ROLE MODEL: AN INSIDER'S LOOK

AT THE ROLE OF THE

MOVIE CRITIC

By

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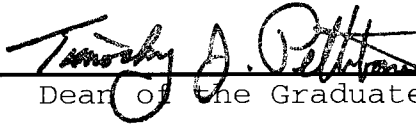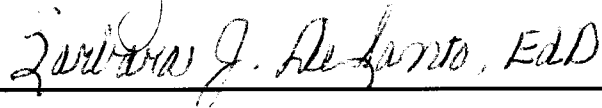Oklahoma State University
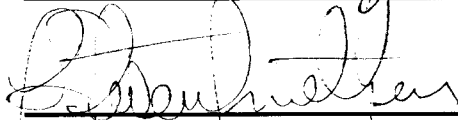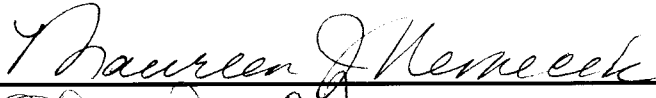
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CHAPTER I

"Throughout the… history of the movies, the role of the

critic never has been clearly defined."

> Charles S. Steinberg,
> Communications Author-Professor
> Cited in *Movie Business*, 1972
> (RingLer, 2000, p. 164)

Introduction

Roger Ebert is the most influential movie critic in

all the land. The statement is more one of inference and

intuition than of statistical measurement. People, readers

and other critics, just *feel* as though Ebert is the most

powerful critic in the land. In fact, some believe Ebert is

one of the few critics actually wielding any influence over

the movie-viewing public.

But what does that mean? Does it mean he has a

powerful influence over a movie-going populace on whether

or not they go see a given film? If so, what does Ebert, or

any reviewer, view as his responsibility to this populace?

The objective of this study is to uncover the

attitudes of movie critics as to their role as members of

the press, and how much influence they think they exude

over the public. Much of the literature, as will be shown herein, maintains that while movie reviews are important to the process of marketing and ultimately the overall financial success of a movie, a review is just a drop in the bucket. However, the mystique of the influence of movie critics keeps them employed at newspapers all across the country even as the industry downsizes (Markiewicz, 2001).

Research Problem

The problem, as the review of the literature will show in Chapter 2, is that the consensus seems to be that no one listens to movie critics, whether it is on matters of taste or viewing selection (Markiewicz, 2001). Reading between the lines, movie critics in the 21st century may be irrelevant and the reviews they provide merely entertaining distractions, not consumer guides or educated treatises on cultural importance (Markiewicz, 2001). In an era when the cost of paper is ever rising and the Internet begins to rival traditional information outlets in popularity and influence, what is the responsibility of the movie critic?

Background

During the late 1970s the way the movie industry marketed films, and subsequently the way and kinds of movies the industry produced, changed. It was the dawn of

the blockbuster. Movies became *events* – things people *had* to go see – rather than pleasant diversions on lazy Saturday afternoons. This is when the power of the movie critic to influence audience tastes and sensibilities, as well as movie selection, began to wane. Gradually, the drone of "entertainment news" drowned out the voices of the critics. Or so the critics would have you believe.

In the past five years, many critics have written about the shrinking sphere of influence, and the findings of many academic studies, such as De Silva's (1998) "Consumer Selection of Motion Pictures," have supported the trend.

There are apparently many factors to account for the attrition. For one, moviegoers often hear about a film during its incubation stage. People know the stars, directors and even plots of upcoming movies even before trailers appear in theaters. For instance, the publicity campaign for New Line Cinema's *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* began more than two years before the movie debuted before the world's audiences (Davis, 2001). Information about the production, from casting to shooting delays, was conveyed via a high-tech website. Through the website, fans-in-waiting could sign up for e-mail updates about the production so as to not even have to hunt for new

information. To top it off, the movie was based on a series of best-selling novels by J.R.R. Tolkien, and thus had a built-in audience. As the release date for the film neared, media coverage about the production increased. Various television shows, such as *Entertainment Tonight*, featured interviews with the cast and crew. Magazines showcased stills of the sets and stars (Davis, 2001). In this situation, moviegoers may have decided whether they were going to attend or not months before the movie opened.

On opening day, the reviews for *The Fellowship of the Ring* appeared in magazines and newspapers all across the country. Did the reviews help viewers decide whether or not they would go see *Lord of the Rings*? Probably not. More likely, moviegoers read the reviews to see whether or not they agreed or disagreed with the critics.

The situation is slightly different when it comes to independent and foreign films. The 2002 Academy Award nominated film *In the Bedroom* achieved notoriety after a limited release where the critics praised the performances of Sissy Spacek and Marissa Tomei. As a result of this critical acclaim, the movie was released on more screens giving more moviegoers the opportunity to watch it. Many did. Of course, the critics cannot be given all the credit for making *In the Bedroom* more commercially successful, but

the reviews did play an important role. Since the beginning of 2002, many awards organizations have announced their nominations for the best films of 2001. Most of these lists have included *In the Bedroom*. A case could be made that awards nominations have spurred the film to greater commercial success. Again, it begs the question – how much power, and what kind of power, does the film reviewer wield?

Purpose of the study

First and foremost, who are movie reviewers? What do movie reviewers perceive as their role? Are they educators, entertainers, consumer advocates… How much influence over their reading public do they think they have? Do they think they have an effect on whether or not people go to see a movie?

The study will be valuable to reviewers themselves in that it can help them develop a better understanding of their profession as a whole. The study will also be of benefit to newspapers and magazines in that it can help them come to an understanding of movie critics and how they fit into the overall organization. Finally, the study is valuable in that it will provide a demographic profile of the "average" movie critic, which could provide insight

into whether or not the public is getting a diversified, critical view of film.

Research Objectives

This study will approach the issues of influence of movie critics and the roles of the critics themselves in the movie selection process from the point-of-view of the reviewers themselves. We will attempt develop a typology of movie critics based upon what they believe their roles are. Then again, there might be no way to categorize the breadth and depth of the profession. While talking with some critics during exploratory research prior to this study, some expressed the opinion that by the nature of what they do, reviewers defy any sort of classification. However, there are common characteristics of any review, and by examining reviewers' attitudes toward these characteristics, this study hopes to construct a profile of the tendencies of reviewers that lends itself to the development of a typology of movie critics.

Summary of methodology

Data will be collected through a web-based questionnaire that will accumulate both demographic

information, information about the influence reviewers believe they have, and what their job responsibilities are.

The demographic section of the questionnaire will be used to construct a profile of the "average" movie reviewer. In addition to questions like gender and age, the questions will also be used to determine how long they have been reviewing films, what their educational background is, and the type of publication for which they write.

Another section of the questionnaire is 17 Likert-scale statements. These statements are used to develop a typology of movie reviewers. Do they believe educating their audience about film is more important than guiding them to films worth their time and money? Do they believe they have a significant influence over whether or not people go to see a film? How reviewers respond to the statements will provide insight into these questions. The statements themselves will be culled from popular press writings, writings of the reviewers themselves, definitions of what they do, and other related studies.

As the study is intended to look at how much influence movie reviewers/critics believe they have, as well as what they believe their role is, the population the sample will be drawn from is magazine and newspaper movie reviewers/critics. Lists of reviewers/critics will be

compiled via membership lists from professional critics organizations, and from the staff lists of magazines and newspapers, daily and weekly, from across the United States. These names will be generated through direct contact with their respective organizations. Physical as well as e-mail addresses were collected. Once the list was compiled and the web-questionnaire is ready, reviewers/critics will be contacted in two ways: 1) a postcard, and 2) via e-mail.

The variables in the study are the demographic information, such as gender, age, length of critical career, and whether the column is carried in a newspaper or magazine, as well as the measurements of their attitudes as measured by the Likert-scale statements.

The research thus far is conflicting as to whether or not movie critics actually have an influence over whether or not individuals see a particular picture. Jarvie (1986) maintains that movie reviews have no effect on whether or not people go to see a particular film, but that reviews do factor into a film's image.

A hypothesis proposed by the study is that print movie critics tend to downplay their influence over their readers, and that they view themselves predominantly as consumer advocates. Furthermore, critics will also display

attitudes toward the various elements of reviewing to the extent that they will fall into clusters, allowing for the creation of a typology.

A cluster analysis will provide insight into the data colleted from the web-form, and a typology for movie reviewers will be generated. The Pearson product-moment correlation (r) is used to examine whether or not there are any statistical relationships between the demographic information collected and the strength of the attitudes critics exhibit toward the various elements of reviewing.

Outline of thesis

The thesis will be divided into five chapters; the first chapter, this one, will provide an overview of the entire study. The second chapter is a review of the literature, which covers the history of the profession of movie critics, an examination of the value society places on movies, and a look at other research related to this study. Chapter III is a detailed account of the methodology used to collect data necessary to evaluate the research problem. The fourth chapter is a report of the findings of the survey and an analysis of the data. Finally, the fifth chapter is a summary of the study, the conclusions that can

be drawn from the data, and recommendations for further research and application of the study's findings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"Hollywood requires criticism to help it fix its social and cultural identity… criticism is a necessary part of the sense-making apparatus that allows cinema to be meaningful in society" (Ringler, 2000, 164).

Richard Maltby, Writer
Stated in his 1995 *Hollywood Cinema*

Overview

This chapter presents a brief history of movie critics, including their rise and apparent fall in importance and influence. It also discusses the social role of movies, factors influencing audience selection of movies, and the current state of the movie reviewer profession. Finally, it addresses the job of the critic/reviewer from an expected content perspective, then provides an examination of the study that provided inspiration for the current one.

A Brief History of Movie Criticism

Almost from the moment motion pictures appeared, which was around the beginning of the 20th century, arts critics began arguing about them and writing those arguments in the press. This was before the days of radio and television, and so print criticism of motion pictures established itself as the standard. Finding a history of the profession of movie critics, however, is a challenge. Most often, histories come in the form of anthologies of reviews, such as Amberg's *The New York Times Film Reviews* or David Denby's *Awake in the Dark*, leaving readers to sort out the details on their own, sometimes with no historical context other that what can be gleaned from the reviews. Some texts discuss the beginnings of film criticism, but only as a means of bringing to light the discussion that started it all; Initially, the arguments usually centered on whether or not movies could be called an art form, especially given they were mass media. As Haberski (2001) asked, are movies "amusement or art?" All the early critics knew at the time was "that movies had changed the world" (Haberski, 2001, p. 10).

The crux of the argument had to do with the emergence of mass culture and the decline of the older cultural

standards. If movies, which represented mass culture, were to be hailed as the next great iteration of art, then art could no longer be thought of by the narrow, standardized, elitist perspective that had always prevailed.

Traditionally, intellectuals and academics, the "art" critics, held the cultural authority and dictated what was art, and what was good about that art. Movies came about and both benefited and caused a shift in power. In a sense, this was because movies were "democratic" (Haberski, 2001, p. 11). According to Haberski (2001), "the magic of movies lay in their power to redefine how a culture understood art without necessarily making that understanding a conscious act" (p.10).

Critic David Denby (1977) insists motion picture criticism did not get interesting until 1915, stating, "Before about 1914 there was very little writing that we would now recognize as criticism; most reviews consisted either of blandly inert summations of plot and character or vaporous rhapsodizing on the 'reality of the images'" (p. xx). Part of Denby's conclusion that criticism did not get interesting until after 1914 was because up until that time, movies were largely forgettable, vulgar in nature and crudely made. Then came films like *The Birth of A Nation*. Nye (1970), in *The Unembarassed Muse*, proposed the belief

that movies were different by then because audience tastes

had changed. Nye (1970) stated:

> Film producers no long aimed at the ten-cent
>
> trade in the tenement district, for there were
>
> movie houses spread out in hamlets and cities all
>
> over the country. Profits were where the
>
> audiences were – in the huge middle class – which
>
> demanded not only different kinds of movies but
>
> different kinds of theatres. (p.366)

It was a portent hinting at the future of film, the

impact the medium would have and the place in society

it would possess.

In 1914, the weekly magazine *Independent* began a movie

column with the assertion movies would do for "drama what

the printing press had done for literature; it brought

drama 'within reach of the multitude thru a process of

mechanical manifolding'" (Haberski, 2001, p. 17). Haberski

claimed the editors of the *Independent* started the column

because they wanted movies to progress as an art form and

intended to provide criticism from the public's perspective

(Haberski, 2001, p. 17). The *Independent's* stance was an

acknowledgement that the art of movies could both "shape

and be shaped" (p. 17) by the masses. Similar columns would

follow in the *Dramatic Mirror, Photoplay* and *Motion Picture*

World (Haberski, p. 17-21). Gradually, a consensus about movies was reached, which according to Haberski (2001) was that "the aesthetic value of movies was in their leveling of taste" (p. 20). Ultimately, it was a question of aesthetics and the clash of class and culture driven by the notion that *art* could not be *popular* and still be called art.

Though films were popular and would likely have remained popular with the American people, it was the critics who gave the medium legitimacy and put it in is proper context. Vachel Lindsay was among the first to give film the critical attention it deserved, and was followed by the likes of Gilbert Seldes in the 1920s, Erwin Panofsky, Otis Ferguson and James Agee in the 1930s and 1940s, and Manny Farber in the 1950s (Denby, 1977). However, not only were these critics establishing the medium as an art form, but they were establishing their reviews as a new form of literature, something to be sought out like a short story, novel, or even a new film (Denby, 1977).

