

Trends and structures in film criticism research: A bibliometric review of scientific literature

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ABSTRACT

Background: Film criticism, as a foundational practice in film studies, plays a crucial role in shaping both cultural discourse and academic inquiry. Despite its significance, a comprehensive, large-scale overview of its scholarly evolution has been lacking. **Purpose:** This study addresses this gap by evaluating the literature on cinema criticism, aiming to map its intellectual structure, identify key research trends, and highlight knowledge gaps, thereby providing a roadmap for the future growth of film studies. **Methods:** Using a quantitative bibliometric methodology, the research analyzes a corpus of 129 papers from 85 unique sources, spanning nearly five decades (1975–2023) and extracted from the Scopus database. The findings reveal an annual growth rate of 2.93%, with a notable spike in publications in 2011. **Results:** The intellectual network is characterized by concentrated power, with key contributors such as Klevan A., prominent institutions like the University of Oxford, and influential journals like *Film Criticism*. Structurally, solo-authored scholarship dominates the field, while thematically, there is a shift towards computational approaches. **Conclusion:** Cinema criticism has evolved into a robust and mature discipline, marked by densely concentrated intellectual hubs and an increasing diversity in methodologies. **Implications:** The review provides an essential intellectual map for scholars, identifying foundational works, key contributors, and thematic trajectories. It also underscores the need for greater research collaboration to counteract the dominant solitary model. Additionally, it highlights the importance of exploring the intersection between traditional critique and digital humanities, offering clear directions for advancing film studies research in the digital era.

Keywords: Bibliometric; critical literature; development of film; film; film criticism

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INTRODUCTION

According to experts, movies have various definitions, reflecting their complex role in modern society. Tombu (2024) defines film not merely as entertainment but as a multifaceted cultural product and a vital means of artistic expression. It functions as an audiovisual communication medium that simultaneously provides information, shapes perspectives, and reflects the societal values of its time. This perspective is reinforced by legal frameworks, such as Indonesia's Law No. 33 of 2009 concerning film, which formally recognizes film as a cultural art product possessing a crucial role as a mass communication medium. The concept of mass communication itself refers to the expansive process of disseminating information through mass media, a category that encompasses traditional forms like newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, alongside cinema (Fatmalasari, 2021; Puspitasari et al., 2024; Wilantari & Memoriance, 2018). Films are meticulously crafted according to the principles of cinematography, with the capacity to be presented with or without synchronized sound, each mode offering a unique aesthetic experience. Expanding on this, film can be further conceptualized as a work of cultural art. This complex social institution involves economic and political structures, and a powerful medium of artistic expression for the individuals—the artists and filmmakers—who create them (Shabrina, 2019). Within this broad definition, a fundamental distinction exists

between fiction films, which construct narrative worlds, and documentary films, which aim to represent reality, each genre serving distinct purposes and employing its own characteristic cinematic language.

A movie, in its most fundamental technical sense, is a series of photographic visuals meticulously arranged and projected onto a screen within a darkened space, typically a movie theatre. This explanation addresses the core phenomenon of moving images that has captivated audiences for over a century. From a technical standpoint, these moving images are derived from a mechanical and optical process that shares its lineage with photography. However, while traditional photography captures a single, frozen moment in time, the art of cinema involves capturing a multitude of still images in rapid succession. These individual photographic frames are then combined and projected through a specialized apparatus, a projector, at a standardized speed. When this collection of still images is projected continuously, the human brain and visual system perceive the rapid succession of static frames as a fluid, unbroken phenomenon of moving images. The motion visible on the screen is, in fact, an illusion, as each image projected remains still. This remarkable illusion is made possible by a physiological characteristic of human sight known as the Persistence of Vision, where the retina retains an image for a fraction of a second after the source has been removed, allowing the brain to seamlessly blend one image into the

next (Dissoki et al., 2024; Parks, 2024). This foundational principle is the very bedrock upon which the entire edifice of cinematic art is built.

Movies have unequivocally become one of the most pervasive forms of entertainment among the global public. The film industry is a vast and dynamic ecosystem characterized by an incredible diversity of genres, each with its own conventions, tropes, and audience expectations. Every year, the global film industry produces hundreds, if not thousands, of new films, creating a saturated market where audiences are often faced with the daunting task of choosing a film that aligns with their personal preferences and tastes. It is in this context that movie genres serve an essential navigational function. They provide audiences with a crucial shorthand, an immediate idea of the potential content, tone, and stylistic characteristics of a film before they commit to watching it. Based on their prior experiences with films of a similar genre, audiences can form a general understanding of what to expect, whether it be the suspense of a thriller, the spectacle of a science fiction epic, or the emotional depth of a drama (Grant, 2012; Pai & N, 2024). Furthermore, movie genres allow the film industry to strategically market their products by signalling to audiences that a new film might offer a similar experiential pleasure to previous movies they have enjoyed. Consequently, genre functions as a key and decisive factor that profoundly influences how audiences make decisions about which movies they want to invest their time and money in

(Litman, 1983; Sumarlin et al., 2016).

