

Quantitative methods and the study of film

Nick Redfern,

Department of Media, Film, & Culture, Leeds Trinity University,
Brownberrie Lane, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 5HD, UK.

n.redfern@leedstrinity.ac.uk

<https://leedstrinity.academia.edu/NickRedfern>

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Abstract

This talk addresses the analysis of film – its texts, its audiences, its political economy – in higher education, arguing for the abandonment of Film Studies as either a subject or a discipline and approaching the cinema as a complex object of inquiry that demands an ecumenical methodological perspective in order that its numerous and various dimensions are fully comprehended. Though used widely by those studying the cinema beyond the narrow methodological confines of Film Studies, quantitative methods are at present underused by film scholars. To fix their place in the study of film and place the study of film in the wider world – particularly the BFI's recent recognition of the importance of evidence-based policy making – I argue there is much to be gained from the application of quantitative methods in studying film and its audiences, and I illustrate this claim by drawing on a range of empirical studies.

Introduction

I want to begin my talk today with a statement that I will then attempt to justify: I hate Film Studies and nothing would make me happier to see an end to the subject. This might be considered to be a foolhardy declaration from someone who is currently employed by Leeds Trinity University to teach Film Studies and who has 'Film Studies' in his job title. Nonetheless, I think it is the only sensible position I can adopt as someone who strives to understand, and to teach my students to understand, the cinema.

There are three reasons behind this. First, there is a great deal of very interesting research being produced by economists, neuroscientists, and sociologists that adds to our understanding of the economic, aesthetic, social, and psychological dimensions of the cinema but which does not find its way into Film Studies. For example, there are numerous books by film scholars on role sequels and remakes in contemporary Hollywood cinema and not one refers to the empirical analyses of researchers such as Suman Basuroy and Subimal Chatterjee (2008) or Sanjay Sood and Xavier Drèze (2006), which are able to tap into the theories and methodologies of economics and social science to explore concepts like the brand extension of hedonistic goods using data from the real

world. The attempts by Brett Adams, Chita Dorai, and Svetha Venkatesh (2000; see also Dorai and Venkatesh 2001) to bridge the 'semantic gap' between the aesthetic features of motion pictures and the semantic terms viewers use to describe them emerged in response to the need to manage multimedia databases, but the methods of computational media aesthetics have been utterly ignored even by those who are interested in quantitative analyses of film style. Film Studies is such a small subject for such a diverse phenomenon as the cinema.

Second, Film Studies is performative rather than exploratory or innovative. By this I mean that Film Studies rewards recitation rather than finding solutions to key problems. In publishing a narrow range of research forms, Film Studies journals encourage this behaviour. Publishing outputs common in other areas such as short empirical studies rapidly communicated, reviews of research, and methodological articles simply find no place in print and online journals that persist in publishing 6000 word articles, a very closed form.

Finally, Film Studies has little relevance to the wider world. In the UK, degree programmes like Film Studies and Media Studies have long been viewed as trivial subjects and a soft option for students (See Buckingham 2013). This is largely a matter of ignorance on the part of critics but it reflects a failure to explain the scope and importance of the study of film and a persistent failure to make Film Studies matter. I am not the first to recognise the dominant discourses in Film Studies have little relevance beyond the limits of the subject. In 2001, Toby Miller pointed to

a lack of relevance in the output of screen studies to *both* popular *and* policy-driven discussion of films, flowing from a lack of engagement with the sense-making practices of criticism and research conducted outside the textualist and historical side to the humanities (Miller et al. 2001: 12; original emphasis).

Miller illustrates this claim with the example of work in the humanities on stardom that fails to acknowledge the existence of research in the social sciences let alone consider its methodologies and conclusions; Miller states that

Adding this material to the textual, theoreticist, and biographical preferences of humanities critics would offer knowledge of the impact of stars on box office, via regression analysis, and of work practices, via labour studies (Miller et al. 2001: 12).

It is interesting that Miller points to the use of 'regression analysis' because he is explicitly referring to the use of quantitative methods in understanding the cinema.