The importance of movie reviews and reviewers reached its peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when film was finally confirmed as an art form, if not *the* art form. Film had become the perfect medium for interpreting the modern

reality (Haberski, 2001). Film scholarship was finally becoming a respected field of academia (Haberski, 2001), and film criticism its own branch on tree of American literature (Denby, 1977). Movies were believed to have replaced the novel as "the chief topic of cultural talk on the campus and at many cocktail parties" (Haberski, 2001, p. 167). It was a time when several reviewers, such as Pauline Kael and Andrew Sarris, were almost considered celebrities, though Kael, in fact, resented the rigidity and structured thinking imposed academia; she thought they were missing the point (Haberski, 2001).

Nye wrote that during the mid-Sixties, elitists came to the realization none of their efforts to "control and direct popular taste" had been successful (Nye, 1970, p. 419). The elitists revolted with the *classical* film theory, which according to Perez (1998), is less of a theory about film than a theory about what is wrong with film (p. B6). The irony of the situation is the critics of the age, surrounded by sub-par product from Hollywood, embraced their passions for the obscure, mostly art films and films from other countries, and created for themselves cultural credibility (Denby, 1998, p. 100).

But after the publicized arguments of Kael and Sarris over *auteur* theory and the like, times changed. The late

1970s brought the beginning of the Hollywood publicity

machine - a way of making movies and promoting them that

sold the spectacle, the shell of a thing rather than the

substance, the content of the thing itself (Haberski,

2001). Today, there are countless articles from critics of

some stature, such as Sarris and Denby themselves, which

read like eulogies of a love just passed. All have the same

message - marketing killed the power and profession of the

critic. Denby (1998) noted that print journalism, in

particular, has been assimilated by the marketing

juggernaut, with "a good many editors, feature writers, and

hack critics… handing out rave quotes like free candy on

the streets" (p. 94). Denby (1998) remarked that a

generation had grown up with movies that do nothing more

than provide escapism and hollow thrills, and therefore

expects and wants nothing more from its movies (p. 98).

Denby (1998) concluded critics could no longer appeal to a

"commonly held set of values" because there was no commonly

held set of values (p. 98). It is of note that Denby's 1998

conclusion is the polar opposite of the one he championed

in his 1977 book *Awake in the Dark*.

The short version is that the writings of movie

reviewers no longer matter because the people who might

happen to read the reviews do not expect substance from the

review *or* the movie itself; It's as though the audience does not want insight, but merely a yardstick to measure their own opinions. Haberski (2001) summarized, with a tone of finality:

> We are thus left with a split audience watching a stale screen. One side of the audience speaks almost exclusively among itself in an intellectual dialect that seems deliberately obscure. The other side of the audience does not talk all that much, it only watches the screen and hopes to get its money's worth. Conversation across the center aisle has dwindled to nothing – and with it the ageless, popular debate over the cultural significance of the movies. (Haberski, 2001, p. 6)

If today's audience's no longer view film as an art form, but as escapist entertainment, then isn't it the job of the critic to win them back? During the glory days of Kael and Sarris, people read critics because they were engaging, entertaining, and more importantly because they provided *context* (Denby, 1977). Rather than unload upon their readers heaps of theoretical concepts, American critics historically have defended their right to discuss film by

whatever context necessary so as to share the truth of a movie with their readers (Denby, 1977).

The quickest way to grace film with artistic cultural validity would be to establish a formal set of theory by which the art form can be discussed and criticized. Throughout the history of the profession, American critics have largely resisted such a thing. In spite of this, the responsibility of establishing film as an art from lies in the hands and the history of the critics and reviewers themselves.

Social Role of Movies

Movies are a part of our culture, our heritage. Since the moment the motion pictures appeared, they have fascinated people. They are a social activity, a means of identity, an escape. Part of the reason movies are popular is that many individuals have developed emotional relationships with them. For instance, in Stempel's *American Audiences on Movies and Moviegoing* (2001), he quoted an interviewee as stating about *Star Wars*, "Thank God it was showing at the local theatre. Movies like this give people in towns like Loveland, Colorado, a reason to get out of bed in the morning" (Stempel, 2001, p. 115).

Young (2000) attributed an individual's emotional relationship with a film or film in general as helping give that individual "equipment for living". Young (2000) stated, "Film viewing plays an active role in the lives of at least some viewers" (p. 462). As a cultural study, Young's project sought to "understand the meaning of various human products in relationship to the larger social structures in which these creations are produced and consumed" (Young, 2000, p. 463). Young's focus was movies. He worked on the idea that moviegoers, at least symbolically, use content from movies to function in everyday life.

Austin (1986) wrote that people attend movies as a means of conforming to social expectations. In his study on motivations for attending movies, Austin, discussing his findings, discovered a "social-conformity dimension of movie-going" (p. 121), in that people attend other movies either to impress others or to imitate others. He stated, "Seeing a movie is almost incidental to the social integration provided" (p. 121). He meant that people base their decisions on whether or not to see movies on their peer group. In this way, movies mean more to the people who attend them than just entertainment. They are important to the individual's day-to-day functionality.

Jarvie (1986) reinforced some of Austin's statements in his book *Movies and Society.* In talking about film as a mass medium, Jarvie stated that urbanization has created huge groups of people with "no sense of community or shared experience and tradition" (p. 18). In lieu of this, Jarvie believed people find a commonality through media. He stated, "The mass media give 'culture' and vicarious 'experience' to the mass, and function as a form of social cement" (p. 19). He further stated, "To enter a cinema is both a social act constituting something (an audience, different on each occasion), and a private act in which one experiences the film in one's own way" (p. 19).

Why People Go to Movies

Then again, movies are not important to everyone. In fact, their place in society is just like anything else – it depends on whom you ask.

De Silva (1998), in her study "Consumer Selection of Motion Pictures", found four important reasons people give for going to the movies. According to De Silva, more than 43 percent of her sample indicated they attend movies for escapist purposes, which De Silva operationalized as to "relax, unwind or get away" (p. 155). The other three reasons, in descending order, were: "Technical," which

included screen size and sound quality, at 31 percent; "To see it now" at 10 percent; and "Theater atmosphere" at nine percent (p. 155).

Austin (1986) also defined four "statistically significant" reasons for movie attendance, which were: "Learning and Information"; "Forget and Get Away/Escape"; "Enjoyable and Pleasant Activity"; and "Learning About Self" (p. 121).

There is some overlap between De Silva and Austin's findings in that both of their sample populations cite escapism as a reason for movie going, but after that, their results differed. This can be attributed to differences in the methodology and approach of the studies themselves. While different, each study provides insight into moviegoer motivations with a statistical basis.

Jarvie (1986) took a less quantitative approach, writing that the impulses for going to see films are diverse, and include inspiration from word-of-mouth, to rest or find distraction, or even to find a dark place to "neck and pet" (p. 19-20). He further stated:

> No simplistic account of what cinema-going
> accounts to is possible. Audience moods and
> reactions, individual moods and reactions, are

just as involved as the individual act of cinema-

going. (p.19-20)

Influences on Movie Selection

We know people attend movies for a multitude of

reasons. Logic would suggest they choose what movies they

see for an equal multitude of reasons. However, there is

evidence to suggest that the way movies are promoted goes a

long way to influence what movies people view. Jarvie

(1986), again without any numbers supporting his ideas,

offered what he called his theory of film "image." He

stated that people are attracted to certain films because

of the films' marketed image, which consisted of many

things, including star power, subject matter, or uniqueness

(p. 189). He further suggested that the "image" was not

purposefully created, but emerged "from an interaction

between the publicity, the film itself, and the audience.

Hard-selling a mediocre film will not create an image;

stars are not enough, they must be somehow in a suitable

story and locale"(p. 189).

Jarvie explained that his "image" arose from a certain

process while a film is being made (Jarvie, 1986). He

stated that during a film's production, elements of it were

picked out for publicity and incorporated into a

promotional campaign (p. 198). The promotional campaign was then unleashed upon the public while the movie itself was shown to critics and test audiences (p. 189). Finally, Jarvie stated, "If the image is fulfilled by the film, publicity (including critics) and word-of-mouth combine to spread this image abroad" (p. 189).

Jarvie's thesis of image is echoed by Stempel (2001), who also marked the importance of word-of-mouth in an individual's selection of a particular film. Stempel believed word-of-mouth had influence on peoples' decisions, though not so simply as was generally thought, which is to say one person passing his or her opinion on to another. He stated that as a film closes in on its release date, all aspects of the film – "trailers, radio ads, critical comments, publicity, stars on talk shows, news stories, discussions on the Internet, as well as traditional word-of-mouth — build up an image of the film" (p. 192) He added that more than one image could emerge from this process, such as one for the public as a whole, and one for individual filmgoers, neither of which may be like the general image (p. 192). Stempel concluded, "Those images, rather than just the promotional efforts of the distributor, determine whether individuals and groups will see the film" (p. 192). Although Stempel does not credit

Jarvie in any way, Jarvie's influence is evident in Stempel's observations. However, neither Stempel nor Jarvie reinforced their arguments or theories with any kind of statistical data.

In three studies, Litman examined factors attributing to the success of motion pictures. In each study, Litman found a statistical significance between "production costs (which include marketing), reviews, the number of screens, the presence of superstars, the Oscar Best Picture award, the summer season, science fiction, and G-rated films" and total box office gross (Litman, 1998, p. 188).

Continuing the theme of the importance of word-of-mouth in viewer selection of film, Litman (1982) stated that advertising and publicity exist solely to entice "the avid moviegoer" (p. 167) into the theatre, but that after a movie has been widely released, word-of-mouth replaces advertising as the "prime motivational vehicle" (p. 167). As a result of this situation, Litman concluded that additional advertising is rendered ineffective (p. 167).

After establishing the importance of word-of-mouth, Litman made the link between it and movie reviewers. He built the case that there are two forms of publicity, critical reviews and movie awards, which are "not initially conducted by the distributor," but encourage movie

attendance (p.168). He stated, "Conventional wisdom would suggest that critical reviews are extremely important to the popularity of films, at least in the initial stages before word-of-mouth reaction can take over" (p. 168). He thought that good reviews stir the curiosity of the public, and as a result, individuals seek out opinion leaders (p. 168).

However, Litman's study is flawed slightly, and examining the whole of his findings can uncover these flaws. Critical reviews, while statistically significant in relation to box office success for the purposes of his study, were not directly the cause of box office success on their own, but seemed to work in conjunction with several other factors.

Influence of Critics

Today is not the time of the critic; the profession apparently no longer enjoys the power it once held. According to Sklar (1997), "…These are not the best of times for movie reviewers. Like major league umpires, the respect they receive as arbiters is in decline" (Sklar, 1997, p. B9). Sklar believed the peak years of power and prestige were the 1960s and 1970s, when the movie industry

was in financial chaos and suffering from a severe lack of confidence (Sklar, 1997).

It was a time when movie executives did not fully understand their audience, and looked to reviewers for direction (Sklar, 1997). During this time, critics championed new artists, such as Martin Scorsese and Robert Altman, and were able to focus their attention on fewer movies. According to Sklar (1997), 1975 saw the release of less than 100 motion pictures for the year – the lowest total on record.

However, that year also marked the emergence of what has become the standard way to market movies — cross promotion — which was a barrage of print, radio and television advertising combined with a "saturation" release, which was the release of the film on thousands of screens simultaneously. It was likely this marketing shift that led to the development of the multi-screen movie theatres.

The new emphasis, according to Sklar (1997), was also responsible for taking the critic out of the equation. He stated, "This blockbuster strategy diminished reviewer's power by relying on prerelease publicity and gimmicks such as t-shirts, caps, and fast-food coupons to generate spectator interest, no matter what reviewers might

eventually say about the screen experience" (Sklar, 1997,
p. B9).

Furthermore, Sklar (1997) believed reviewers only
enter the equation after viewers have already formed
opinions about a given movie due to the prevalence of
entertainment "news," and are further hampered because
studios, with millions riding on each film, control
reviewers' access to information about the movies. Sklar
(1997) added that revenue generated by a reviewer's
publication factored into the mix; reviewers are more
inclined to give positive reviews, further damaging
credibility in the eyes of the public. Sklar concluded that
due to these conditions, reviewers "retain their greatest
power as consumer guides for the vast majority of movies
that do not receive blockbuster promotional treatment" (p.
B9).

Critics' credibility is further hurt by incidents such
as Sony's use a fictional critic to promote its films and
it becoming front-page news. In the summer of 2001,
Newsweek broke the story that Sony Pictures had been using
quotes from an invented reviewer, David Manning, on its
movie publicity. Perhaps alarmingly, the Manning incident
is but a step past the normal modus operandi of most
studios. Most of the quotes spattered across newspaper

movie ads are attributed to individuals who work for
"broadcast outlets or specialty publications" (Reina, 1996,
p. 23). According to "Why Movie Blurbs Avoid Newspapers"
(Reina, 1996), the few words appearing on the ad are the
only words written by the individual about the movie. There
is no accompanying review or critique. One critic called
these people "blurbmeisters" (Reina, 1996, p. 23). The
article went on to describe critics as "unruly adjuncts to
the publicity department" (p. 23) in the eyes of the movie
studio.