Persistence of Vision is the specific optical illusion that allows the human eye to perceive a visual image for a duration slightly longer than the actual presence of the visual stimulus. This principle has been fundamentally utilized in the art of animation to create a convincing sense of motion from a series of static drawings or models. For instance, contemporary motion-based animation techniques and advanced technologies, such as sophisticated motion transformers designed for unsupervised image animation, explicitly leverage this principle. They achieve this by using meticulously calculated visual transitions to generate fluid and continuous movements that appear lifelike to the viewer (Tao et al., 2022). Because these individual images are presented in a continuous and rapid sequence, the retina of our eyes effectively stitches them together, creating the powerful illusion of motion even though the preceding images have not entirely faded from our perception. The development of modern animation tools, such as vision-based motion synthesis systems, has further refined and enhanced this effect by employing real-time computation to ensure seamless and believable image transitions (Ye et al., 2011). Although physiologists and psychologists critiqued the precise scientific accuracy of the “Persistence of Vision” concept in the 20th century, the term and the general principle it describes are still widely used and understood as a practical framework for explaining the mechanics of

cinema, especially from a technical perspective. The modern application of neural network-based models and motion transformers in animation research underscores the enduring relevance of this foundational principle in contemporary cinematic and media studies (Tao et al., 2022).

According to Crystalia and Sunardi (2018), film criticism can be defined as the process of seeking in-depth aspects in any work of art, whether it is fine art, architecture, or art deco ornamentation. The purpose of criticism is to help viewers better appreciate films by providing greater insight and understanding of the implications of film as an art form, conveying multidimensional messages. Criticism comprises two elements: analysis and judgement. However, the methods employed are more deliberate than they might initially seem. Many of these basic principles have been taken from the field of content analysis. This technique was initially used as just that, a technique for studying texts, but it has been adapted to a new purpose of working with pictorial and other visual material, allowing for detailed examination of this type of data. For example, Kurniawan (2018) was the first study that utilized content analysis as the methodological basis to quantitatively assess how often fetishistic and sensual subject matter is present in photographic works of amateur photographers shared on one particular social media service. As a result, the adaptability of content analysis is highlighted and its value in making sense of recent visual culture is once

again shown. Accordingly, Kurniawan and Rochmawati (2018) applied the robust research design of content analysis to quantitatively assess symbolization of ideology in a series of video commercials, thereby demonstrating the relevance of the method for media narratives processing.

This shows that the careful analytical technique of film criticism goes beyond partial interpretation and is based on methodological systems for the assessment of visual as well as narrative aspects. This methodological approach is absolutely vital to academic cinema studies as it deepens scholarly inquiry.

Film reviews are also important because they provide their own opinions from both an informed and particular standpoint. This helps individuals see and understand movies from multiple points of view. Usually, these points of view help people understand the movie better, which makes them more interested in it. Comprehensive film critique extends beyond mere narrative summaries or recommendations.

A detailed film analysis does more than give tale summaries or ideas. It looks at the movie's unique cinematic characteristics, such as its cinematography, editing, and sound design, as well as the numerous social, cultural, and political topics it might show. The Indonesian Film Reviewers Association (KAFEIN) says that film criticism is the process of examining, analyzing, comparing, or assessing movies while paying close attention to both their story and their cinematic features.

This definition indicates that film criticism can look at deep social, cultural, and political issues in both written and non-written forms (such as video essays or podcasts). However, it must always be about the film's cinematic qualities. As a result, film criticism is an important and necessary part of the larger film ecosystem. It teaches both filmmakers and spectators how to appreciate films and how to think critically about them. Film critics are those who write about movies. They may work for the mass media as journalists or as academics at universities, where they provide detailed, philosophically based assessments of movies. This leads to two primary types of criticism: journalistic criticism, which aims to assess and evaluate films for a general audience, and academic criticism, which produces more in-depth, scholarly analyses for specialized readers.

Despite the well-documented importance of film criticism in both popular and academic spheres, a significant research gap exists within the scholarly literature. There is a lack of a systematic, large-scale, quantitative analysis of the field of film criticism itself. While countless articles and books are dedicated to critiquing individual films or exploring specific cinematic theories, the academic discipline of film criticism has rarely turned its analytical lens upon its own scholarly output. The intellectual structure, historical evolution, key contributors, thematic trends, and collaborative networks of the field remain largely unmapped and

understood only through anecdotal observation rather than empirical data. This gap means that fundamental questions about the development of the discipline remain unanswered. For example, which authors, institutions, and journals have been most influential in shaping the discourse over the past several decades? How have the dominant topics of inquiry within film criticism changed over time? Moreover, to what extent is research in this field a collaborative or an isolated endeavour? The absence of this foundational knowledge creates a significant blind spot, hindering a comprehensive understanding of how knowledge is produced, disseminated, and validated within the academic study of film criticism. This is particularly relevant given the critical role the discipline plays in shaping cultural understanding, as highlighted by the work of Manurung and Kameo (2021) on the Indonesian film industry, where the critic's voice is essential for fostering a feedback loop for continuous artistic improvement.

