those sessions, 80 onsite and 270 online. Participants engaged in discussion on themes emanating from the novel.
- **Community sessions:** 3 sessions were held, via Zoom, for the community in 2021 with a combined total of over 210 persons in attendance. Information was provided to participants on the definitions, statistics, and manifestation of domestic violence, the effect of abuse on children, and the reasons why it is so difficult for survivors to leave.

The attendees at all the sessions were both men and women, young adults and seniors, students and professionals, employed and unemployed, middle class, and lower class. Utilising my creative work, I found the public where they were and took the information to them whether within or outside the physical walls of the library. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a wider reach in the virtual domain. The themes raised in the novel were particularly relevant given the alarming statistics with regard to domestic violence. Additionally, the following themes were deliberately written into the plot to bring awareness to patrons about the statistics, implications,

and possible measures to curb the rising incidence of domestic violence. 'Second Chances' tells the story of Dalere, a young woman whose comfortable life is shattered by a tragic event that causes her father to begin physically abusing her and her sister. The intervention of a bystander, Mark, contributes to the resolution of the conflicts witnessed in the novel. I will now share excerpts from 'Second Chances' which reflected these themes and were utilised to share information at the various sessions on violence against women and girls. These themes are statistics and manifestations, silence, bystander intervention, how domestic violence affects children, street harassment, sexual harassment, workplace sensitivity, and the challenges of seeking help.

### *Statistics and Manifestations*

The statistics for domestic violence are daunting. I weaved these statistics into the plot through interactions with the survivor, Dalere, and the bystander, Mark. Having been threatened by her father and forced into returning home for the sake of her sister, Mark tries to get Dalere to understand the danger she is in. He resorts to statistics and scenarios to encourage her to leave. He says to her:

There were over 4,000 reported cases of child sexual abuse and incest last year alone and you are packing to go back? Your father is one of those in society who is misusing his parental privilege. On more than one occasion I rescued you in time, yet you ...decide to return? (p. 90)

Despite the daunting statistics, Dalere remains resolute. This provides an opportunity to share additional information with respect to the occurrence of domestic violence. Although told to the main protagonist, it is creatively packaged to provide awareness to the reading public:

Let me tell you about a recent case the firm investigated...She took out a protection order against the man, but he still stalked her. He would even go to her job to look for her. The company attempted to help her by moving her from branch to branch but he always found her. Now she is dead. How? She left her safe house and returned to him because he cajoled her back with gifts and promises. (p. 91)

This information was provided to encourage the survivors and supporters to break the silence surrounding domestic abuse. Silence is a major contributor to the perpetuation of domestic violence.



*Silence*

In several reported incidences of domestic abuse which I accessed, the issue of the empowerment of perpetrators through the silence of the victim was a factor. Silence empowers perpetrators. After Mark shares the story of the victim of abuse who was murdered, Dalere is shaken, yet, out of fear of the perpetrator, she tells Mark that he doesn't understand. Although he encourages her to explain her plight to him, she insists that she can't. She chose silence. In the face of her silence, he says to her "A large percentage of these survivors were victims in their own homes and kept silent; like you are doing now" (p. 9). Silence was one of the major themes which was stressed in the novel.

*Bystander Intervention*

Mark, a bystander, happened to be passing the night Dalere was fleeing violent abuse from her father. The sight of a young woman running down a lonely street at night with the hand of a young child clutched in her own caught his attention. He got out of his car to investigate. Had he not done so, the evening could have ended tragically. The bystander drives the rescue dynamic in the story. He outlines the grim reality of domestic violence to the protagonists. This in turn serves as a source of awareness to readers of the novel. He says to Dalere: "Your home is not a place of safety, but a crime scene, and you expect me, a former officer of the law and one who now works along with law enforcement, to just go along with your decision?" (p. 90). He also secured shelter for the victim. Bystander intervention was critical to the resolution of the plot of second chances. The need for men to intervene was also highlighted with the theme of bystander intervention.

*How Domestic Violence Affects Children*

The child protagonist, Carice takes recourse to fantasy for normalcy. She sees Mark, the male hero as her father and Dalere, her sister as her mother. After Dalere wins a race at Carice's school's sports day, which Mark, having designated himself their bodyguard, attended with them, Carice races towards him after collecting her prize, and throws herself into his arms. Two of her friends followed her. From his arms, she introduces her friends to Mark. As he stoops to meet her friends, she looks at them from the security of his arms and proudly affirms, "This is my dad. I told you about him" (p. 280). When her sister Dalere approaches, she calls her mommy and encourages her to run the 'mothers' race'. This prompts Dalere to say to

Carice, “I am your sister, not your mother’ Carice stubbornly rebuts “You are my mommy” (283).

This is just one of such interactions emanating from the novel, which shows the sombre reality of the effects of domestic violence on children.