There are good reasons for incorporating quantitative methods into the study of film. The British Academy recently expressed concern at the lack of quantitative skills among humanities graduates, noting 'a dearth of candidates with good quantitative skills to go forward to doctoral training, and an inadequate supply of graduates with the numerical skills that are in demand in the workplace'

(2012: 2). Quantitative skills are highly valued by employers and by failing to equip our students with these competencies we are limiting their employability. They are also necessary in dealing with the enormous amount of quantitative information we encounter when studying the cinema in the form of box office returns, audience surveys, production trends, empirical psychological studies, and so on. It is not a question of making the study of film quantitative; it has always been quantitative. It is a matter of ensuring film scholars have the necessary abilities to deal with this information. Without recognising this simple fact we will produce graduates with degrees in Film Studies who are unaware of the career advantages of quantitative skills and lack the necessary abilities to interpret and respond to the quantitative data they will encounter in their studies and in their working life.

Thinking about quantitative methods and their role in understanding the cinema also leads us to reflect on the nature of what we do as film scholars – to think about the questions we can ask and the range of methodologies available to answer those questions. This is the topic I want to explore today. I argue that we should abandon Film Studies as a subject or discipline and focus on the study of film as *a complex object of inquiry that demands an ecumenical methodological perspective*. I illustrate this claim by looking at how expanding our horizons to include research using new perspectives from outside Film Studies using quantitative methods can transform our understanding of film genre. I also argue that participation in evidence-based policymaking for film and film education in the UK requires us to embrace the role quantitative skills play in these processes. Failure to do so will limit our understanding of the cinema; it is the difference between studying film and Film Studies.

Subject/discipline/object

Miller asks ‘what would it take for screen studies to matter more?’, and makes three proposals:

(a) influence over public media discourse on the screen; (b) influence over public policy and not-for-profit and commercial practice; and (c) not reproducing a thing called ‘screen studies,’ but instead doing work that *studies* the screen, regardless of its intellectual provenance (Miller et al. 2001: 15; original emphasis).

These are, I think, excellent objectives. However, Miller is less clear on the practical steps we need to take in order to *achieve* these goals. In my opinion, the first step is to abandon Film Studies as an academic subject or discipline and to ask ‘what do I need to do to understand the cinema?’ Let’s move the emphasis away from the subject and/or discipline and back on to the object we want to understand. After all, students study film *not* Film Studies.

Jan Parker (2002) rejects the idea of the ‘subject’ in higher education and argues we should focus on ‘disciplines.’ Subjects, she argues, comprise static packages of knowledge and skills to be mastered by students; whereas disciplines exist as ‘communities of practice’ that demand critical engagement on

the part of scholars as part of an evolving debate to prevent fossilisation. I think Parker's criticisms of 'subjects' are useful but I am not convinced that 'disciplines' are an improvement. She writes that

For many disciplines, surely, the defining, quintessential element is a core process: an underpinning unifying activity that gives the discipline its distinctive tone and value. For Humanities disciplines the core is the critical, mutual engagement with humanities texts (2002: 379).

Disciplines, as Parker describes them, are characterised by 'non-generic epistemological models' that are distinctive to each discipline (2002: 381). This idea of a 'discipline' is too closely associated with the idea of exclusion and disqualification, and it is a problem at the very heart of Film Studies.

In a 1968 edition of *Cinema Journal*, the journal of the newly named Society of Cinema Studies, the editors declared 'we are searching for our best approach, our discipline' (quoted in Grieveson and Wasson 2008: xiii). These nine words encapsulate everything that is wrong about Film Studies. It asserts ownership ('our discipline') to exclude others from studying the cinema and in doing so it cuts that enterprise off from other, unnamed disciplines in the procedure of 'partitioning and verticality' described by Michel Foucault by introducing 'between the different elements at the same level, as solid separations as possible' (1991: 220). The best approach, in the view of the Society of Cinema Studies, turned out to be text-led analytical methods placed firmly within the Humanities that immediately cut the study of film off from decades of empirical research on the cinema that looked at how viewers experienced and comprehended films, at the behaviour of audiences, and at the social impact of cinema. There is no theoretical or methodological justification for this. In 1968 the Society of Cinema Studies was concerned more with establishing the discipline of Film Studies than it was with studying the cinema. The 'best approach' is the one that answers the questions you want to ask, irrespective of where those theories and methods come from. Emphasising the 'core process' of a discipline serves only to diminish other approaches, however profitable they may prove to be, and promotes a defensive attitude that *encourages* fossilisation.

Let's get rid of Film Studies as a subject or a discipline. It has been forty years since Film Studies was 'institutionalised' and so I think we've given it a good chance to prove its worth.¹ By thinking of the cinema as an object of inquiry we free ourselves from the mundane activity of reproducing something called 'Film Studies,' so that we ask *all* the questions we want to ask and answer them. I described this possibility in an article on research blogging as being 'bound by nothing more than my own desire to study film in any way that captures my imagination' (Redfern 2012). For me, that is a far more attractive prospect than being 'disciplined.'