The research problem addressed in this study directly stems from this identified gap. Without a systematic map of the field, scholars, researchers, and students operate within a fragmented and opaque intellectual landscape. The primary problem is that the lack of a comprehensive bibliometric overview makes it exceedingly difficult to identify the foundational works, pivotal intellectual turning points, and core theoretical debates that have defined the discipline's trajectory. The problem is that new film studies scholars struggle to understand the

most important academic contributions, as no one has told them how it is done. In this case, these scholars have to make do with literature that is, at best, incomplete and biased. There are also the new topics that provoke the critical re-evaluation of established guidelines and modes of inquiry. However, these are often abandoned in favour of continuing existing academic fads that have not been reflexively assessed. Such is the case with the lack of a consensus on thematic trajectories in film studies, which prevents scholars from pinpointing neglected areas and new pathways for investigative research. Consequently, scholars may unknowingly amalgamate existing scholarship or choose to ignore promising novel areas of inquiry that integrate film criticism with other disciplines. This is a clear case for the need for new scholars to deepen and problematize their engagement with the existing literature so that they can make meaningful contributions to the rapidly evolving field of film studies.

The problem is equally theoretical and practical: if you do not have an understanding of all the important organizations and networks within your domain, you will have difficulties in getting collaborators as a researcher, which in turn, fosters intellectual silos, stifles innovation, and hampers progress in a discipline.

The main gap that the project aims to fill is the absence of data-driven self-assessment in the practice of film criticism. Such an approach is needed, at a minimum, for strategic purposes, but also as a means of intellectual

self-regulation. The project is thus conceived to help create a more synergetic and inventive scholarly community, which in turn will allow for greater circulation of film criticism and related discourse.

The aim is to meet the challenge head-on and contribute to filling a gap in the literature through a bibliometric analysis of academic criticism of cinema. For the study in question, criticism is appropriate, as it offers a quantitative and systematic approach to the analysis of a substantial body of scholarly work, uncovering phenomena that might otherwise be missed through traditional qualitative assessments. The study will act as a framework for the research, generating what can loosely be termed a screen for the development in the field of study over the past five decades.

The study will analyze the publication and citation data, as well as the networks and frequencies of keywords, to identify and map the major themes in the academic criticism of film, the relative and absolute impact of scholarly works and authors in the field, and the collaboration that sustains the discipline. This work will serve to claim the title of the first evidence-based diagram for the intellectual territory of film critics. As such, this study is illustrative of the *sine qua non* role that meta-analysis can play in helping a field to understand itself, thereby fostering a more interactive, self-aware, and ultimately rejuvenating cinematic and academic panorama, much like a gardener who meticulously studies the soil and climate to

cultivate a fertile garden.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study measures and maps cinema criticism research using bibliometrics. ‘Bibliometrics’ — ‘biblio’ (literature) and ‘metrics’ (measurement)— describes its purpose. This quantitative method can analyze the field’s intellectual structure, historical growth, and main subject trends better than qualitative evaluations. This study rigorously analyzes publishing and citation data to find complicated academic discourse patterns and relationships.

Scholarly precedence guides this design. This approach has proven successful in multiple domains (Batubara et al., 2021; Martínez-López et al., 2018). Empirical research since Setyaningsih et al. (2018) has shown that the academic literature adopted bibliometrics in 1969. With this framework, the study tracks knowledge domain evolution using existing methods.

The investigation required quantitative bibliometrics. Quantitative bibliometrics analyzes publishing trends and scholarly book usage using math and statistics. This strategy was needed to understand film criticism objectively. According to Mokhnacheva and Tsvetkova (2020), internet technologies and big data have made quantitative database tools ubiquitous for methodically studying massive academic datasets.

Lyu et al., (2023) emphasize that growth

has enhanced computer-based analytical models. As academic procedures and theoretical frameworks change, bibliometrics is needed to examine research trends, collaboration networks, and scholarly transformations.

The study began with data source selection. After repeated assessments, Scopus became the dominant academic database. Scopus’s large collection of peer-reviewed journals, books, and conference proceedings—including arts and humanities— influenced our choice. Bibliographic research provides reliable and complete data due to its organized metadata— authorship, affiliations, keywords, and citations (Wardhana & Ratnasari, 2022).

Second, develop a precise search strategy for complete and relevant literature. Keyword coverage and relevancy were balanced to maximize the dataset signal-to-noise ratio. The top search term was “Film Criticism” after the strategy definition. This phrase was chosen for its scientific worth. Scopus’ “Article Title, Abstract, Keywords” categories were searched for movie critique.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria improved search results and protected data. The criteria were (1) 1975–2023 literature that presented a thorough history of the area and (2) English, the global academic language. For a complete scholarly output assessment, we omitted all other languages and did not limit the document type (article, review).