Most blurbs in newspaper movie ads come from press
junkets hosted by the studios that produce the movies. In
exchange for the positive blurbs, critics are given bonuses
such as free trips, interviews with the directors and stars
as well as other perks (Reina, 1996). The critics
interviewed for Reina's story express disdain for this
system and remark that more commonly television and radio
personnel take advantage of the freebies while print media
pay their own way to the junkets (Reina, 1996).

With all the compromises to the credibility of the
print critic, and in light of the opinion that the critic
is just another cog in the marketing machine, do the
critics themselves actually feel as though they have any
influence at all on their audience? Furthering that

thought, the question must be asked as to whether or not newspapers and magazines even need critics. Markiewicz (2001), for one, commented on the topic of the film critics' relevance. He asked:

> What, after all, is the place of the serious reviewer in a world chock-full of self-anointed Internet and self-absorbed television movie critics, filmmakers more inclined to produce 'Dude, Where's My Car?' than 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,' and teenage moviegoers who do not read newspapers much less the reviews? (p. 62-63)

He added that consumers are bombarded with "lowbrow alternative voices," and choices, critics might not matter at all. He concluded, "Box office reports suggest they don't, at least when it comes to dissuading moviegoers from going to see blockbusters" (p. 62-63).

The author also observed that television, radio and Internet reviewers are having an effect on the influence of print critics (Markiewicz, 2001). The underlying premise of it all is everyone who goes to the movies has an opinion, and that a newspaper critic's is no better than anyone else's – perhaps better conveyed, but not "better." Markiewicz (2001) concluded, "Given the clutter of critical voices, it's

little wonder that moviegoers don't know whom to trust and whom to empower with influence" (p. 66).

However, Markiewicz (2001), building a case through interviews with movie critics, poses the thought that reviewers have more power to influence their audience when the film is smaller in scale, such as an independent or foreign film. The author quoted one critic who stated, "There's no question in my mind that movie critics have enormous clout, even newspaper critics" (p. 64). Another critic quoted in the article stated, "The larger films have a built-in audience. With a film released on 3,000 screens simultaneously, I don't think that any one critic can have an effect" (Markiewicz, 2001, p. 64). Markiewicz (2001), further stated that a critic's influence extended beyond selling the public on art house films or dissuading them from seeing a stinker; he believed critics promote discussion about movies, "putting a film into its historical, social and political contexts" (p. 64), which in turn, can help "enrich the art form, possibly causing better films to be made" (p. 64).

Jarvie (1986) wrote that critics have little to no influence. While discussing the merits of press screenings, Jarvie (1986) stated that the movie industry itself believed "critics have little or no effect on the box

office success of a film" (p. 193). He believed there are
too many critics writing for too many periodicals, and
people who are not movie specialists could not be expected
to be influenced by them (p. 193). He thought likely
candidates to be influenced by critics are those who have a
couple of favorites they read on a regular basis (p. 193).

However, Jarvie defended the importance of the
existence of critics, stating that if cinema is a "medium
of artistic expression, as well as a major social function,
criticism is of the greatest importance" (p. 193). He wrote
that criticism exists to explain why certain films are good
while others are bad, which provides education and
enlightenment (p. 193). Criticism is also important to
legitimizing cinema as a serious art form by helping the
public to develop "discrimination and standards" (p. 193).

What Do Critics Think is Their Role?

Jarvie (1986) delved into discussion of the role of
movie critics by discussing the purpose of evaluation
during the life of a film. He wrote that critical
evaluation served to provide "pointers and lessons to the
artists which they may care to apply in later work," (p.
180) but that it primarily existed for the "benefit of the
audience" (p. 180). He further stated that during the free

press-screening period of a motion picture's distribution,

some critics looked for selling points that could "be used

to fill uncritical magazines" (p. 181). Still, other

critics, according to Jarvie, are not interested in selling

points, but in "giving a critical account of the film, from

which their readers will be able to decide themselves

whether or not to see it" (p. 181).

So what is the role of the movie reviewer? Markiewicz

(2001), quoting *Tampa Tribune* movie critic Bob Ross, wrote,

"A newspaper critic is writing for people who haven't seen

the movie and haven't made up their mind. So I'm as much a

consumer reporting service as a critic" (p. 66). Others

balk at the thought of being a consumer advocate (p. 66).

Two-Step Flow Theory and Opinion Leadership

In Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) seminal work *Personal Influence*, an entire chapter is devoted to a group they

call "movie leaders." At the time the book was written, the

authors found movie leaders tended to be "the young, single

women with fewest family responsibilities" (p. 297); this

likely is not descriptive of movie leaders today as the

role of movies has changed slightly through the years. Katz

and Lazarsfeld then go on to state that the young in

general attended more movies than the old, and that more

frequent visitors to the cinema were more likely to be opinion leaders (p.298). However, they also noted that the act of movie going is a group activity, rather than an individual one, and that deciding which film to see is a group decision (p.301).

After a discussion of their rationale behind single women being movie leaders, the authors move on to a discussion of "the movie expert" (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, p. 306). They described movie experts as people who attend movies frequently and are younger in age, and primarily female (p. 307). Their discussion did not include movie reviewers.

However, the chapter did provide support for their two-step flow of communication theory, which was that information passes from the media to the opinion leaders, then from the opinion leaders to "less active sections of the population" (p. 309). They concluded, "opinion leaders in every realm tend to be more highly exposed to the mass media than are the non-leaders" (p. 309).

The question two-step flow theory raises in regard to the present study is, "Are movie critics opinion leaders?" Katz and Lazarsfeld described movie opinion leaders as people who read more about movies, attend more frequently, and are better educated than non-leaders (p. 315). Their

research would suggest critics are the media, and movie opinion leaders are something else. However, and this is not addressed by the authors, the nature of reviewing a film is more subjective than objective. When it comes down to it, critics and reviewers are sharing their opinions, and readers seek out those opinions. Would critics then be considered opinion leaders? It is a question worthy of a study in its own right.

The Difference Between and Critic and a Reviewer

Thus far, this study has used the terms critic and reviewer interchangeably. Granted, the differences are subtle enough to the outsider that the two would seem to be identical, but a careful examination produces an almost black-and-white distinction. More often than not, the personality behind an account of a movie in a newspaper is a reviewer, not a critic.

According to Brown (1978), "Typically a review is brief, reactive; a piece of criticism longer, reflective" (p. 32). He added:

> Typically a review describes or summarizes a work
> and praises or blames, so helping a diverse
> audience decide whether to encounter the work.
> Typically a piece of criticism analyzes and

> explicates a work for a specialized audience,
> many of whom may have encountered the work, and
> evaluates it, using critical theories and
> criteria that have evolved in the art form's
> tradition. (p. 32)

In addition to the depth of the analysis, there is also the matter of timeliness. According to Titchener (1998), criticism can appear days or weeks after the event, where a review must appear as soon as humanly possible after the event (p. 2-3). It is the difference between academia and mass media – a criticism is one, a review is the other. Likewise, the qualifications of the critic and reviewer differ. The critic typically is an expert in the field while a reviewer is a journalist with an *interest*, and sometimes background, in the field (Brown, 1978; Titchener, 1998).

However, in *Awake in the Dark*, Denby (1977) wrote that American film criticism could be described as "strikingly anti-theoretical, empirical, descriptive, pragmatic, local, and spontaneous" (pp. xvii-xviii). He stated that American critics are more concerned with conveying the superficial elements right, "the way a film looks or feels, the contours of a director's style, an actor's stance or gesture" (p. xvii-xviii), than with applying any sort of

critical, intellectual approach to the film. He concluded,

"We describe more, interpret less" (pp. xvii-xviii).

Denby's description of the domestic critic sounds

suspiciously like that of a reviewer. If Denby describes

himself as a critic, not reviewer, of film, his comments

seem to indicate that, at least in the United States, the

division between the two is tenuous at best, and certainly

not as clear-cut as Titchener or Brown believe. It could be

said that even amongt professionals, the distinction

between the critic and the reviewer is different from

critic to critic and reviewer to reviewer. It would appear,

also, that in spite of whichever title reviewers and

critics of the nation's newspapers and magazines, most of

them are, in reality, reviewers.

Aspects of Being a Reviewer - The Job

If the idea that content separates a critic from a

reviewer, an argument could be made that reviewers,

fulfilling the function of consumer advocate, have much

less leeway in how their reviews are constructed.

Obviously, both critics and reviewers *write* reviews. But an

academic critic can pull into his or her writing elements

of theory (even if Denby suggests they rarely do so) and

can discuss issues of social relevance or talk of how

movies are a mirror of the society that produces them. A reviewer, however, has a much more clearly delineated list of content items, or so it would seem.

In *Reviewing the Arts*, Titchener (1998) provides a down-and-dirty, five-part template for a reviewer to follow when writing about the arts. He says, "the five parts of the review are a strong opening, a strong closing, identification, summary, and opinion" (p.31). He then goes on to discuss each of the five parts in detail, constructing in effect a do-and-do not list for the fledgling reviewer. The strong opening and closing section emphasizes the need for the reviewer to grab a reader's attention while providing in brief a hint of the contents of the review. The identification section deals with the listing of individuals involved in the production, be it play, movie or art exhibit, and where a reader can find said play, movie or art exhibit. The summary segment deals with the differentiation between a summary and a synopsis, and explains why one is more appropriate than the other. Finally, the opinion section expresses the importance of not only taking a subjective stance, but in backing up criticisms with examples from the material being reviewed, even if only on a basic level. It is worth noting

Titchener's outline was for reviewing *any* artform, not one specifically.

In chapter four of his book, Titchener applies his framework to film reviews. He makes it a point to address the kinds of required information, such as the stars and title of the movie, and then moves on to providing suggestions as to how to critique the film (p. 45). The author tackles everything from assessing the quality of direction to determining whether or not the characters are written credibly (pp. 45-53). A few more pages detail intangibles a reviewer might encounter, but other than that, the chapter of the book could be described as a review-by-numbers guide. Wolseley (1959) conceded that reviewing could be reduced to a formula, but expressed the opinion anything based on a formula was to be avoided if at all possible.

Titchener manages through his writing to suggest a laundry list of expectations readers of reviews have come to expect over the years. Readers of reviews expect to get a healthy does of opinion, a synopsis, and an enjoyable reading experience. Reader expectations for content do not directly lead to expectations for influence.

Previous Related Study

In 1978, *Journalism Quarterly* published the study "Reviewers on Reviewing." The study sought to discover who reviewers were, what they thought their job was as a reviewer, and how they got the job in the first place. The study sampled editors and reviewers of newspapers from "75 cities with daily newspapers and population under 100,000 and of 60 cities with daily newspapers and population 100,000 and over" (Brown, 1978, p. 34). Of those, 108 newspapers responded.

From the responses, Brown developed a profile of the "average" reviewer:

> The typical reviewer is a 40-year-old male
> college graduate who has worked 15 years as a
> journalist and 10 as a reviewer and is likely
> to have worked as a performer or creator in at
> least one of the art forms he reviews." (Brown,
> 1978, p. 35)

However, Brown also concluded that there is no such person as an "average" reviewer, and that the profile was simply the statistical mean from the results of the survey. Brown also found most reviewers review more than one art form, with 40 percent of respondents reviewing three or more

(Brown, 1978, 35). He concluded, "reviewers are journalists first, reviewers second, that their view of the reviewing function is more practical than aesthetic…" (Brown, 1978, p. 34). To that end, Brown found reviewers believed it important to entertain their audience while helping them to decide whether or not to encounter the art form under discussion (Brown, 1978).

"Reviewers on Reviewing" examined the scope of reviewing art forms, in newspapers as a whole, but did not focus on any specific art form. The study, as reported in the journal, provided no insight into the movie reviewer profession, nor did it examine any reviewer's opinions as to the influence of their writing. The review of literature, however, assumes a certain amount of influence on the reading public by the reviewer. For instance, when discussing the difference between the critic and the reviewer, Brown wrote while a critic may help bolster an artist's reputation and respectability, the reviewer, as a result of the reach and currency of the review itself, may help make an artist rich (Brown, 1978, p. 33). Again, Brown's analysis is of reviewers as a whole. Brown discusses movie reviewers only when addressing the issue as to whether or not a reviewer should have experience in the field in which he or she review. For instance, Brown (1978)

reported Roger Ebert as stating practical experience helps provide insight into the "methods of filmmakers" (p. 38).

"Reviewers on Reviewing" provides inspiration and foundation for the current study – where it explored the attitudes and demographics of newspaper reviewers from all different art forms, this study narrows the focus to movie reviewers, takes into consideration a current prevailing attitude that the influence of the reviewer is diminishing, and seeks to provide an understanding of the reviewer under those conditions.

Summary of the Literature

The review of the literature opened with a brief history of the profession of the movie critic. Emerging from the realm of arts criticism, movie reviewers began appearing shortly after the beginning of the last century. In the beginning, the profession basically argued over whether movies, as a mass medium, are to be classified as "art." Various theories on the nature of film followed as the field and medium gradually gained respect. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, while cinema was at a low point content wise, the critical profession was at the height of its influence. The late 1970s brought the emergence of the

Hollywood blockbuster and accompanying marketing machine, and the gradual decline of the reviewing empire.

