

## The Gender Criteria of Film Criticism: Creating the 'Big', Avoiding the Important

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**Abstract :** Social and anthropological research, parallel to Gender Studies, highlighted the relationship between social structures and symbolic forms as an important field of interaction and recording of 'social trends.' Since the study of representations can contribute to the understanding of the social functions and power relations, they encompass. This 'mirage,' however, has not only to do with the representations themselves but also with the ways they are received and the film or critical narratives that are established as dominant or alternative. Cinema and the criticism of its cultural products are no exception. Even in the rapidly changing media landscape of the 21st century, movies remain an integral and widespread part of popular culture, making films an extremely powerful means of 'legitimizing' or 'delegitimizing' visions of domination and commonsensical gender stereotypes throughout society. And yet it is film criticism, the 'language per se,' that legitimizes, reinforces, rewards and reproduces (or at least ignores) the stereotypical depictions of female roles that remain common in the realm of film images. This creates the need for this issue to have emerged (also) in academic research questioning gender criteria in film reviews as part of the effort for an inclusive art and society. Qualitative content analysis is used to examine female roles in selected Oscar-nominated films against their reviews from leading websites and newspapers. This method was chosen because of the complex nature of the depictions in the films and the narratives they evoke. The films were divided into basic scenes depicting social functions, such as love and work relationships, positions of power and their function, which were analyzed by content analysis, with borrowings from structuralism (Gennette) and the local/universal images of intercultural philology (Wierlacher). In addition to the measurement of the general 'representation-time' by gender, other qualitative characteristics were also analyzed, such as: speaking time, sayings or key actions, overall quality of the character's action in relation to the development of the scenario and social representations in general, as well as quantitatively (insufficient number of female lead roles, fewer key supporting roles, relatively few female directors and people in the production chain and how they might affect screen representations. The quantitative analysis in this study was used to complement the qualitative content analysis. Then the focus shifted to the criteria of film criticism and to the rhetorical narratives that exclude or highlight in relation to gender identities and functions. In the criteria and language of film criticism, stereotypes are often reproduced or allegedly overturned within the framework of apolitical "identity politics," which mainly addresses the surface of a self-referential cultural-consumer product without connecting it more deeply with the material and cultural life. One of the prime examples of this failure is the Bechtel Test, which tracks whether female characters speak in a film regardless of whether women's stories are represented or not in the films analyzed. If perceived unbiased male filmmakers still fail to tell truly feminist stories, the same is the case with the criteria of criticism and the related interventions.

**Keywords :** representations, context analysis, reviews, sexist stereotypes

**Conference Title :** ICCFMS 2023 : International Conference on Cinema, Film and Media Studies

**Conference Location :** Dublin, Ireland

**Conference Dates :** August 24-25, 2023