Scopus returned 129 papers with the parameters. This 50-year scholarship dataset

was used for bibliometric analysis (Ryandono et al., 2022), and used bibliometrics to study article topic networks.

Third-stage search results were carefully reviewed. The researcher carefully reviewed all 129 documents' metadata to ensure movie criticism scholarship relevance and to remove keyword-ambiguous or irrelevant information. After curation, the dataset is more reliable.

Phase four carefully gathered and categorized validated data. The 129 sources have titles, authors, keywords, abstracts, and citations. Formatting this filtered data for bibliometric tools made the study robust.

Data processing was Biblioshiny's purpose. The web application and graphical user interface for the sophisticated 'Bibliometrix' R-package provide comprehensive science mapping (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Academic research benefits from the ease of data processing and analysis (Sjuchro, 2023). Its versatility makes the software ideal for the inquiry (Bonilla et al., 2015).

The detailed Biblioshiny performance analysis and science mapping supported this. Researchers can define research fronts, issue areas, and collaboration networks using the software's algorithms to answer this study's main questions (Donthu et al., 2021; Ratnasari et al., 2025). Another important analytical aspect was citation impact (Belter, 2015).

Final step: formal curated dataset bibliometrics. Different methods were used to find prominent patterns, theme structures,

and complex links in scholarly writing. Bibliometrics evolves as complementary methods use increased computer capabilities for complex analytical modelling (Lyu et al., 2023).

Performance analysis measured film criticism, literature, productivity, and impact with descriptive statistics. Annual scientific productivity, average citation rates, prolific writers, top journals, and active institutions and countries were key measures. A quantitative baseline identified top thinkers.

Scientific mapping revealed the field's intellectual structure in the second exam. The cooperation patterns and evolution of theme clusters were explored using co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks constructed in Biblioshiny. These illustrations capture social relationships in the scholarly domain.

The clarity and strength of the data necessary for the analysis were represented in Biblioshiny's charts, graphs, and network maps. Exporting graphics and data tables from the software's Excel Workbook simplified the plotting of intricate bibliometric data (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The systematic and thorough approach taken at multiple levels in the research added considerable value. Developers, researchers, and policymakers in the field will benefit from its use for decision-making in the field's advancement. This bibliometric analysis, with its emphasis on intellectual and practical application, adds to the growing tradition of

knowledge in the field by analyzing publication and citation patterns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

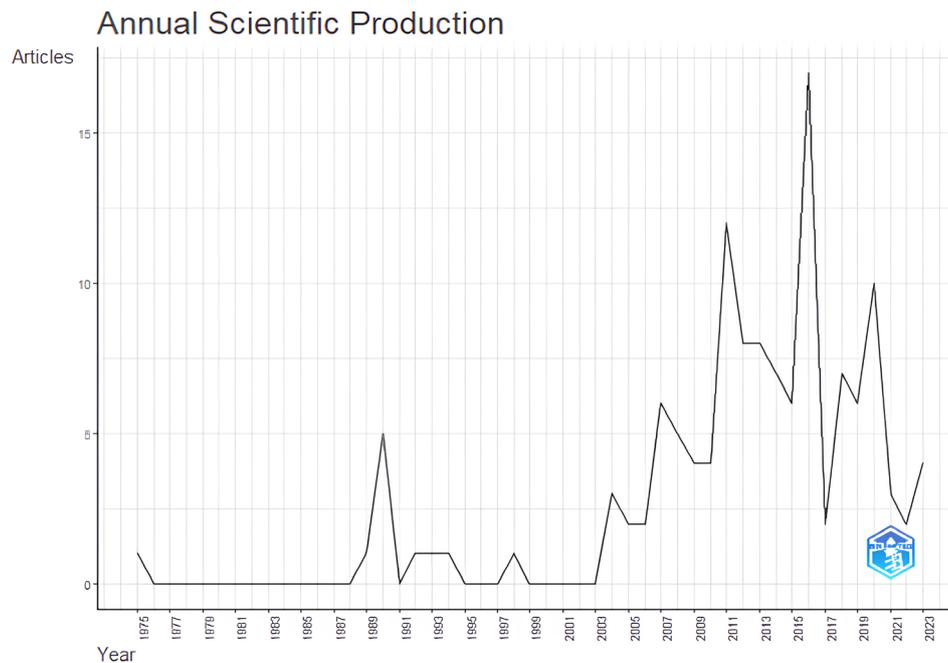
Analyzing the 129 documents obtained from the Scopus-Elsevier database provides a glimpse into the world of academic writing on film criticism spanning the years 1975 to 2023. This section compiles results that the author chose to deal with specific parameters from bibliometric indicators. Each of the results has been subjected to reasoning aimed at determining the underlying logic of the results, their interpretation, and the consequences on the domain. This will ultimately result in a synthesis of the greater narrative of the academic world. Most of the data has been managed on the Biblioshiny interface, which provides the foundational framework that structures, outlines, and captures the film criticism scholarly works based on their achievements and relevance. The results in the derived set are tabulated in Table 1.