### *Street Harassment*

Street harassment is also abuse. Several participants in the sessions were not aware of this. This interaction from the novel generated discussion and raised awareness on the issue. One evening, while standing at the side of the road awaiting transportation to go home, Dalere experienced street harassment from a group of young boys:

“psst...psst...reds...sweetness...” The attention was annoying and frustrating. She neither turned around nor acknowledged the group of lazing, jaywalking boys...now they were moving towards [her] “or...so you too nice for we. You want we to do something to make you turn around.” Her heartbeat quickened as they got closer... (32)

Of all the themes in the novel, street harassment as a manifestation of abuse and bystander intervention as necessary to prevent abuse were perhaps the two that took the participants by surprise.

### *Sexual Harassment*

Because Dalere was new to the office, one of the senior male workers made sexual advances to her, promising her benefits if she gave in to him. Although other workers were victims of his harassment, they never officially reported him for fear of his power and position in the company. Their silence empowered him. Empowered by their silence in the workplace, on one occasion he brazenly cornered Dalere in the elevator:

He moved swiftly imprisoning her by plastering his hands around her against the wall of the elevator. “I’ll be in your face and space until you give in”. He was so close his breath fanned her face and his chest brushed hers. She pushed forcefully against him but to no avail. The solitude of the elevator fuelled his need to have her... (290)

### *Workplace Sensitivity*

The workplace needs to be sensitive to the plight of workers. The foil character, a contrasting character to the main protagonist, is a victim of intimate partner violence. On one

occasion after being brutally raped by her husband, battered, and bruised, she calls the workplace to indicate that she could not make it in because she was not well, only to receive a demand to show up for duty:

She held a senior position, had workers to supervise, projects to complete and deadlines to meet. When she pulled herself together, covered the bruises as best as she could, applied appropriate makeup, plastered the face and the smile and showed up for work, her unsuspecting supervisor turned to her professional colleagues and asked, “What part of her look sick to you?” They had laughed. “She looking real good. She carrying her sickness well.” Never once did her supervisor show concern or ask what was wrong. [She] was an educated, well paid, indomitable, professional woman. She was also a victim of abuse (84-85).

This character and sub-theme were woven into the plot to bring awareness to how the workplace can be affected by domestic violence and to highlight the sensitivity needed by the workplace in the fight against domestic violence. The role the workplace can play was also shared through an incident where the perpetrator found the victim at her workplace. The vigilance of the security officer at the workplace caused him to leave without accomplishing his evil intent.

### *Challenges of Seeking Help*

Because of threats from the perpetrator, Dalere was reluctant to seek help. She constantly returned to him because of the child, her sister, over whom he has custody. A near-fatal accident caused the perpetrator and the child to be hospitalised. Despite his hospitalisation, he continued to threaten Dalere through notes and messages.:

...I will find you when I get out. In the meantime, you better find yourself home. Your sister dying. She would have to get plenty serious operations. They would need my consent because I am the legal guardian, not you. I can say no. I can let her die to take her out of the misery and pain she is in. You want her alive? Go home. Today. If you don't go home I wouldn't sign for any of those operations. I will let her die out of mercy for her. I have people looking out for me so I would know if you don't go home so you better obey this instruction. And I don't want Superman around you either! Get that policeman out of my business! (87)

Because she was afraid of losing her sister, she returned to the site of abuse. On a previous occasion when she tried to leave, he had snickered at her, “You leaving again? You will find your tail right back here because you have nowhere to go” (37). Although qualified, as a youth, she was not yet settled into a stable job and was financially unstable, so it was difficult for her to leave. She was also defenceless.

The above excerpts highlighted how relevant information may be creatively packaged and shared. Additionally, the information was packaged and created by an information professional. The librarian was able to utilise the resources, knowledge, and skills gleaned from the profession to craft a book to add to the pool of resources and to benefit patrons who sought and needed the information.

### **Practical Significance**

Libraries are hubs for collections (books), marketing initiatives (disseminating), and loans (distribution), to name a few. As posited in the literature, Librarians are best positioned to identify trends and gaps and use this information to nurture creativity. While creativity is not limited to literary works, literary works, however, are the focus of this presentation. Librarians can be producers of the information with which they interface. Not only can librarians embrace the role of producer and creator, but they can also move out of the physical walls of the library to meet the client where they are and disseminate information they have researched and packaged. The new normal facilitated by the COVID-19 pandemic has shown just how easily roles can change. Like the teacher who can step outside of the classroom and produce resources, the Librarian can also step outside of the library and be producers of the material they interface with.