To understand the interest in movie reviewers, it is important to understand the importance of film to society. Research concludes that movies provide context for people in everyday life as well as making individuals feel connected to the larger mass of society (Young, 2000; Austin, 1986). As for why people go to movies in the first place, the reasons are multitude - some go to escape, others to be entertained, and still others so they can feel a sense of community with the other people in the audience (Young, 2000; Austin, 1986).

But what influences people on what movies to see? Again, there are many factors. People are influenced by advertising and word-of-mouth. They are influenced by subject matter and star power. Sometimes, individuals might even be influenced by movie critics and reviewers (Litman, 1982).

Historically, movie critics and reviewers knew what their role was, and worked on the assumption that their writing was for a purpose, be it furthering the understanding of film as an art form or helping people to decide whether or not to take in a given film. If readers are no longer seeking to understand film or looking for

guidance, then perhaps the role of the movie critic/reviewer needs to change.

It is also apparent from the literature the population writing reviews is a mixed bag of academics and self-professed movie experts who do not understand the difference between being a critic and being a reviewer. Generally, they all understand the basic requirements of the review, which the literature defines as a good opening, a good closing, identification of the artists - directors and stars - involved, a brief synopsis and a bit of an opinion as to the quality of the film. The difference between the review written by the critic and the review written by the reviewer comes in the opinion section and the depth of analysis applied.

Finally, it would appear that prior to this study, only one other has attempted to take a look at the profession from the point of view of the critics and reviewers. That study provided a general overview of the profession as related to all critics and reviewers of all the arts - music, dance, theatre, film, writing and all other performance arts (Brown, 1978). The study, "Reviewers on Reviewing" provides a point of departure for this study.

Why do this study?

After reviewing the literature, it is clear the professional movie critic/reviewer is not a dying breed – people expect to be able to read movie reviews in their favorite newspapers and magazines. However, it also appears that with very few exceptions, Roger Ebert being one of them, movie critics have little influence on their reading public's decision making when it comes to choosing movies. In essence, they have job security, but no real power. Or so it would seem.

The influence issue is compounded by the fact the individuals who make up the population of critics and reviewers often do not know which category they fall into. It brings up questions about the responsibilities they feel they have to the reading public. Would a critic be concerned with writing an entertaining review? Would a reviewer want to communicate the social and historical relevance of a particular film? These are questions that need to be answered.

In the face of irrelevancy, what do reviewers view as their role? What is the most important thing they can give to the people who do read them, and how much influence do they *think* they have? These are questions that need to be

answered, even if the answers point to still more

questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III discusses the methodology used to examine the research objectives described in Chapters I and II. The chapter introduces the factors contributing to the utilization of a survey to measure reviewers' attitudes, and details the construction and justification of the methodology.

Methodology Overview

Due to considerations of cost, time and the evasive nature of the movie critic, and the fact that the study is in every aspect an exploratory work, a descriptive survey fit the research objectives of the study. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), descriptive surveys are meant "to picture or document current conditions or attitudes — that is to describe what exists at the moment" (p. 161), which is in line with the purpose of the study. Furthermore, since the population can be described as

busy and geographically disconnected, a self-administered Internet survey presented the most accomplishable option.

Administering the survey via the Internet presents another set of advantages and disadvantages. Like questionnaires mailed to sample members, the Internet survey is self-administered, meaning it also includes many of the same advantages and disadvantages. The largest disadvantage to a self-administered questionnaire is the potential for a lower response rate (Shoemaker & McCombs, 1989), which often requires follow-ups, thereby partially offsetting the advantage of lower cost and condensed study time.

Since the late 1990s, the popularity of acquiring questionnaire data via the Internet has increased in popularity primarily because of ease (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). On top of the normal advantages of a self-administered questionnaire, Internet surveys carry additional pros and cons. The largest advantage is that of cost in terms of time and money. Internet-based surveys can be created and disseminated quickly, they do not require the extensive travel on the part of the researcher, and the data can be collected rapidly (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

However, in spite of the attractive advantages, there are downfalls to Internet surveys. Uncertainty as to who is

actually filling out the questionnaire is the most significant (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). The second disadvantage is web-based surveys can only be taken by those with Internet access (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). It is the assumption of this study movie critics and reviewers by nature of their profession all have access to the Internet.

Research Question One

Do movie critics and reviewers feel as though they have influence on consumer selection of motion pictures?

Research Question Two

What are movie critics and reviewers attitudes toward the responsibilities of their job?

The Survey

As the emphasis of the study is to provide insight into the prevalent attitudes reviewers and critics have toward their job, a data collection instrument that would gather interval level data was the most appropriate. The purpose of the study is to quantify the subjective opinions of reviewers into an objective format so that statistical analysis can be performed. A sample survey presented the most viable option for collecting the data. A printout of the actual survey instrument can be viewed in Appendix A.

Furthermore, the survey was designed to reach reviewers at the office and provide a snapshot of their attitudes. Shoemaker and McCombs (1989) describe this as a "cross-sectional" survey (p. 153), which is created with the intention of uncovering characteristics of the sample.

Various sources provided inspiration for the questions and statements, including the literature, previous relevant research, and discussions with the critics themselves.

Survey Statements and Questions

Shoemaker and McCombs' (1989) recommendations contributed to the nature and style of the survey questions. Questions were written concisely and clearly with appropriate language and a determined effort to avoid any type of bias or predisposition.

The survey was divided into three parts: statements about the nature of the job of the reviewer, questions asking reviewers about their roles as opinion leaders, and demographic questions.

Questions 1 through 17 dealt with ethics, objectivity, influence and the different opinions as to the function of a movie review. Three approaches to reviews were identified. The first was an emphasis on entertainment, the second on consumer advocacy, and the third on education.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each approach individually, and then to rate each against the others. For example, question 10 asked respondents to weigh the importance of education as a function of reviews against the importance of consumer advocacy. Respondents were asked to choose from seven levels of agreement or disagreement in relation to the statements.

Questions 18 through 24 addressed reviewers' role as opinion leaders. Seven statements addressed the extent to which reviewers felt like they discuss movies in a social setting as well as how often they are approached for information about films. Respondents were given five levels of positive to negative answers.

The statements were an adapted version of the opinion leadership scale developed by King and Summers (1970), which was, in turn, adopted from Rogers (p. 45-46). The scale has been tested repeated throughout the years, and refinements and revisions have been made to increase the internal validity of the scale (Childers, 1986; Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastman, 1994).

Questions 25 through 31 asked respondents for demographic information, such as:

- Gender

- Age

- The type of publication for which they work

- How long they had been a reviewer/critic

- Field of college major

- Level of education

Finally, question 32 asked respondents whether they viewed themselves as critics or reviewers. The literature made clear there was a distinction between the two that the general populace, and even the critics and reviewers themselves, was not aware.

Sampling

The overall population under consideration of the study consists of all the movie reviewers and critics for all the newspapers and magazines in the United States. Although there are various critics' organizations throughout the country, there is no comprehensive list of film reviewers – thus, the overall quantity of movie critics and reviewers writing for print publications cannot be known, or at least not without substantial temporal and monetary cost. Given these conditions, it is impossible to construct a completely randomized probability sample, and ultimately means the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire population of movie critics and reviewers. Therefore, the sample used for the study is a

non-probability sample gathered using a variety of methods, including convenience sampling, plausibility sampling and snowballing. Convenience sampling makes use of "readily accessible subjects" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000, p. 83). Plausibility sampling implies a sample is selected because the members *could* be representative of the larger population (Bradley, 1999). Snowballing is when contacts within a sample "provide other respondent names" (Bradley, 1999, p. 388). Nonetheless, the sample was expected to be relatively representative, and certainly appropriate for non-parametric analysis.

For the purposes of the study, the sample was constructed via a number of methods. The bulk of the respondents were selected from the websites of newspapers, daily and weekly, and magazines. First, a list of the 50 largest American cities in terms of population was acquired from the U.S. Census Bureau. Through the Internet and various media directories, a list of publications in these markets was assembled. When a corresponding publication had a website, the researcher browsed through the staff directory to find the names and e-mail addresses of staff movie critics and reviewers, as well as those reporters who write reviews. When e-mail addresses were not available on or through the website, phone calls were placed to the

publications to request the information. When no e-mail addresses were available, the mailing address of the publication itself was acquired. All sample members were contacted via e-mail or postcard, asked to participate in the survey, and given the URL to the survey website.

Instrumentation

The survey consisted of three parts: An introductory solicitation e-mail and/or postcard inviting members of the sample to participate in the study, the web-page survey, and a follow-up reminder e-mail message.

The introductory solicitation e-mail and postcard, both which featured the same text, appealed to the professional interests – pride, curiosity and desire to be a part of a larger whole – of the sample population members. The message was written in a "business causal" tone – the language was respectful of reviewers' experience in the field, yet from the point-of-view of someone in the field. The contents described the purpose of the study, asked for reviewers' assistance in exploring the topic, provided the Internet address of the survey, and gave a deadline for taking the survey. A copy of the e-mail message and postcard can be found in Appendix B and C, respectively.

E-mail messages and postcards were initially sent on February 15, 2002. All sample members were sent either a message or postcard by February 22, 2002.

The Internet-based questionnaire consisted of an introduction and the body of statements and questions. The Journalism department of Oklahoma State University hosted the questionnaire's web page, which was found at: http://advertising.okstate.edu/movies/. The introduction also informed respondents they could enter their e-mail address at the bottom of the electronic form, enabling them to receive an executive summary of the results of the study in an electronic format. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

A reminder message was sent to the sample March 18 asking respondents to visit the website and take the survey by March 22. No responses were accepted after March 22. A copy of the reminder message can be found in Appendix D.

Addressing Response Rate

As with mail surveys, Internet surveys have notoriously low response rates (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Comstock & McCombs (1989) suggest a number of tactics for increasing response rates for mail surveys, such as follow-up mailings and the salience of the subject matter of the

questionnaire in relation to the sample. The authors also state that altruistic appeals, institutional sponsors and the education level of the sample have a positive effect on the response rate. Comstock and McCombs (1981) found four means of reducing lack of response: facilitation, encouragement, strategic search and reopportunity.

Facilitation infers the ease in which respondents can participate, with brevity and convenience paramount (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). To this end, the survey required no paper or postage; all respondents were asked to do was visit the survey's web address, which could be accomplished by clicking on the link included in the initial e-mail message. The initial e-mail message also assured respondents the sample would take little of their time. The statements and questions on the survey itself were written clearly and concisely.

The language of the e-mail message and postcard provided encouragement, which Comstock and McCombs (1981) describe as something between "supplication and persuasion" (p. 153). The message first made an emotional appeal to reviewers' professional pride, and then explained how their participation in the study would help provide insight into the profession. By stressing that the study was being conducted with the support of Oklahoma State University

also provided encouragement through legitimacy, which added an important element of credibility needed to encourage sample members.

Comstock and McCombs (1981) describe strategic search as an attempt to reach sample members when they are available to take the survey. For the purposes of this study, all attempts were made to send the e-mail messages and postcards to the sample members' place of employment. By virtue of the format of the Internet survey, respondents could then take the survey at their convenience with the stipulation that the survey be taken by the date given in the message.

The initial deadline for sample members to take the test was March 11, 2002. Once this date was past, an additional message was sent out to offering sample members another opportunity to take the survey. Comstock and McCombs (1981) call the technique "reopportunity" (p. 154). Due to time constraints, only one reopportunity was offered to sample members.

As an additional incentive, the introduction of the survey itself offered an executive summary of the study's results to be provided to those taking the survey. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), nonmonetary incentives are helpful in increasing response rates.

Analysis

Data collected from the survey instrument was transferred from the web form to an Excel spreadsheet, and then into SPSS statistical software. A correlation analysis was conducted on the first 17 statements and the demographic information. Responses from the opinion leadership scale were summed and compiled as an opinion leadership rating, which was then correlated with the first section of the survey instrument. Finally, a cluster analysis was conducted upon the first segment of the survey with the intent of developing typologies based on how respondents answered the statements.

Limitations and Assumptions

The major obstacle in conducting this study was compiling a sample. With no ready-made rolls of movie reviewers, much time was spent making phone calls and searching for and visiting Internet sites. Though a systematic approach was applied to the process, the method was one of convenience and not thoroughness.

Another possible limitation is the timing of the study itself. Many of the members of the population are members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and

could have been busy with the voting process for the 2001 Academy Awards.

Respondents had no opportunity to provide more in-depth information concerning their attitudes toward the profession, as there were no open-ended questions. However, the top of the web site featured a link where respondents could contact the researcher; many took advantage of the link. The content of those messages will be discussed in Chapter IV.

By nature of the study, a non-probability sample was used, and therefore the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of print movie reviewers and critics. However, as the study is exploratory in nature, generalizing the results was never the intent. Instead, the study hopes to uncover trends and possible insights that lend to future research.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The present chapter includes the data collected by the web-based survey instrument. The survey was conducted to measure reviewers' attitudes toward the role and responsibilities as reviewers. Demographic information was collected to provide a profile of the "average" sample member. Correlation analysis and cluster analysis were conducted to assess relationships and develop a typology of reviewers based on their conception of their role.

Discussion of the findings and a summary of the conclusions are presented in Chapter V. A printout of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Description of Respondent Movie Critics and Reviewers

The last eight questions on the questionnaire were demographic in nature, and collected information on gender, age, respondents' publication type, how long respondents had worked in the field, the type of degree held, and

highest level of education. These variables are nominal in nature, except in the case of age.