The annual scientific production in film criticism literature exhibits a pattern of sustained growth punctuated by periods of significant fluctuation, as illustrated in Figure 1. The initial period, from 1975 through the late 1980s, was characterized by a consistently low output, with often only one or two articles published per year. This suggests that during its early academic formalization, film criticism was a niche field with limited scholarly publication venues. A notable shift occurred in 1990 with a spike to five articles, signalling an emerging and intensified academic interest. This momentum continued, leading to a significant peak in productivity in 2011, when 12 articles were published. Following this peak, the field saw another significant surge in 2016, which recorded the highest single-year output of 17 articles. A more recent spike in 2020, with 10 articles, indicates continued scholarly engagement. The overall annual growth rate for the entire period stands at a stable 2.93%.

Table 1 Basic Data and Critical Information

Description	Results
Timespan	1975:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	85
Documents	129
Annual Growth Rate %	2.93
Document Average Age	11
Average citations per doc	4.333
References	1
Authors	126
Authors of single-authored docs	97
Single-authored docs	111
Co-Authors per Doc	1.15
International co-authorships %	1.55

Source: Biblioshiny, 2023



Source: Biblioshiny, 2023

Figure 1 Annual Scientific Production

The logical interpretation of this trend suggests that the field's development has not been linear but has instead responded to external catalysts and internal theoretical shifts. The post-1990 increase may be associated with the rise of cultural studies and post-structuralist theory in academia, which provided new, fertile ground for critical film analysis. The 2011 peak is a scholarly response to the maturation of digital cinema and the proliferation of new media platforms, which demanded new critical frameworks. Similarly, the 2016 peak may reflect a culmination of research in areas that gained prominence in the early 2010s. The recent activity in 2020 could be linked to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated media consumption and prompted critical reflection on film's role during a time of global crisis. The stable long-term growth

rate, however, confirms that film criticism has successfully established itself as a durable and evolving field of academic inquiry, moving from a marginal sub-discipline to a recognized area of study.

Citation analysis shows how the literature has affected and influenced the academic community. The 129 documents in the dataset have received many citations, with an average of 4.33 citations per document. The materials are an average of 11 years old, which suggests that foundational and older articles are still essential and are still being used in recent research.

An analysis of the most influential papers, based on the number of times they have been cited, in Figure 2, is an indication that some key works have laid down the groundwork in this field. The most important of these documents is D.N. Rodowick's 1982 "The Crisis of

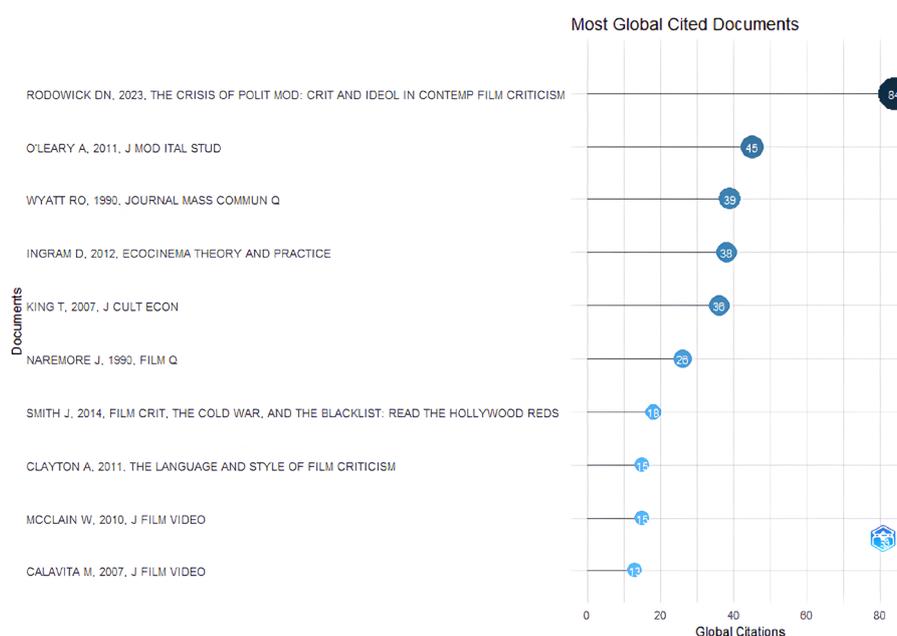
Political Modernism: Critique and Ideology in Contemporary Film Criticism,” which has been cited 84 times. The sheer volume of citations the book has received is not merely a statistic; it speaks to its importance to the foundational questions in film studies about ideology and modernity.