As a librarian, I was able to keep abreast of trends, access resources, gauge the needs of users and utilise creativity in producing and disseminating information. In addition to written feedback, responses from the novel were also gleaned through discussion sessions both onsite and online via social media and networking platforms. Verbal feedback was also received. Some of the questions and feedback that arose from the Community sessions were:

- *What is the difference between Violence Against Women and Girls, Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence, and Intimate Partner Violence?*
- *I did not know about VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) before this session.*
- *I did not know so many differences exist in abuse.*

- *What is spiritual abuse? Is that also domestic violence?*
- *Is financial abuse also domestic violence?*
- *Where can we get more information on the topic?*
- *Why do people stay in such relationships? Why don't they leave?*

In addition to the sessions described above, I utilised the electronic flyers on the virtual walls of cyberspace to convey information about violence against women with regard to the following:

- How silence empowers perpetrators
- Victim blaming
- The treatment of women as second-class citizens
- Street harassment
- The need for workplace training to identify traits of abuse and foster a culture of empathy
- The misrepresentation of victims in the media
- The need to enforce zero tolerance in the workplace
- That women are not property
- The reality of VAWG in the church
- The need to confront the pandemic of gender-based violence since it is everyone's business
- The need for bystander intervention
- That men are the best advocates in the fight against gender-based violence.

I shared this information during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign in 2021 and 2022. Flyers were posted on social media platforms, more specifically Facebook and Instagram. This is comparable to onsite library displays where topical or trending issues are displayed within the walls of the library.

I also utilised, 'Second Chances' in my most recent scholarly publication, a chapter entitled 'Literature as an Agent of Change'. This book on domestic violence was the first of its kind in the Caribbean. Titled, "Gender and Domestic Violence in the Caribbean," it was published by Palgrave MacMillan, in 2021. The chapter highlights how literature may be used as an agent of change in the fight against domestic violence. Additionally, I theorised a media account of a murder-suicide, highlighting how the victim was misrepresented. This I did to strengthen my position that literature, inclusive of literary works, can be used as an awareness

tool in the battle against domestic violence. The Librarian, through the creation and telling of stories can be an advocate and social educator. Through the provision of information, as highlighted in the Literature Review, the Librarian is best prepared, given the experience from working in the library, the knowledge of trends and the needs of readers, and access to relevant information.

My creative works have also been used in a university course on creative writing. Additionally, they have been included on the reading list of a book club for a volunteer program for youth across the Caribbean. As a librarian I have been able to not just acquire, package and disseminate, but also to create and utilise literature as activism, to raise awareness and educate students and youth on the issue of violence against women and girls, both within and outside of the walls of the library.

### **Reflection**

*What?*

Because writing creatively exists outside of the roles of librarians, like a number of librarians before me I engaged in my creative writing late in the night, early morning and during break and lunch periods. Finding the time to write, publish, and facilitate sessions is one of the major challenges for the librarians who write. The power of writing as a creative activity that librarians can also engage in to share information should also be highlighted. Librarians can be producers of information, more specifically, literary works, and not just disseminators.

*So What?*

Like Thomas and Leonard (2014), I support the view that “the creative activities that academic librarians are engaged in outside of the library science discipline...is in fact, part of the profession of librarianship” (548). The experience of and exposure from working in the library trigger creativity. The motivation generated by the love of writing and the fulfilment it brings, ferments, nurtures, and triggers creative works from librarians who write creatively. Such an activity also serves to empower and uplift the lives of patrons. Additionally, against the backdrop of technology and innovation required by institutions, if they are to survive in the twenty-first century, creativity in the execution of roles and the fulfilment of organisational goals is particularly significant. The librarian as creator is one such manifestation of innovation.

*Now What?*

Given the experiences described in this paper, and against the backdrop of the literature, it is probably time to consider not just an association, but the integration of the creative cultural expression of story writing and storytelling into one of the roles of librarianship. As a third-space professional, and given the interdisciplinary nature of my qualifications, I did not separate my creative writing from librarianship. I utilised my creativity (Literary studies) to share information and bring awareness (Library Science) to the global, regional, and local issue of violence against women and girls which affects women (Gender Studies). I see Librarianship like a thread that weaves its way between a multiplicity of disciplines, gathering, knitting, preparing, and packaging information for its diverse clientele with varying needs.

### Conclusion

This paper explored how I utilised the creation and telling of stories as a vehicle to convey messages, provide information, and raise awareness. It posits that the exposure and experiences gained in the library can nurture creativity in the form of story writing and storytelling. It showed how a novel, I authored, was used to disseminate information on violence against women and girls as well as its subcategories. It advocates that such creative activities should not be separated from the profession of librarianship. My experience was shared through a reflective case study. While creativity is not limited to literary writing, creativity in writing was the focus of this paper.

Librarians have approached me indicating their intention to write but lamenting the lack of time. Some of them indicated that they would write after they retired, in the process separating creative writing from their profession. I believe that there should not be a separation. Creativity should be embraced by librarianship. Perhaps, as a librarian, you have that creative muse within you but can't seem to get started because of time or otherwise. I end with the words of Sandra Kitt (as cited in Chepesiuk 1991, 991), a librarian and romance novelist whose books have sold millions of copies, "Sit down and do it. We all have a story to tell."

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