Gender of Respondents

The total group was composed of 76 respondents, 76.32% of whom were men (N = 58) and 23.68% were women (N = 18) (Table I).

TABLE I

RESPONDENTS' GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Male	58	76.32
Female	18	23.68
Total	76	100.0

Age of Respondents

Of the 76 respondents, 75 answered this question. Respondents were asked to enter their age in an open field in the questionnaire. The mean age was 40.59 (ages ranged from 17 to 71) with a standard deviation of 10.15 and a median of 40.0 (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

RESPONDENTS' AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Distribution of Respondents
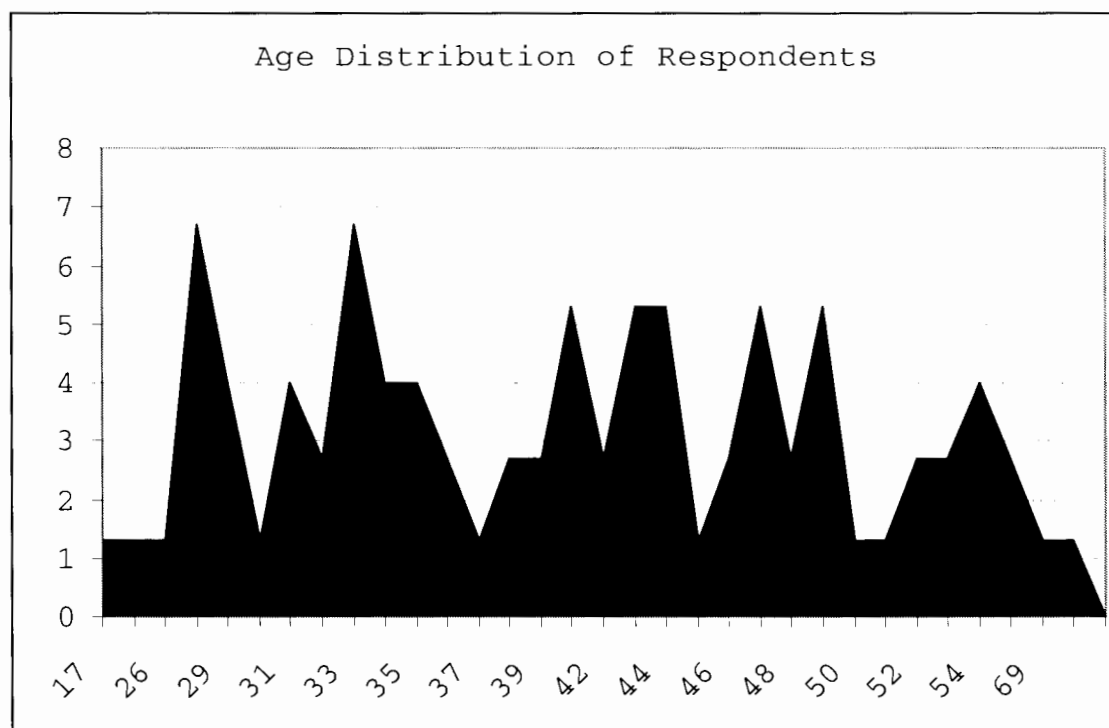
(Mean = 40.59, SD = 10.15, Median = 40.00)

Respondents' Publication Type

Subjects indicated the type of publication or other mass medium in which their reviews were carried. Of the 76 subjects responding, the largest percentage (53.9%, N = 41) wrote for daily newspapers, while 39.5% (N = 30) wrote for weekly or bi-weekly newspapers, 1.3% (N = 1) wrote for a monthly magazine, and 1.3% (N = 1) wrote for a less frequently published magazine. Additionally, 1.3% (N = 1) wrote for a web site and 3.9% (N = 3) reviewed films for a radio or television station. It should be noted that the

sample was collected only from reviewers working in print (Table II).

TABLE II

RESPONDENTS' PUBLICATION TYPE

Publication Type	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Daily Newspaper	41	53.9
Weekly or Bi-Weekly Newspaper	30	39.5
Monthly Magazine	1	1.3
Less Frequent Magazine	1	1.3
Web Site	1	1.3
Radio or Television Station	3	3.9
Total	76	100.0

Length of Career

Of the 76 respondents answering this question, 3.9% reported working in the profession for one year or less (N = 3), 31.6% two to five years (N = 24), 26.3% five to ten years (N = 20), 27.6% ten to twenty years (N = 21), and 10.5% reported working more than twenty years (N = 8) (Table III).

TABLE III

RESPONDENTS' LENGTH OF CAREER AS REVIWER/CRITIC

LENGTH (years)	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
One year or less	3	3.9
Two to five years	24	31.6
Five to ten years	20	26.3
Ten to twenty years	21	27.6
More than twenty	8	10.5
Total	76	100.0

Respondents' Degree Field

Of the 76 respondents to the survey, 75 answered this question. Of those responding, 5.3% reported having a degree in fine arts or art (N = 4), 30.7% reported having a degree in journalism (N = 23), 13.3% reported having a degree in film (N = 10), 1.3% reported having a degree in drama, 44.0% reported having a degree in some other field (N = 33), and 5.3% reported that they had no degree (N = 4) (Table IV).

TABLE IV

RESPONDENTS' DEGREE FIELD

Degree Field	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Fine Arts or Art	4	5.3
Journalism	23	30.7
Film	10	13.3
Drama	1	1.3
Other	33	44.0
None	4	5.3
Total	75	100.0

Respondents' Education Level

This question was the most infrequently answered question on the survey with responses from 71 of the 76 survey respondents. Of the 71, 8.5% reported having some college (N = 6), 56.3% reported having a college degree (N = 40), 14.1% reported having completed some graduate school (N = 10), and 21.1% reported having completed a graduate degree (N = 15) (Table V).

TABLE V

RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL

Ed. Level	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
High school or less	0	0
Some college	6	8.5
College degree	40	56.3
Some graduate school	10	14.1
Graduate degree	15	21.1
Total	71	100.0

Critic or Reviewer

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were a critic or a reviewer. In Chapter II, critics were described as reviewing films from a theoretical standpoint, whereas reviewers attempt to help individuals decide whether or not to see a particular film. Of the 75 respondents who answered the question, 40% saw their job as being a reviewer (N = 30), while 60% viewed themselves as critics (N = 45)(Table VI).

TABLE VI

CRITIC OR REVIEWER

Classification	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Reviewer	30	40.0
Critic	45	60.0
Total	75	100.0

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was performed on the first seventeen statements of the survey, which were intended to assess reviewer opinions of their role, as well as the demographic information. A table of the statements is provided (Table VI), and a correlation matrix can be found in Appendix E.

Guilford (1956), in an effort to have consistency of terminology, developed a rough guide for assigning verbal descriptions to correlations. He developed the following scale, which will be used in this study for discussing the relationships suggested by the coefficients:

       < .20 slight; almost negligible relationship
    .20 - .40 low correlation; definite but small
             relationship
    .40 - .70 moderate correlation; substantial
             relationship
    .70 - .90 high correlation; marked relationship

>	.90 very high correlation; very dependable
	relationship

(p. 145)

TABLE VII

SURVEY INSTRUMENT STATEMENTS 1-17

Statement 1	"I consider myself to be an objective journalist."
Statement 2	"I have an influence over whether or not individuals view certain films."
Statement 3	"As a reviewer, I believe it is unethical to attend expense-paid press junkets."
Statement 4	"My job is to aid people in selecting movies I believe are worth watching."
Statement 5	"Educating my readers about films is more important than helping them decide if a film is worth attending."
Statement 6	"Attending free press screenings is ethical for a reviewer."
Statement 7	"My primary role as a reviewer is to educate the movie-going public about film as an art form."
Statement 8	"I have less influence over a reader's film choices when it comes to large-budget films than small-budget independent films."
Statement 9	"My primary role as a reviewer is to keep my audience entertained."
Statement 10	"Helping people spend their movie time and money wisely is more important than educating them about film."
Statement 11	"My job as a reviewer is to help people better understand movies."

TABLE VII (Continued)

SURVEY INSTRUMENT STATEMENTS 1-17

Statement 12   "As a reviewer, it is unethical for me
                      to accept promotional gifts from
                      studios."

Statement 13   "My primary role is to write
                      entertaining reviews to attract an
                      audience to my column, rather than to
                      help readers select films that are
                      worth their time and money."

Statement 14   "Educating my readers about film is
                      more important than being
                      entertaining."

Statement 15   "Helping people understand film better
                      is not my primary role as a reviewer."

Statement 16   "It is not my job to tell people
                      whether or not a movie is worth
                      seeing."

Statement 17   "The job of being a reviewer precludes
                      complete objectivity."

Statements of Objectivity

Statements 1 and 17 asked respondents to gauge their

attitude toward the importance of objectivity as a reviewer

or critic. Statement 1 asked respondents to consider

whether or not they were objective journalists. Statement

17 prompted respondents to agree or disagree with the idea

that in being a reviewer, one cannot be objective. It was

expected there would be a negative correlation between the

two statements, and in fact a substantial negative relationship was observed between statements 1 and 17 (r = -.549, P < .000).

Statement 1 had significant relationships with other statements, though all were small. Statement 1 was observed to have significant relationships with statements 7 (r = -.285, P < .013), 10 (r = .332, P < .003), 15 (r = .299, P < .009), as well as with respondents' Degree Field (r = .323, P < .005).

Statement 17 also exhibited significant relationships with other statements, though these too were small. Statement 17 exhibited a relationship to statements 3 (r = .337, P < .003), 7 (r = .274, P < .016), 11 (r = .283, P < .013) and 13 (r = .235, P < .041). Statement 17 was also observed to have small relationships with respondents' Publication Type (r = .228, P < .047) and whether or not respondents viewed themselves as Reviewers or Critics (r = -.353, P < .002).

Statements of Influence

Statements 2 and 8 asked respondents to gauge the amount of influence they believe they have. Statement 2 pertained to the general question of influence, while statement 8 asked respondents to consider their influence,

with the assumption that they do possess influence, in regard to large and small budget films. The two questions were related by topic, but explored different aspects of the topic, and were expected to have some relationship. The correlation analysis found no significant relationship between the two questions.

Furthermore, statement 2 was not observed to have a substantial relationship with any of the other survey statements, though it did exhibit small positive and negative relationships with statements 4 ($r = .255$, $P < .026$), 9 ($r = -.233$, $P < .043$), 10 ($r = -.230$, $P < .046$) and 11 ($r = .241$, $P < .036$).

A significant substantial relationship was observed between statements 8 and the demographic information provided by respondents as to the type of publication at which they work ($r = .415$, $P < .000$). Statement 8 was also observed to have small positive and negative relationships with statement 4 ($r = .227$, $P < .049$), Gender ($r = .377$, $P < .001$), Age ($r = -.272$, $P < .018$), and Length of Career ($r = -.254$, $P < .027$).

Statements of Ethics

Statements 3, 6 and 12 sought to gauge respondents' attitude toward ethical considerations on the part of a

reviewer or critic. Statement 3 explored whether or not attending press junkets was unethical. Statement 6 dealt with the ethics of attending free press screenings. Statement 12 explored whether or not it was unethical to accept promotional gifts.

It was expected that, due to the similar nature of press junkets and promotional gifts, statements 3 and 12 would exhibit a substantial relationship, and a substantial positive relationship was observed ($r = .481$, $P < .000$).

Statement 3 was also observed to have small, but significant relationships with statement 17 ($r = .337$, $P < .003$), respondents' publication type ($r = .312$, $P < .006$), and whether or not respondents viewed themselves as reviewers or critics ($r = -.248$, $P < .032$).

Statement 12 was observed to have small, significant relationships with respondents' publication type ($r = .242$, $P < .035$).

Statement 6 was not found to be substantially, or even significantly related to statements 3 and 12. Furthermore, statement 6 was only observed to have a small negative relationship with statement 16 ($r = -.257$, $P < .025$), which dealt with the consumer advocacy function of the reviewer, and a small positive relationship with respondents' education level ($r = .235$, $P < .049$).

Statements of Consumer Advocacy

Statements 4 and 16 sought to gauge respondents' attitude toward the consumer advocacy function of their job. Statement 4 asked respondents whether or not helping readers select movies to view was the most important aspect of their job. Statement 16 is a reverse of statement 4. A negative substantial relationship was expected between the two statements. A negative relationship was found between statements 4 and 16 ($r = -.394$, $P < .000$), but it was smaller than anticipated. It can be explained by the slight terminology difference between the two statements; where statement 4 asks if helping people select films to watch is the most important aspect of being a reviewer/critic, statement 16 asks respondents to discern whether or not helping people select films for viewing is even part of the job.

Statement 4 was also observed to have a substantial relationship with Gender ($r = .404$, $P < .000$). A Chi Square computation conducted on a cross tabulation between men and women respondents indicates a significant difference in the way the two genders answered statement 4 ($X^2 = 19.374$, $P < .004$). Women were more likely to disagree with statement 4, where as men were more likely to agree. Additionally,

statement 4 was observed to have smaller relationships with statements 2 ($r = .255$, $P < .026$), 8 ($r = .227$, $P < .049$), and 10 ($r = .261$, $P < .023$).