Other works of scholarship have also had an impact, such as G O’Leary (2011) in the Journal of Modern Italian Studies. This article, which has been cited 45 times, is a considerable amount and indicates that it has had an impact on scholarship in a relatively short time. At the same time, important works like “Ecocinema: Theory and Practice” (2012) by I. Ingram and “Film Criticism, the Cold War, and the Blacklist” (2014) by J. Smith have shaped the landscape of the domain with new insights on ecocriticism and political history and the consolidation of these works.

In its entirety, these cited patterns propose

two fundamental propositions regarding the history of cinema criticism. To begin with, the average number of citations per work is relatively healthy. This suggests that, unlike some other subject areas, research in this area is not partitioned off and quarantined. On the contrary, it indicates an active and vigorous intellectual discourse where scholars have been, and continue to be, in direct interaction with and constructively building on earlier scholarship. Also, the influence of some of R.’s classic works suggests to us that we must not search for a brittle theoretical foundation in our field, based on which we can build an intellectual totality. Instead, we seek a framework that is fundamentally resilient, woven with malleable core structures from which new possibilities can erupt in different contexts.

The increasing influence of new publications on niche topics such as ecocinema and political history suggests diversification of



Source: Biblioshiny, 2023

Figure 2 Average Citations per Year

the discipline and the application of innovative theoretical frameworks that produce substantial scholarly impact. The identification of such highly cited papers is a well-known approach to delineating the intellectual cornerstones of a discipline, because it helps to identify the works that have made the most significant, enduring impact on subsequent scholarship (Cobo et al., 2015).

This analysis, then, aims to quantify the impact and, at the same time, pinpoint the foundational layers of the corpus of literature on film criticism.

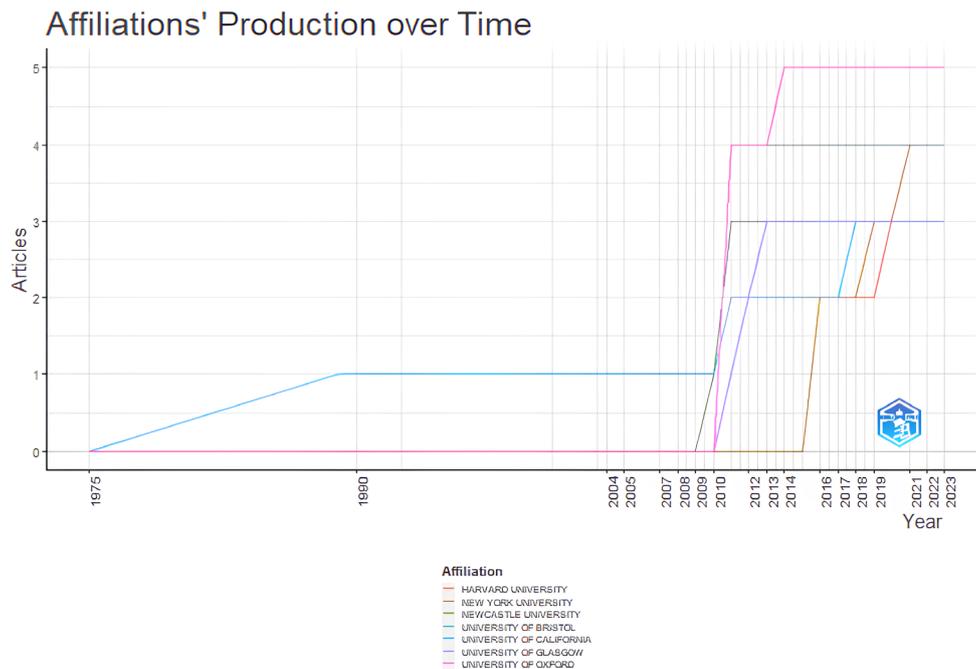
Analyzing author productivity shows that a handful of researchers are responsible for the bulk of the field's output. Of the five authors with the most publications in the dataset, KLEVANA realized the most. They have written four papers. Then BELL M, CLAYTON A, MCWHIRTERA and RENTSCHLER E followed next with three publications each. Among the top 10 were also authors ALTMANN E, FREY M, INGRAM D, IVAKHIV A, and DEBENEDETTI S, who have two relevant publications. This level of authorship and cross collaboration, in addition to indicating contributions to. And the holders of the records. This is harsh, as they are the supporting miles of the field, and activists of cross, and have been, for an extended period of time, to infinity.

This relates to sustaining social order within the profession. One could argue that there is a sizable number of very influential authors in this domain. The presence of

specific individuals on the scene does raise the possibility, as is often the case with the more specialized fields within the humanities, that film criticism, the practice at hand, is captured within 'invisible colleges'—or fashionable intellectual silk screens—supervised by these rather dominant individuals. The totality of that output, or at least the bulk of it, is what defines the research agenda, determines the principal concerns within the theory, and constitutes the primary materials for newcomers. On one side, this group of scholars is able to strengthen the framework of the domain with robust theoretical constructs and on the other, it could also set very high entry barriers that, if left unchallenged, could severely limit theoretical pluralism.