¹ Whenever I hear the phrases like 'the institutionalisation of the discipline' I think of Grampa Simpson shut away in the Springfield Retirement Castle where he won't bother anyone, telling his long, rambling stories despite the fact no-one is listening, and inventing meaningless words as he goes along.

As I have argued elsewhere (Redfern 2012, 2013), the study of film includes industrial, textual, ethnographic, and cognitive-psychological research. If we approach film as a complex object of inquiry with the methodological openness this demands. This *naturally* includes quantitative methods, as it naturally includes historical and text-based methods, because quantitative methods will help us to answer questions about the economics of the film industry, about patterns in the style and form of motion pictures, about audiences' behaviours and attitudes, and about how we understand and experience the cinema. The data is already available; but if we stay within the disciplinary limits established by the Society of Cinema Studies then we won't be able to do anything with this information.

I haven't joined the Society of Cinema and Media *Studies* or the British Association of Film, Television, and Screen *Studies* and I don't think I will; though I might be interested in joining or a British Association for the *Study* of Moving Images.

Bringing new ideas to the study of film genres

To illustrate how making the shift from Film Studies as a subject or discipline to the study of the cinema can open film scholars' eyes to research that comes from outside Film Studies and refresh the ways in which we think about the cinema, I want to look at an example of research employing quantitative methods in the study of film genres from the Business School of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST).

The problems of genre research are well-known. We are faced with what Andrew Tudor (1974) called the 'empiricist's dilemma' of analysing genre films to determine which genres they belong to and why only after we have first defined the genres themselves. We must also deal with the problems of *extension* (where generic labels are either too broad or too narrow), *normativism* (having preconceived ideas of criteria for genre membership), the twin problems of *monolithic definitions* (as if a film belonged to only one genre) and *hybrid films* (when films belong to several genres), and *biologism* (in which genres are seen as evolving through a standardised life cycle) (Stam 2000: 128-129).

These problems are also well-rehearsed. In 1975 Douglas Pye warned against treating genres as Platonic forms that are 'essentially definable' and of approaching genre criticism 'as in need of defining criteria' (Pye 1975: 30). The same argument is made by David Bordwell 14 years later, arguing there is no fixed system of genre definitions in the film industry or film studies and that no strictly deductive set of principles is capable of explaining genre groupings (1989: 147). These theoretical problems are again repeated in 2008 by Raphaëlle Moine, who writes:

If we consider film genres as categories of classification, one can only note the vitality of generic activity at an empirical level, and the impossibility of organizing cinema dogmatically into a definitive and universal typology of genres at a theoretical level. Categories exist but they are not impermeable. They may coincide at certain points, contradict one another,

and are the product of different levels of differentiation or different frames of reference (Moine 2008: 24).

These are important problems given the central role genre plays in shaping the attitudes of producers and the experiences of audiences. They are problems Film Studies has failed to address over the past forty years. The examples quoted demonstrate the performative aspect of Film Studies, with same problems restated over four decades without the prospect of a solution. This is not acceptable. If the study of film is to have the sort of impact Miller envisages then progress is a must.

In order to overcome these problems, Shon Ji-Hyun and Kim Young-Gul from the KAIST Business School and Yim Sang-Jin from CJ Entertainment & Media Pictures adopted a different approach to understanding 'genre' in the cinema (Shon, Kim, & Yim 2012). They did not begin with genre theory. Their approach was not top-down, trying to impose order on a group of films; it was bottom-up, endeavouring to discover what order exists in the ways in which people categorise films. Their method involved developing a set of 'movie type indicators,' which they define as 'the set of distinct movie characteristics as perceived by the movie audience' (2012: 7) and then using these to categorise movies into 'movie types.'