Statement 16 was observed to have smaller significant relationships with statements 5 ($r = .394$, $P < .000$), 6 ($r = -.257$, $P < .025$), 7 ($r = .252$, $P < .028$), 10 ($r = -.352$, $P < .002$), 11 ($r = .267$, $P < .020$), and 13 ($r = .262$, $P < .022$).

Statements of Education

Statements 7, 11 and 15 sought to gauge respondents' attitude toward the educational function of their job. Statement 7 prompted respondents to assess whether education was the most important aspect of being a reviewer or critic. Statement 11, similar to statement 7, was concerned respondents' attitude toward helping people understand film, which is a function of education. Statement 15 was a reverse statement where respondents agreed to disagree with helping people understand movies not being the primary responsibility of a reviewer or critic.

It was expected the relationships between the three questions would be substantial, and the findings upheld expectations. A substantial positive relationship was found

between statements 7 and 11 (r = .565, P < .000).

Substantial negative relationships were observed between

statements 7 and 15 (r = -.680, P < .000), and 11 and 15 (r

= -.687, P < .000).

Statement 7 was also observed to have smaller

relationships with statements 1 (r = -2.85, P < .013), 13

(r = .252, P < .028), 16 (r = .252, P < .028), 17 (r =

.274, P < .016), as well as with Age (r = .231, P < .046)

and whether or not respondents viewed themselves as

reviewers or critics (r = -.328, P < .004). Relationships

were also observed between statement 7 and statements 10,

13 and 14, but those are discussed in a later section.

Statement 11 was observed to have smaller

relationships with statements 1 (r = -.350, P < .002), 2 (r

= .241, P < .036), 16 (r = .267, P < .020), and 17 (r =

.283, P < .013). The findings also revealed relationships

between statement 11 and statements 5, 10 and 14, but those

will be discussed in the section on "Statements of

Comparison."

Statement 15 was observed to have a smaller

relationship with statement 1 (r = .299, P < .009), and

whether respondents viewed themselves as reviewers or

critics (r = .266, P < .021). The statement was also

observed to have significant relationships with statements

5, 10 and 14, but those relationships will be addressed in the section "Statements of Comparison."

Statements of Entertainment

Statement 9 sought to gauge respondents' attitude toward the importance of being entertaining as a reviewer or critic. The statement asked respondents whether being entertaining was the most important responsibility of the reviewer or critic.

Statement 9 was observed to have a small, but significant negative relationship with statement 2 ($r = -.233$, $P < .043$). The statement was also observed to have significant correlations with statements 13 and 14, but those will be discussed in the next section.

Statements of Comparison

To accomplish one of the research objectives of the study, which was to construct a typology of movie reviewers and critics based on their attitudes toward different aspects of their jobs, it was necessary for the survey to feature statements of comparison. Statement 5 prompted respondents to rate whether education was more important than helping people decide what films to watch. Statement 10 reversed the situation in statement 5, proposing that assisting consumer selection being more important than

educating consumers about films. Statement 13 stated that entertainment was more important in a review than helping people choose a film. Statement 14 stated that the educational mission of the reviewer was more important than being entertaining.

It was expected statements 5, 10 and 13 would all exhibit a significant relationship level by nature of shared content (consumer advocacy). Statements 5 and 10 exhibited a substantial positive relationship ($r = -.563$, P $< .000$). A smaller, positive relationship was observed between statements 5 and 13 ($r = .276$, P $< .016$). However, there was no significant relationship observed between statements 10 and 13. It was also expected the three statements would exhibit a significant relationship with statements 4 and 16, again due to shared subject matter. Statement 5 was observed to have no significant relationship with statement 4, but a smaller, negative relationship was observed between statements 5 and 16 ($r = -.394$, P $< .000$). Statement 10 was observed to have a small positive relationship with statement 4 ($r = .261$, P $< .046$), and small negative relationship with statement 16 ($r = -.352$, P $< .002$). Statement 13 exhibited a smaller significant relationship with statement 16 ($r = .262$, P $< .022$), but no significant relationship with statement 4.

Significant relationships were expected between statements 5, 10 and 14 as all dealt with the educational element of the job. The relationship between statements 5 and 10 has already been addressed. A substantial positive relationship was observed between statements 5 and 14 ($r = .409$, $P < .000$), and a small, negative relationship was observed between statements 10 and 14 ($r = -.230$, $P < .047$). It was also expected the three statements would exhibit significant relationships with statements 7, 11 and 15 because of subject matter. A marked relationship was observed between statements 5 and 7 ($r = .708$, $P < .000$). A substantial positive relationship was observed between statements 5 and 11 ($r = .464$, $P < .000$), while a substantial negative relationship was observed between statements 5 and 15 ($r = -.521$, $P < .000$). Statement 10 was observed to have substantial negative relationships with statements 7 ($r = -.548$, $P < .000$) and 11 ($r = .441$, $P < .000$), and a substantial positive relationship with statement 15 ($r = .550$, $P < .000$). Statement 14 was observed to have a substantial negative relationship with statement 15 ($r = -.416$, $P < .000$), but smaller positive relationships with statements 7 ($r = .349$, $P < .002$) and 11 ($r = .375$, $P < .001$).

Finally, statements 13 and 14 were expected to exhibit a substantial relationship because each dealt with the entertainment aspect of the job of a reviewer or critic. A small, negative relationship was observed between the two statements ($r = -.274$, $P < .017$). The two statements were also expected to exhibit significant relationships with statement 9. As expected, a substantial positive relationship was observed between statements 13 and 9 ($r = .610$, $P < .000$), and a substantial negative relationship was observed between statements 14 and 9 ($r = -.511$, $P < .000$)

Opinion Leader Analysis

The answers to the opinion leader section of the survey instrument were totaled combined into one statistical measure, or the opinion leader rating. Scores could range from 7 to 35. The lower the scores, the greater the extent to which the respondents viewed themselves as opinion leaders. The mean for the group was 13.173 with a standard deviation of 2.4014. The lowest score was 10, the highest 22. The low mean score indicated that as a whole, the respondents viewed themselves as opinion leaders.

A correlation analysis was conducted on the opinion leader rating and the first 17 statements of the survey

instrument. It was expected the rating would show relationships with the questions pertaining to influence, but no such significant relationships were found.

Typology of Movie Reviewers and Critics

One of the objectives of the study was to develop a typology of movie critics. Ideally, a typology would provide useful, relevant categories that explain the tendencies of reviewers or critics.

A cluster analysis of the first 17 statements was performed, to reveal a five-cluster solution of reviewers and critics. Cluster sizes were similar. Cluster 1 consisted of 13 members; cluster 2, the largest cluster, contained 21; cluster 3 had 15 members; and clusters 4 and 5 featured 13 members apiece. SPSS excluded one case from the analysis, so the total number of cases for the analysis was 75.

FIGURE 2

NUMBER OF CASES IN EACH CLUSTER
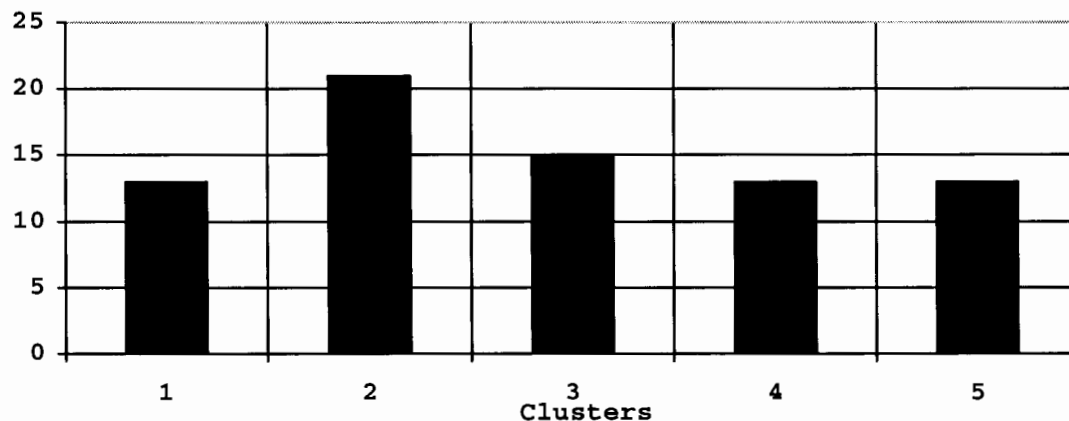
A composite of how each cluster characteristically
responded to one of the first 17 statements was analyzed,
and the clusters took on distinctive personalities.

Cluster 1: Reporters

Profile

Reporters saw themselves as objective journalists who
simply had a job to do and were not convinced of the
importance of any of the three primary aspects of reviewing
(education, consumer advocacy and entertainment). They view
reviews as an informational tool, much like a news story.
Reporters are also not bothered by the ethics of taking
freebies from movie studios.

Objectivity

Reporters view themselves as objective and believe that just because they are writing a review does not mean they have a license to abandon objective journalistic principals. In response to statement 1, which asked respondents to consider whether or not the viewed themselves as objective journalists, Reporters generally answered, "agree." In response to statement 17, which suggested objectivity is unattainable in review writing, Reporters generally answered, "somewhat disagree." These responses indicate a tendency toward objectiveness.

Education

Reporters were ambivalent in regard to educating their readers about film. Out of six statements about the importance of education in reviewing, Reporters answered "Neutral" to four, "Somewhat disagree" to one, and "Somewhat agree" to the last.

Entertainment

Reporters do not place a high value on writing entertaining reviews. Of the three statements dealing with entertainment value of reviewing, Reporters answered "Neutral" to two, and "Disagree" to the third.

Consumer Advocacy

Reporters believe the reviews they write may be of some help to individuals trying to decide whether or not to watch a film. However, Reporters do not place any more importance in this aspect of reviewing than any other. Four statements dealt with consumer advocacy. Reporters answered "neutral" to two, and "somewhat agree" to a third. The fourth statement compared consumer advocacy to entertainment, and Reporters responded that consumer advocacy was more important than entertainment.

Ethics

Reporters have no problem with taking the freebies that frequently accompany the job of reviewing. Three statements dealt with ethics. Reporters "somewhat disagree" with the statement suggesting press junkets are unethical. They "strongly agree" with attending free screenings, and "somewhat disagree" with the statement that accepting promotional gifts is unethical.

Cluster 2: The Educators

Profile

Educators are not concerned with objectivity, and do not necessarily consider themselves journalists. They do

not care if they help an individual choose which movie to see at the multiplex, but place a premium on educating their readers on the finer points of movie watching. Educators shun most freebies, though not advance press screenings. Like Reporters, Educators feel they have influence over their readers' movie decisions, but on a limited basis.

Objectivity

Educators make no pretence about being objective – they are not. Two statements pertained to objectivity. In regard to the first statement, Educators responded "neutral," which could indicate they are not overly concerned with being objective and do not necessarily consider themselves journalists. The second statement concerning objectivity, which suggested being a reviewer precludes objectivity, Educators answered, "agree."

Education

Certainly more important than helping people decide what movie to watch, and more important than being entertaining, the primary role of the Educator is to educate. Educators "agreed" with the two statements listing education as a reviewer's top priority. They disagreed with the statement suggesting education was not the most

important aspect of being a reviewer. Furthermore, they disagreed with both statements that suggested education was not more important than either entertainment value or consumer advocacy.

Entertainment

Educators understand their audience and know that a little entertainment is the fastest way to get a point across. Three statements dealt with entertainment. Educators "somewhat agreed" with statement suggesting entertainment was the most important part of their job. However, they were "neutral" when asked to compare the entertainment value with the consumer advocacy function of reviewing.

Consumer Advocacy

Educators do not place a great deal of importance on being a consumer advocate. They answered neutral on the statement stressing the importance of helping people choose which films to see. Educators also consistently placed a higher value on the education function on their job when compared to consumer advocacy.

Ethics

Educators believe indulging in free promotional items and attending press junkets is questionable behavior for a reviewer, but that attending free press screenings is acceptable.

Cluster 3: Traffic Directors

Profile

Traffic Directors are primarily concerned with directing people to movies they believe are worth watching. Traffic Directors want to ensure moviegoers do not feel robbed when they leave the theater. They do not worry about educating their audience on the nuances of film, and certainly not at the cost of helping people spend their movie money wisely. Entertainment is just part of the job, nothing special. They frown upon attending press junkets, are ambivalent about promotional items, but have no problem attending movies for free.

Objectivity

Traffic Directors generally did not buy into the objectivity angle of reviewing. On the first objectivity statement, the objective journalist statement, they responded "neutral," and on the second, negatively phrased

question, they agreed. The answers suggested Traffic

Directors did not view themselves as either objective or

journalists.

Education

Traffic Directors generally disagreed with statements

stressing the importance of the educational function of the

reviewer. They disagreed somewhat with the suggestion that

education was more important than consumer advocacy, but

agreed that helping people understand movies; on a

negatively phrased version of the "understand movies"

statement, Traffic Directors agreed somewhat. Finally, on

the comparison statements that suggested education was more

important then either consumer advocacy or entertainment,

they tended to "disagree somewhat."

Entertainment

Traffic Directors responded neutrally to the direct

statement about the importance of entertainment, indicating

they did not believe it was the most important aspect of

their job. In regard to the two comparison statements

featuring entertainment, Traffic Directors felt consumer

advocacy was more important than being entertaining, but

being entertaining was more important than being

educational.