The phenomenon of concentration of authorship of scholarly materials on a small number of individuals is not unique to this domain. It is well documented in bibliometric studies across various fields as a typical case where the central contributors also serve as primary gatekeepers and knowledge 'pourers.'

This concentration of influence among a core group of authors is mirrored by a similar pattern in the distribution of articles across academic journals, with a select few publications serving as the primary outlets for research in film criticism. The analysis identifies *FILM CRITICISM* as the most central and relevant journal, having published 12 of the 129 documents in the dataset, which makes it the undisputed core publication for this specific scholarly community. Other highly



Source: Biblioshiny, 2023

Figure 3 Author's Production Over Time

significant journals include *NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE* (6 articles), a finding that suggests a substantial nexus with German studies and critical theory, and *CINEASTE* (5 articles), a publication well-known for bridging academic and popular film analysis. Also prominent are the *HISTORICAL JOURNAL OF FILM, RADIO AND TELEVISION* (5 articles) and *FILM QUARTERLY* (4 articles), a fact which indicates a sustained interest in historical and contextual approaches to criticism within the field.

The scholarly implications of this journal concentration are crucial for both established and emerging researchers. These core journals function as the primary channels for the dissemination and, critically, the validation of new knowledge within the field (Evans et al., 2024). For an author, publication in one of

these outlets signals a high level of scholarly rigour and relevance to the ongoing discourse. This concentration also helps to define the very boundaries of the field, as the editorial scope and theoretical preferences of these key journals inevitably shape the type of research that is deemed central to the discipline. Consequently, for researchers seeking to contribute meaningfully, targeting these publications is essential for engaging with the core academic conversation. The diversity among these top journals—from the highly specialized *Film Criticism* to the interdisciplinary *New German Critique*—also indicates that the field, while possessing a clear center, maintains vital connections to broader areas of critical theory, history, and media studies.

Beyond the concentration in specific journals, the production of this scholarship is

also characterized by a significant geographical concentration within a small number of institutions and countries. The data reveals that the most active institution is the University of Oxford, which contributed five documents to the dataset. It is closely followed by other leading Anglophone universities, including New York University and the University of Bristol (each with four articles), alongside Harvard University, Newcastle University, the University of California, and the University of Glasgow (each with three articles). European leaders and Brunel University, along with Sussex University, are key universities in that sphere (Figure 3).

Based on the affiliation of these top-tier institutions, it is certain that the United Kingdom and the United States take the lead in publishing research regarding this individual. The intense geographic concentration indicates that the scholarly discourse in film studies is shaped primarily by the scholarly practices, cultural preoccupations, and commercial interests of the Anglophone world. The case scenario raises serious issues of the discipline's plurality and global representation. However, this concentration of scholarly activity does create a robust and cohesive intellectual community between the two countries which, in turn, marginalizes the non-English theoretical traditions and results in a sparse layer of scholarship on films from other regions of the world. The gap in question underscores the range of future research on film criticism that

is intended to interface with scholarship from more peripheral regions in order to stimulate a more balanced global discourse on film criticism.

Returning to the discipline's social stratification, an examination of the collaborative network in the area brings to the fore one of its most distinctive features: a very low co-authorship rate.

Considering that there are not many co-authors per paper in other scientific fields, the average of 1.15 co-authors per paper in this case is astonishingly low. Moreover, out of 126 total contributors, 97 are single authors of their own documents, which is impressive. This trend toward individualism is even stronger in international collaboration, which is only 1.55%.

The visualization of the author collaboration network (Figure 4) graphically confirms this pattern, showing a highly fragmented network composed of small, disconnected clusters and a large number of isolated nodes representing individual authors. Even the most prominent cluster, containing Kleven A and Clayton A, is small and clearly represents an exception rather than the rule. The internal structure of these clusters is often defined by role equality rather than extensive, hierarchical collaboration (Fonseca et al., 2016; Modak et al., 2020).

The precise meaning of this statistic is that film critique is still done mainly by one person. This finding aligns perfectly with the traditional model of research in the humanities, where



Source: Biblioshiny, 2023

Figure 4 Collaboration Network Author's

individual scholars are expected to develop and articulate their arguments independently, a sharp contrast to the collaborative, lab-based model standard in the natural and social sciences. This profound lack of collaboration, particularly at an international level, may inadvertently limit the cross-pollination of ideas and the synthesis of different theoretical perspectives. While solitary scholarship undoubtedly allows for a deep and focused authorial vision, it can also slow the broader advancement of the field and reinforce existing theoretical divides. This conclusion suggests that fostering improved collaboration could be a vital avenue for future advancement, potentially leading to more ambitious, interdisciplinary, and globally-focused research endeavors. Consequently, analyzing these networks is crucial for a thorough comprehension of the social dynamics inside any research community (Anjum et al., 2020; Hakim, 2020).