They started with the audience asking a sample of 125 Korean students to describe films using adjectives or adjective-like expressions. This generated a list of 605 terms, indicating the high level of variation in the way audiences think about films, that was then reduced to remove films with low level of responses, duplications of meaning, and idiosyncratic terms to a list 139 items describing 230 films. This was then reduced to a smaller set of 96 terms following an online survey generating 42,412 data points as a basis for analysis. Finally, the team applied exploratory factor analysis and validation methods to identify eight 'movie type indicators' based on the 96 adjectives. The resulting list of 'movie type indicators' comprises

- Eye-catching
- Commonplace
- Fun
- Feelgood
- Touching
- Serious
- Discomfort
- Different

The 'movie type indicators' were then used to identify groups of films sharing similar indicators using cluster analysis. The result of this process was a set of nine 'movie types:'

- Rollercoaster – high-concept blockbuster movies (e.g. *Iron Man*)
- Déjà vu – formulaic films (e.g. *The Taking of Pelham 123* and *Superhero Movie*)
- Oddball – fresh films with unique characters (e.g. *Hancock* and *Wall-E*)
- Playground – fun films typically aimed at kids and teens (e.g. *Kung Fu Panda* and *Mamma Mia!*)
- Marshmallow – films that evoked a cosy, warm feeling in the audience (e.g. *Definitely, Maybe* and *The Bucket List*)
- Lone-wolf – serious films released outside peak windows (e.g. *The Life Before Her Eyes*)
- Soul trigger – films that ‘seem to steal the hearts and souls of the audience’ (e.g. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and *Changeling*)
- Nerve-wrecker – R-rated films that distress the audience (e.g. *Drag Me to Hell* and *The X Files*)
- Mosaic – films that scored evenly across the eight ‘movie type indicators’ (e.g. *Terminator Salvation* and *Slumdog Millionaire*)

What is interesting is that when comparing these ‘movie types’ with conventional genre labels the researchers found that there are key differences and that, on average ‘each movie type spans across 4.2 movie genres and each movie genre is linked to 5.4 movie types’ (2012: 20). The researchers argue that ‘movie types’ are preferable to ‘movie genres’ because they perform better in analysing release patterns and box-office performance and that they do so because they are based on not on ill-defined marketing categories used to sell a movie but on the perceptions of audiences who have actually watched the movies.

The approach of the Korean researchers solves the problems of genre theory. As they state,

our study is not ‘top-down, theory-driven’ but ‘bottom-up, data-driven’ as our goal was not to extend or validate a pre-existing theory but to come up with a scientific method to classify movies as they are actually perceived by the movie audience (2012: 22).

The ‘empiricist’s dilemma’ is a theoretical problem in genre theory; it’s not an empirical problem. There are no problems with normativism because the method described above is *exploratory* and analyses the structure of the data rather than imposing the critic’s preconceived ideas of genres. There are no problems with the extension of categories because they are derived from the data and only from the data. Films belong to only one category eliminating the problem of hybridity. At the same time, monolithic definitions need not concern us because the ‘movie types’ are based on searching for patterns in how a large number of respondents describe a film, and, as the product of empirical research, are open to testing and retesting. There is no biologism because the definitions of ‘movie types’ are based on audience descriptions and do not make assumptions about the ‘life cycle’ of genres.

The future use of this methodology will be interesting to observe, but an interesting question is why this research on categorising films not attracting the attention of film scholars? There are, I think, several reasons. The first reason is somewhat tangential to my central argument today but it is nonetheless significant: this research was conducted in Korea and not in Europe or North America. Second, this research was not carried out by film scholars in a Film Studies department but by researchers in a business school in conjunction with a film distribution company and therefore lies beyond the institutional and intellectual limits of Film Studies as a subject or a discipline. Third, genre has long been none of the key theoretical cornerstones of Film Studies and an organising principle of degree programmes in the subject but this research suggests that we would be better off abandoning the concept altogether. I cannot see Film Studies departments being prepared to take such a bold step. Fourth, it uses empirical methods of which film scholars are simply ignorant, largely uninterested in, and determinedly resistant to. It is astonishingly difficult to get empirical research on audiences reviewed in humanities journals, let alone published. I wrote a piece analysing TV genre preferences among audiences using data produced by the BFI and was told by the editor of *Television and New Media* that the piece would be 'better suited to a marketing magazine or trade journal' and that '[m]ore [problematic though, is that the method is based on survey research, which itself has so many shortcomings that would need to be addressed critically to forward a more nuanced argument.]' In other words, irrespective of the quality of the work or anything we might learn from analysing this data, we won't publish this because it's *not* my discipline and it's *not* my method. This is a dangerously narrow perspective. It is certainly not the 'critical engagement' Parker refers to.