Consumer Advocacy

Traffic Directors agreed with the statement suggesting consumer advocacy was the most important part of their job, and disagreed with the negatively phrased version of the same statement. Furthermore, in statements of comparison, Traffic Directors choose consumer advocacy as the more important function when compared to education or entertainment. The answers suggest a high sense of responsibility toward helping people choose which films to view.

Ethics

Traffic Directors, as with all the other clusters, agreed that attending free press screenings was acceptable behavior for a reviewer. However, they agreed with the statement suggesting press junkets were unethical, and were neutral on the promotional gifts statement. The responses seem to suggest that Traffic Directors decide their ethics on a situational basis.

Cluster 4: Micro Managers

Profile

As the name would suggest, Micro Managers believe in all aspects of reviewing equally. They view themselves as

objective journalists, but do not feel the need to be objective in their review writing. Micro Managers are also firm on their opinions about the ethics of the job.

Objectivity

The Micro Managers' agreement with the first objectivity statement suggests they viewed themselves as objective journalists, and possibly that reviewing in a sort of public service. However, in agreeing with the second objectivity statement, which was negatively phrased, Micro Managers stated they did not think objectivity was attainable in a review. The answers to the statements appeared to run counter to each other, which suggested Micro Managers actually have a clear idea as to what their job is as a reviewer. This may also suggest that, like many journalists, reviewers are constantly pulled between a belief that objectivity is an admirable goal, and the realization that it is frequently unattainable.

Entertainment

Micro Managers agreed with the direct statement suggesting their primary responsibility as a reviewer is to keep their audience entertained. In the comparison statement between education and entertainment, they disagreed somewhat with the suggestion that education is

more important than entertainment. Micro Managers were neutral on the comparison statement between entertainment and consumer advocacy. Overall, a vacillating attitude toward the entertainment function of a reviewer suggested Micro Managers cannot decide if one area of responsibility is more important than any other.

Education

Micro Managers wanted people to better understand film, but no more so than they wanted to also provide a yardstick by which to measure films by, while at the same time conveying all the information in an easy-to-digest manner. Micro Managers agreed somewhat with direct statements on the importance of education, but on statements of comparison did not give education precedence over either entertainment or consumer advocacy.

Consumer Advocacy

Micro Managers generally agreed with statements stressing the importance of consumer advocacy. However, they responded neutrally to two comparison statements – consumer advocacy vs. education, and entertainment vs. consumer advocacy. Micro Managers agreed somewhat with the statement suggesting education was more important than consumer advocacy. The ambivalence toward the consumer

advocacy statements suggested Micro Manager did not place any more or any less importance on consumer advocacy than the other responsibilities of the reviewer.

Ethics

Micro Managers were clear on their ethics. They agreed strongly with the statement suggesting press junkets were unethical, and they agreed that accepting free promotional gifts from studios was also unethical. However, like all the other clusters, Micro Managers saw no problem with attending free press screenings of new films.

Cluster 5: Guidance Counselors

Profile

Much like their namesake, the Guidance Counselors seek to foster a greater understanding of film in their audience while subtly guiding them toward films they feel worthy of the public's attention. Their method is a combination of education and consumer advocacy. Guidance Counselors are neutral on ethical matters and not overly concerned with being entertaining. Guidance Counselors in no way see themselves as objective.

Objectivity

Guidance Counselors made no pretense about objectivity; it was not a part of their approach to writing reviews. They disagreed with the statement about being objective journalists, and agreed with the statement on the preclusion of objectivity due to the nature of reviewing.

Education

Guidance Counselors were observed to hold education as their foremost responsibility as a reviewer. In all statements of comparison, education was picked as more important. Guidance Counselors also agreed with statements suggesting education was the most important responsibility of a reviewer.

Entertainment

Guidance Counselors answered neutrally to the statement suggesting entertainment was the most important part of the job. That sentiment was upheld by their answers to the two statements of comparison featuring entertainment; education and consumer advocacy were picked as more important.

Consumer Advocacy

Guidance Counselors agreed with the statement suggesting consumer advocacy was a primary responsibility of reviewing, and disagreed with the negatively phrased version of the same statement. In regard to statements of comparison, education won the head-to-head battles, but consumer advocacy conquered entertainment.

Ethics

Guidance Counselors answered neutrally to the statement suggesting press junkets were unethical, and to the statement suggesting the acceptance of promotional gifts was unethical. However, as with all the other clusters, Guidance Counselors felt it acceptable to attend free press screenings.

Influence

Two statements on the survey instrument dealt with influence. Generally, all the clusters answered the influence questions in the same way. All clusters voiced some level of agreement with the statement suggesting reviewers have influence over which films moviegoers watch. All clusters also voiced some level of agreement with the statement that they have more influence on getting people to see smaller budgeted films than larger budgeted films.

Clearly, reviewers believe they have a conditional

influence on the people who read their reviews.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The study utilized a web-based survey instrument to gather data from movie critics and reviewers on their attitudes toward the responsibilities of their job. The aim of this research project was to construct, if possible, a descriptive typology of the different camps of reviewers. The sample was culled from daily newspapers, weeklies, and magazines from the 50 most populace markets in the United States as reported by the U.S. Census in 1990.

The survey was designed to gauge reviewers' attitudes on six different areas of reviewing: education, entertainment, consumer advocacy, objectivity, influence and ethics. Additionally, in an attempt to measure reviewers' perspective as opinion leaders, an adapted version of King and Summers (1970) opinion leadership scale was administered to respondents. The instrument also gathered demographic data to provide insight of the background of movie reviewers.

Conclusions

The findings of the analyses conducted allowed the research objectives to be accomplished. First, a profile of the sample's "average" film reviewer/critic was developed from the demographic information. Second, the sample identified itself as a group of opinion leaders based on responses to a modified version of King and Summers (1970) opinion leadership scale. Finally, a typology of reviewers and critics was created based on a cluster analysis of the responses to the first 17 statements of the survey instrument.

Demographics

Brown (1978) stated the average reviewer was a 40 year-old male college graduate who has worked 10 years as a reviewer (p.35). The profile revealed in this study closely resembles that described by Brown.

The average respondent to the survey was male (76.32%, N = 58), 40.59 years of age (N = 75) and worked for a daily newspaper (53.9 %, N = 41 of 76). He also had between two and five years experience (31.6%, N = 24). He held a bachelor's degree (56.3%, N = 40) and a degree in something other (44%, N = 33) than Journalism, Drama, Film or some

kind of Fine Arts. He also viewed himself as a critic (60%, N = 45, rather than a reviewer (40%, N = 30).

A more careful examination of the results revealed some interesting information. For instance, in regard to experience as a reviewer, the two-to-five-years category contained the largest percentage of respondents; however, the category for five-to-ten years garnered 26.3% (N = 20), and the category for ten-to-twenty years captured 27.6% (N = 21). The numbers suggest that once reviewers get their job, they stick with it.

Another statistic of interest is the degree field reported by reviewers and critics. Though the "other" category contained 44% (N = 33) of respondents, 30.7% (N = 23) reported having a Journalism degree, making it the single largest represented degree field. This is perhaps what should be expected given the sample and the suggestions of the literature. However, that fact that 69.3% of respondents were not journalists suggests reviewers get into the field because of personal interest in film.

The fact that more than half of the respondents have at least a bachelor's degree is to be expected. However, it is of note that 21.1% (N = 15) of respondents reported having a graduate degree. If nothing else, the combination

of the two categories suggests that as a whole, the profession is well-educated.

Also of interest is the 60/40 split on the Critic-or-Reviewer statement. Though not quite half and half, it does suggest perhaps some professional ambiguity on the respective definitions for each categorization. The literature suggests nearly every writer who reviews motion pictures for daily newspapers is a reviewer, not a critic (Brown, 1978; Titchener, 1998).

Opinion Leadership

The opinion leadership portion of the survey instrument sought to assess reviewers' thoughts on their influence on consumer attitudes toward and selection of motion pictures. The results of the section served to answer Research Question 1, which was: Do movie critics and reviewers feel as though they have influence on consumer selection of motion pictures?

Traditionally, the opinion leadership scale is scored from 5 to 1; however, this study coded answers from 1 to 5, thus the scores were reversed from the normal findings of the King and Summers scale. The scores are summed to get the opinion leader rating. The normal scale rates opinion leaders with scores from 7 to 35, with the higher the

number, the stronger the opinion leader rating. Since the coding was reversed for this study, the lower the score, the stronger the opinion leader.

The reviewers and critics who responded to the survey collectively had a mean score of 13.173 with a standard deviation of 2.4014, which indicated they feel as though they are opinion leaders, and that, in fact, they do feel as though they carry some influence. The responses to the attitude portion of the survey (the first 17 statements) corroborated the findings of the opinion leadership portion. The statement asking reviewers to respond to differing amounts of influence depending upon the size of the film, in terms of budget (marketing push), however, indicated reviewers are not unrealistic about the amount of influence they *do* possess. They understand their influence is limited.

The opinion leadership score also suggests that because critics and reviewers know their influence is limited, the feel as though they are fighting the good fight. They feel as though they are making a difference, else why do it? However, that is, perhaps, a question for another study.

Cluster Analysis

The primary objective of the study was to produce, if possible, a typology of movie reviewers, as a typology would provide an understanding of the population's attitude toward the job. The first 17 statements of the survey were designed to measure respondents' attitudes in the six previously discussed categories. Correlation analysis was then performed to test the validity of statements, without which a typology could not have been created.

A cluster analysis of respondents' answers to the first 17 statements of the survey instrument did produce a typology of five camps of critics/reviewers, which were then named: Reporters, Educators, Traffic Directors, Micro Managers and Guidance Counselors. The summaries of each cluster have been reproduced from Chapter IV. For a more in-depth examination of each category, please refer back to the previous chapter.

Reporters

Reporters saw themselves as objective journalists who simply had a job to do and were not convinced of the importance of any of the three primary aspects of reviewing (education, consumer advocacy and entertainment). They view reviews as an informational tool, much like a news story.

Reporters are also not bothered by the ethics of taking freebies from movie studios. Reporters represented 17.33% (N = 13) of the sample.

Educators

Educators are not concerned with objectivity, and do not necessarily consider themselves journalists. They do not care if they help an individual choose which movie to see at the multiplex, but place a premium on educating their readers on the finer points of movie watching. Educators shun most freebies, though not advance press screenings. Like Reporters, Educators feel they have influence over their readers' movie decisions, but on a limited basis. Educators represented 28% (N = 21) of the sample, suggesting the group members most likely also viewed themselves as critics.

Traffic Directors

Traffic Directors are primarily concerned with directing people to movies they believe are worth watching. Traffic Directors want to ensure moviegoers do not feel robbed when they leave the theater. They do not worry about educating their audience on the nuances of film, and certainly not at the cost of helping people spend their movie money wisely. Entertainment is just part of the job,

nothing special. They frown upon attending press junkets, are ambivalent about promotional items, but have no problem attending movies for free. Traffic Directors represented 20% (N = 15) of the sample, the second largest group.

Micro Managers

As the name would suggest, Micro Managers believe in all aspects of reviewing equally. They view themselves as objective journalists, but do not feel the need to be objective in their review writing. Micro Managers are also firm on their opinions about the ethics of the job. Micro Managers represented 17.33% (N = 13) respondents.

Guidance Counselors

Much like their namesake, the Guidance Counselors seek to foster a greater understanding of film in their audience while subtly guiding them toward films they feel worthy of the public's attention. Their method is a combination of education and consumer advocacy. Guidance Counselors are neutral on ethical matters and not overly concerned with being entertaining. Guidance Counselors in no way see themselves as objective. The category represented 17.33% (N = 13) of the sample.

Concluding Thoughts on Clusters

The cluster analysis results are insightful for illustrating tendencies of movie reviewers and critics, but are generalizations. The clusters should not be used as stereotypes nor should critics and reviewers be pigeonholed into one of these categories. The clusters serve to illuminate those interested on the various different approaches to writing reviews of motion pictures for a mass audience. They are useful for understanding that elusive creature that is the movie reviewer or critic, and the state of the profession as a whole.

Recommendations

The next logical step in researching the topic is to conduct a qualitative study of the reviewers themselves. The survey instrument included a link allowing respondents to e-mail the researcher. A number did. Some indicated that they never participate in surveys, but would be happy to engage in an in-depth interview via telephone.

Nine respondents of the 76 (11.84%) sent messages to the posted e-mail address; the nine were not among those respondents who sent requests for phone interviews. The messages contained further commentary raised by the survey instrument. Some reviewers pointed out areas they thought

the survey did not address, or did not address properly. For instance, one critic stated that most critics he knew had multiple degrees from various degree fields but there was no way to express this on the survey. Incidentally, the observation could account for the large percentage of "other" responses to the degree field question.

Many expressed in writing exactly what the study hoped to address: the role of the critic. One critic stated, "You have to explain why you liked a movie, what you saw in it and what you hope the reader can take from it. Presumably, you have the education and expertise to do so…" (Ealy, 2002, e-mail message). A few of the messages remarked on how the survey made respondents choose one element of reviewing, such as education over entertainment, when the two are not mutually exclusive categories. This was intended. By making respondents choose, a measure of the importance they assign, and thus and assessment of their attitude toward their role, could be reached.

Based on the number of respondents who both took the survey and the time to send an additional message, even if it was just to say they would rather participate in a phone interview, it would seem reviewers and critics are interested in the information studies like this one could provide. After contacting a number of critics and reviewers

for qualitative research purposes, a second, more comprehensive study could be conducted using this one as a foundation.