Collaboration networks show how people in the area are connected, while an examination of term co-occurrence shows a map of the field's main ideas and intellectual interests. The most frequently used keywords are foundational and broad in scope, such as "human" and "motion pictures," which effectively anchor the field within a humanistic and media-centric context. A significant and historically important thematic cluster revolves around psychoanalytic theory, with terms like "psychoanalytic theory" and "Freudian theory" appearing prominently. This pattern clearly shows that psychoanalysis is still a significant way to look at film narrative, character psychology, and theories of spectatorship (Figure 5).

However, a newer and just as important trend is the rise of a separate group of technological and computational keywords. The area has changed a lot in terms of its themes. For instance, "convolutional neural network,"

Although we have not conducted a comprehensive co-citation and bibliographic coupling analysis, the results so far have provided a strong basis for such undertakings. The fact that publications like Rodowick (1982) are highly cited suggests there may be one or several central nodes in a co-citation network. A subsequent study could analyze what other papers are most frequently cited in combination with Rodowick to complete the theoretical framework on the critique of “political modernism” that Rodowick and other works offer. The same logic could be applied to analyze the publication records of recent papers that contain the phrase “sentiment analysis” in relation to the amount of primary and secondary theoretical and technical literature upon which the field rests. If one, or a combination, of these networks encourages you to do such an analysis, the results would be a rational circumstance for moving from identifying the prominent thinkers and writers in the field, which is what this study undertakes, to tracing the more profound invisible lines of the architecture of the discipline and the interdisciplinary connections that form bases for the discipline.

If we cross-date these data with the annual keywords analysis, we can better understand the evolution of cinema criticism for the past half a century. The evolution of the field can be categorized into three broad phases. The first phase (1975-c. 1995) appears to be a foundational period dominated by the application of grand theories to film, particularly psychoanalysis

and structuralism. The keywords and highly cited works from this era suggest a focus on ideological critique and the formal structures of cinematic language.

The second phase (c. 1995-2010) represents a period of diversification and specialization. During this time, the field expanded to incorporate a broader range of theoretical lenses, including post-colonial theory, gender and queer theory, and ecocriticism, as evidenced by the themes of influential articles from this period. The research moved beyond a singular focus on ideology to engage with a broader array of social, political, and environmental contexts.

The third and current phase (c. 2011-present) can be defined by the “computational turn.” While traditional critical theories remain highly relevant, this period is marked by the rapid integration of digital humanities tools and data science methodologies. The emergence of keywords related to neural networks and emotion analysis signifies a new research frontier focused on the empirical and large-scale analysis of film and audience data. This ongoing evolution implies that the future of film criticism will likely be characterized by an increasing hybridity, where scholars will need to be conversant in both critical theory and computational methods.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis set out to map the intellectual landscape of film criticism scholarship from 1975 to 2023, and in doing

so, has revealed the defining characteristics of a mature yet dynamic academic field. The findings move beyond mere data points to offer a synthesized conclusion: the scholarly discourse of film criticism is characterized by concentrated intellectual hubs, with a small number of authors, institutions, and journals in the Anglophone world shaping its trajectory. Furthermore, the analysis confirms that the field operates predominantly on a model of solitary scholarship, as evidenced by remarkably low rates of co-authorship and international collaboration. Most significantly, this study concludes that the field is at a crucial thematic and methodological crossroads. The enduring influence of traditional humanistic inquiry, such as psychoanalytic theory, is now converging with an emergent “computational turn,” creating a vibrant, hybrid space for future research.

Based on these conclusions, this study puts forward several significant recommendations for future research. To counteract the intellectual isolation identified, academic bodies and funding agencies should create initiatives that actively foster international and interdisciplinary collaboration. This could break down existing theoretical silos and enrich the field with diverse global perspectives. Secondly, there is a clear need for research that actively focuses on non-Anglophone critical traditions and cinemas to create a more representative and globally inclusive discipline. Finally, scholars are encouraged to explore the novel research questions arising from the convergence of

technology and criticism, such as the ethical implications of using AI in film analysis or the development of new hybrid methodologies that blend qualitative depth with quantitative scale. These avenues represent generative new ideas for moving the field forward.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the research limitations of this study. The findings are based exclusively on data from the Scopus database; including other databases such as Web of Science or Google Scholar could yield a more comprehensive dataset. The analysis was also confined to English-language publications, which means a significant body of scholarly work on film criticism from other linguistic traditions was not included. Lastly, as a quantitative method, this bibliometric analysis excels at identifying broad patterns and trends but cannot capture the qualitative nuance, argumentative rigor, or conceptual depth of the individual articles themselves. These limitations provide a clear scope for subsequent research to build upon the foundational map provided herein.

Author Contributions

“Conceptualization, R.K.A.; methodology, R.K.A.; software, Y.W.; validation, R.K.A., and A.A.M.; formal analysis, R.K.A., Y.W. and A.A.M.; investigation, A.A.M.; resources, R.K.A.; data curation, R.K.A. and A.A.M.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.W.; writing—review and editing, R.A.S; visualization, R.A.S; supervision, R.K.A.; project administration, R.K.A.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.”

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