The KAIST study is, I think, exactly the type of research Miller is referring to when he talks about making the study of film matter.² It is research that does not simply reproduce Film Studies but which actually studies how audiences categorise films and therefore not only adds to our understanding the cinema as a social and cultural phenomenon but is also of practical significance to the film industry. If we are alive to this research then it can surprise us, refreshing our thinking about the cinema by bringing new perspectives and methodologies to bear on problems with which we have long struggled. The first step on the road to progress we must take is to change how we think about what we do as researchers. We need to let go of Film Studies and focus on the study of film.

Evidence-based policymaking

'Evidence-based policymaking' refers to 'a policy process that helps planners make better-informed decisions by putting the best available evidence at the centre of the policy process' (Segone & Pron 2008). Evidence comes in many different forms but *statistics* have been described by one group of researchers as

² The KAIST study is not the only attempt to re-invigorate genre analysis using empirical data. Andrew McGregor Olney (2013) has approached the problem of defining film genres based on audiences' implicit ideals.

the 'eyes' of policymakers (AbouZahr, Ajei, & Kanchanachitra 2007), while Christopher Scott (2005: 40) writes that 'good policy requires good statistics at different stages of the policymaking process, and that investment in better statistics can generate higher social returns.' Most participants in a decision-making process will be using data collected, analysed, and interpreted not by themselves but by professional statisticians, sociologists, market researchers, economists, and other data producers and analysts. Participating in a policy making process therefore requires – as a minimum – the ability evaluate quantitative research and to understand statistical information presented in a variety of forms. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) describes this succinctly:

The availability of statistical information does not automatically lead to good decision-making. In order to use statistics to make well-informed decisions, it is necessary to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to be able to access, understand, analyse and communicate statistical information. These skills provide the basis for understanding the complex social, economic and environmental dimensions of an issue and transforming data into usable information and evidence-based policy decisions.

If you do not understand the information provided to you, the methodologies used, and the pitfalls of both, how can you make a sensible decision about which policies have been effective in the past and how can you decide which will provide the best policy for success in the future? This is of immediate practical relevance to policymaking for the film industry and for film education in the UK.

The DCMS policy review, *A Future for British Film: It Begins with the Audience*, published in 2012 recognised 'the need for a strong evidence base for film policy' and recommended the establishment of a 'research and knowledge function' (Department for Culture, Media, and Sport 2012: 84). Evidence-based policymaking has clearly arrived at the British Film Institute (BFI), and statistics will inevitably be a part of this process (though – importantly – not the only part). The BFI's research outputs already have a substantial statistical component. Obviously, the BFI's statistical yearbook is the standout case here, but the *Opening Our Eyes* report published by the BFI in 2010 and the 2012 policy review both use information presented in numerical, tabular, and graphical forms. These are intended to be used as part of the evidence base for subsequent policy making regarding film education and training, film distribution, and film production.

Other agencies also produce data-heavy reports. For example, Skillset (2009) notes that 'research provides the evidence, authority and justification for all we do' and includes large amounts of statistical information in its surveys. There is also much research on the cinema available from the EU and UNESCO that is loaded with numbers, tables, and graphs. To these we can add trade publications (*Screen International*, *Variety*, etc.) and academic research on the economics of film. Again, this is information that is supposed to provide a basis for decision-making about UK film policy, and all of it containing quantitative information to be used as the desired evidence-base.

Again, it is not a question of making Film Studies quantitative; it already is quantitative. It is a matter of ensuring that film scholars have the necessary skills to participate in a policymaking process that uses this type of evidence.

The 2012 DCMS report is an interesting case study of the failure of Film Studies to make a contribution to policymaking for film. The committee for this report was chaired Lord Smith of Finsbury, the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and included distributors, producers, film and television executives, and an Academy-award winning writer. There is, of course, no reason why any of those involved should not have participated in the review process and there is no reason to think they did not do the best job possible – but the absence of film researchers stands out. As the report includes an assessment of and recommendations for film education the failure to include even one educator on the committee is disturbing. There was no one from Film Studies specialising in film industries, film policy, or British cinema; and there is no economist, sociologist, or geographer specialising in film, media, and/or creative and cultural industries. The report contains a list of references 108 references, including a handful to Margaret Dickinson and Sylvia Harvey, Rob Cheek, Maud Mansfield, and Joe Lampel, but there are no references to the wider body of research of the film industry in the UK.

In short, film scholars are not involved in evidence-based policymaking for the film industry or for film education. Why should this be so?

In 2011 I attended a symposium on research and policymaking in the UK film industry at which Carol Comley from the BFI described the current processes of policymaking for film in the UK as 'suboptimal' due to the lack of an evidence base that can inform film policy. There are various reasons for this: the differing time scales at which the film industry and academics work, the lack of trust between parties, a lack of engagement by researchers with the film industry, and the lack of demand from the film industry for research. A key feature problem identified was the very 'disciplinarity' of Film Studies itself. Robin MacPherson and Finola Kerrigan both pointed out that academic disciplinary boundaries often resulted in little exchange between communities of researchers ('Research and Policymaking for Film' 2011: 4). Ian Christie linked this problem to the funding of research on the cinema:

I do think that meaningful research in the audiovisual field increasingly needs a multiplicity of skills and disciplines [...] the problem is that the style of funding we have at the moment [...] is to a single principal investigator who is in one discipline in one institution ('Research and Policymaking for Film' 2011: 9).

Christie went on to express the opinion that Film Studies had failed to grapple with important issues and to impose itself on the research agenda, in part because it had generated too much qualitative research that could provide only a limited range of answers to a limited range of questions and that there had been too little quantitative research.

At this symposium I pointed out that Film Studies students do not have the necessary quantitative skills to make the best use of the available statistical information and it is likely that filmmakers and policymakers also lack these skills. I asked who, in the context of film policy and film education, is responsible for promoting statistical literacy. The reply from Richard Phillips of the Manchester Business School was that promoting statistical skills in filmmakers and policymakers is perhaps not the best way forward and they can get other people to carry out the statistical analyses but then make use of the results ('Research and Policymaking for Film' 2011: 13-14). Needless to say, this was not the response I was looking for.³ The answer cannot be 'get someone else to do it' because that is the death knell for the study of film – it *won't* be film scholars collecting the data, conducting the statistical analyses, and analysing the results. After all, it's not our discipline. This response also utterly fails to answer my question: if filmmakers and policymakers do not have the requisite quantitative skills to understand the information presented to them, how will they make use of those results in shaping policy? Somebody has to be responsible for developing the knowledge and competencies to deal with this information. I propose that quantitative methods be a part of the education of every film student so that we produce graduates who have the necessary skills to participate in and make a direct contribution to policymaking for film.

The lack of participation of film scholars in an evidence-based policymaking process is a problem that goes far beyond thinking about the place of quantitative methods in the study of film. A focus on quantitative literacy will improve the ability of film scholars to participate in evidence-based policymaking; but evidence comes in many forms. We should be concerned with quantitative methods, especially since this is the dominant type of evidence in the film industry; but we should also be concerned that *none* of the existing research on the cinema in the UK by Film Scholars plays a role in shaping the BFI's policies. The 2012 DCMS report is a stark reminder of Film Studies lack of relevance to the wider world.

Conclusion

In a blog for *Scientific American*, Maria Konnikova wrote:

Every softer discipline these days seems to feel inadequate unless it becomes *harder*, more *quantifiable*, more *scientific*, more *precise*. That, it seems, would confer some sort of missing legitimacy in our computerized, digitized, number-happy world. But does it really? Or is it actually undermining the very heart of each discipline that falls into the trap of data, numbers, and statistics, and charts? (Konnikova 2012; original emphasis).

³ Both Robin MacPherson and Terry Illot agreed with me that policymakers need to know how to use data and that educating people in the use of data can inform and improve policymaking.

It is not the case that the study of film will only be taken seriously after we have made it more scientific or quantifiable. We could better educate those outside higher education about what film scholars do but 'numbers, and statistics, and charts' won't confer whatever legitimacy is perceived to be lacking. Our participation in an evidence-based policymaking process demands that we develop our quantitative skills because some of the evidence in that process will be quantitative in nature and *cannot* be ignored.

The study of film is and incredibly diverse activity; it demands that we have the methodological scope to cope with that diversity. That includes quantitative methods. I despair of the 'high humanist' stance that insists the Humanities are 'a sui generis and autonomous field of inquiry, approachable only by means of a special sensitivity produced by humanistic training itself' (Slingerland 2008: 2). That intellectual defensiveness that sees the inclusion of quantitative methods in those areas traditionally conceived as 'the Humanities' as a threat will only serve to limit the future of the study of film. Toby Miller is right: without a change of mind-set that moves us away from reproducing Film Studies as a subject or a discipline we will not produce graduates or research that matters. I hate Film Studies and I see no reason to persevere with it. The sooner we are rid of Film Studies the sooner we can make real progress in understanding that object of our inquiries: the cinema.

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