The study could also be used to provide insight on the profession as seen through the eyes of readers of reviews, the editors of the publications featuring reviews, directors and actors, and finally, motional picture executives themselves. We now have a general idea of how reviewers and critics view their job and their role; by looking at the profession through the eyes of its audience, we could begin to understand the meaning and value society assigns to reviews. Additionally, when all of the data from each study is compiled, the question of the influence of a review will be answered.

A readership study would be particularly insightful. Different people read different books for different reasons; the same could be said of people who read critics. Some people probably read critics to help them determine whether to see a movie or not, while others may just like to read thoughtful commentary on film. Furthermore, it would be interesting to discover what types of readers read what types of critics. Are young people more likely to read Reporters or Educators? Are male readers more likely to read male critics or female critics, and does that have

anything to do with the predominance of the male reviewer within the profession? Do the different types of reviewers correlate more strongly with one demographic group of readers more than another? These are questions that the current study has brought to light, and need to be answered.

Another important element to consider is raised by the variation of respondents' attitudes toward objectivity and ethical matters. Some professional organizations feature in their code of ethics standards by which businesses and the like can be evaluated. There is, however, no code of ethics for the movie reviewer. It was beyond the limited reach of the study to explore the breadth of university courses that even touch on the practice of writing reviews of film for a mass audience. It is thought there are few, if any. If no one is teaching future reviewers how to ply their trade, then for certain ethics are not being addressed. If there is no standard, then the credibility of the reviewer will always be suspect. A study focusing on reviewer's ethics would be enlightening, and potentially necessary for the long-term viability of the profession.

On a more basic note, it also seems appropriate, and necessary, to survey the universities around the nation to see how many, schools teach the writing of reviews, and

what departments teach the courses. Since reviewers typically have college degrees, a look at the programs that produce them, if any, could be insightful. The training reviewers receive in college, or lack thereof, might point to both the ethics they apply on the job, and the type of reviewers they are.

Another important observation that begs further research is why is there such a predominance of men in the profession, and does it hold out across the different media? Is the percentage the same for broadcast reviewers? Radio reviewers? Internet reviewers?

Finally, it is recommended a content analysis be conducted on movie reviews in all types of publications, and possibly even on Internet and broadcast reviews. A content analysis would help determine what types of reviews appear in different kinds of publications, which would strengthen the distinction between critics and reviewers, as well as provide either support for or disprove the typology put forth by this study.

No matter the direction, there is a lack of research into the minds and methods of movie critics. The current study has brought to light more questions than answers, but provides basic background for any of the previously discussed research areas. As of now, any research on these

individuals would be of benefit to both mass communications

academia and the reviewers and critics themselves.

CHAPTER VI

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

OSU

This study is being conducted through the
School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University.
If you have questions about the survey, or would like to contact the researcher, you may send email
here.

Motion Picture Reviewer Survey!

Thank you for helping us understand more about the role of the reviewer in the motion picture industry. Your responses will be
completely anonymous and will only be reported in summary form.

At the end of this survey, you will have the opportunity to enter your email address to receive an executive summary of the results!
We want to ask you some questions about how you view your profession, how you view your role in the entire promotion and
marketing process of motion pictures. Please be completely honest about your opinions, and thank you again for your help!

Please indicate the degree with which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Statement	Agree Strongly	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neutral or No Opinion	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
"I consider myself to be an objective journalist"	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"I have an influence over whether or not individuals view certain films."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"As a reviewer, I believe it is unethical to attend expense-paid press junkets."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"My job is to aid people in selecting movies I believe are worth watching."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"Educating my readers about films is more important than helping them decide if a film is worth attending."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"Attending free press screenings is ethical for a reviewer."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"My primary role as a reviewer is to educate the movie-going public about film as an art form."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"I have less influence over a reader's film choices when it comes to large-budget films than small-budget independent films."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"My primary role as a reviewer is to keep my audience entertained."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"Helping people spend their movie time and money wisely is more important than educating them about film."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

"My job as a reviewer is to help people better

http://advertising.okstate.edu/movies/

3/29/2002

Welcome to our reviewer survey!   Page 2 of 3

understand movies."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"As a reviewer, it is unethical for me to accept promotional gifts from studios."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"My primary role is to write entertaining reviews to attract an audience to my column, rather than to help readers select films that are worth their time and money."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"Educating my readers about film is more important than being entertaining."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"Helping people understand film better is not my primary role as a reviewer."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"It is not my job to tell people whether or not a movie is worth seeing."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
"The job of being a reviewer precludes complete objectivity."	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Here are a few other questions to help us understand your role as a reviewer ...

Aside from your reviews, how often do you speak with others about movies?	Very often O	Often O	Some O	Not often O	Rarely or never O
When you talk to others about movies, how would you rate the amount of information you provide?	A great deal of information O	More than others O	The same as others O	Less than others O	Very little information O
Since you started doing reviews, with how many people have you discussed movies in a social setting?	A great many people O	More than most O	Some people O	Few people O	Hardly anyone O
Compared with others, how often are you likely to be asked about movies by others?	Very often O	Somewhat often O	Often O	Not often O	Rarely or never O
In a discussion of movies, would you be more likely to give information, or listen to the ideas of others?	Listen to the ideas of others O	Listen more than contribute O	Listen and contribute equally O	Contribute more than listen O	Contribute exclusively O
In discussions about movies, which happens more often?	You tell others O	You tell a little more than others O	Equal give and take O	You tell a little less than others O	Others tell you O

Overall in your discussions with others, are you ...	Often used as a source	Sometimes used as a source	Occaisionnally used as a source	Rarely used as a source	Never used as a source
	O	O	O	O	O

Finally, some quick demographic questions!

What is your gender?   O Male O Female

What is your age?   [   ]

Please briefly tell us what you review in additional to movies.
(Leave this blank if you only review movies.)   [   ]

For which type of publication do you write reviews?   [Please select one ▮]

How long have you been a reviewer?   [Please select one ▮]

Please indicate the field of your college degree.   [Please select one▮]

Please indicate the level of your education.   [Please select one ▮]

Finally, do you consider yourself to be a reviewer or a critic?   O Reivewer O Critic

If you would like to receive an executive summary of the results of this survey, please
enter your email address here. Sorry, but only electronic versions of this summary will
be available.   [   ]

Thank you for your help with this suvey! All you have to do now is
submit your responses and you can get back to work!

APPENDIX B

INITIAL E-MAIL MESSAGE

I have both a professional and academic interest in the movie critic profession. If, as so many believe, critics do not influence people's decisions on what movies to see, then what is the role of a critic? This question is the basis of my thesis.

My name is Cory Cheney. I'm working on my Master's in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University. I'm also a fledgling movie critic and write a weekly column for Urban Tulsa Weekly.

I'm hoping you'll help me determine, along with your peers, the role of a movie critic in today's print media. I know you're busy, but it would be great if you could help provide some insight into our profession. It's a short survey that will only take about 10 minutes of your time. No demographic information will be collected, so you don't have to worry about being added to any mailing lists or receiving any spam.

Please try and visit the site before March 11. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Cory Cheney

The link to the site is:
http://advertising.okstate.edu/movies/

APPENDIX C

POSTCARD

Cory Cheney
223 S. Berry
Stillwater, OK 74074

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

What is your role as a movie critic?

If, as so many believe, critics do not influence people's decisions on what movies to see, then what is the role of a critic? This question is the basis of my thesis. My name is Cory Cheney. I'm working on my Master's in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University. I'm also a fledgling movie critic and write a weekly column for Urban Tulsa Weekly.

I'm hoping you'll help me determine, along with your peers, the role of a movie critic in today's print media. I know you're busy, but it would be great if you could help provide some insight into our profession. It's a short survey that will only take about 10 minutes of your time.

Please try and visit the site (listed below) before March 11. Thank you for your help.

http://advertising.okstate.edu/movies/

APPENDIX D

REMINDER MESSAGE

Survey Link: http://advertising.okstate.edu/movies/

Movie critics and reviewers,

A few weeks ago, I sent you a message regarding a survey I'm conducting for my Master's thesis at Oklahoma State University. So far, the response has been great and the feedback insightful. The survey is trying to measure your attitudes on the various aspects of your job as a critic or reviewer.

This is just a reminder message. The first round of messages I sent out individually, this one is a mass e-mail, so I apologize if you've already taken the survey and this is repetitive.

If you're interested in taking the survey and haven't yet , please do so by March 22 (this Friday). It only takes between five and ten minutes depending on how fast you read.

Thank you for your help.

Cory Cheney
Oklahoma State University
ccory@okstate.edu
405-744-8532

APPENDIX E

CORRELATION MATRIX

		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17	OPNLDR
V1 - "I consider myself to be an objective journalist."	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.062	-0.009	0.147	-0.118	-0.036	-0.285	0.173	0.182	0.332	-0.35	0.044	-0.029	-0.017	0.299	-0.13	-0.546	0.202
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.594	0.935	0.206	0.312	0.759	0.013	0.136	0.003	0.002	0.708	0.806	0.882	0.009	0.261	0	0.082	
V2 - "I have an influence over whether or not individuals view certain films."	Pearson Correlation	-0.062	1	0.103	0.026	0.145	0.213	0.447	0.273	0.043	0.046	0.036	0.547	0.554	0.423	0.076	0.16	0.172	0.916
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.594		0.376		0.103	0.255	0.169	0.145	0.447	0.273	0.043	0.046	0.036	0.547	0.554	0.423	0.076	0.16
V3 - "As a reviewer, I believe it is unethical to attend expense-paid press junkets."	Pearson Correlation	-0.009	0.103	1	0.097	0.057	-0.088	-0.047	0.177	-0.027	-0.041	0.129	0.481	0.103	-0.098	-0.073	0.165	0.337	-0.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.935	0.376			0.407		0.623											0.431
V4 - "My job is to aid people in selecting movies I believe are worth watching."	Pearson Correlation	0.147	0.026	0.097	1	-0.174	0.132	0.447	0.126	0.817	0.724	0.265	0	0.374	0.405	0.529	0.155	0.003	-0.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.206				0.407													0.743
V5 - "Educating my readers about films is more important than helping them decide if a film is worth attending."	Pearson Correlation	-0.118	0.145	0.057	-0.174	1	0.132	-0.146	0.255	0.132	0.451	0.132	-0.174	0.623	0.686	0.136	0.003	-0.014	0.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.312	0.169																0.272
V6 - "Attending free press screenings is ethical for a reviewer."	Pearson Correlation	-0.036	0.213	-0.088	0.132	-0.146	1	0.037	0.201	0.084	-0.201	0.213	0.472	0.37	0.213	0.082	0.207	0.836	0.75
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.759	0.255	0.623	0.132			0.307											
V7 - "My primary role as a reviewer is to educate the movie-going public about film as an art form."	Pearson Correlation	-0.285	0.447	-0.047	0.447	-0.146	0.037	1	0.049	0.915	0.817	0.126	0.686	0.126	0.049	-0.025	0.155	0.337	0.912
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.013	0.169	0.686		0.207													
V8 - "I have less influence over a reader's film choices when it comes to large-budget films than small-budget independent films."	Pearson Correlation	0.173	0.273	0.177	0.126	0.255	0.201	0.049	1	0.694	0.082	0.213	0.037	0.749	0.082	-0.006	0.084	0.472	0.443
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.136	0.145																
V9 - "My primary role as a reviewer is to keep my audience entertained."	Pearson Correlation	0.182	0.043	-0.027	0.817	0.132	0.084	0.915	0.694	1	0.435	0.091	0.201	0.037	-0.006	0.037	0.046	0.307	0.872
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.273				0.207												
V10 - "Helping people spend their movie time and money wisely is more important than educating them about film."	Pearson Correlation	0.332	0.046	-0.041	0.724	0.451	-0.201	0.817	0.082	0.435	1	-0.441	-0.057	0.435	0.249	-0.548	0.057	0.659	0.292
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002		0.817															
V11 - "My job as a reviewer is to help people better understand movies."	Pearson Correlation	-0.35	0.036	0.241	0.265	0.464	-0.164	0.565	0.201	-0.108	-0.441	1	0.104	0.071	0.375	-0.687	0.267	0.383	0.372
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.241	0.139															0.105
V12 - "As a reviewer, it is unethical for me to accept promotional gifts from studios."	Pearson Correlation	0.044	0.036	0.265	0.632	0.124	0.158	0.086	0.76	0.354	0	0.372	1	0.13	-0.085	0	0.02	0.013	0.372
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002																	
V13 - "My primary role is to write entertaining reviews to attract an audience to my column, rather than to help readers select films that are worth their time and money."	Pearson Correlation	-0.029	-0.069	0.103	-0.14	0.276	-0.141	0.252	0.222	0.61	-0.148	0.071	0.13	1	-0.274	0.031	0.262	0.235	-0.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.708	0.547	0	0.863	0.285	0.379	0.459	0.608	0.103	0.627	0.372	0.262		0.468	0.471	0.138	0.128	0.738
V14 - "Educating my readers about film is more important than being entertaining."	Pearson Correlation	-0.017	0.094	-0.098	0.061	0.409	0.018	0.349	-0.019	-0.511	-0.23	0.375	-0.085	-0.274	1	-0.416	-0.024	-0.01	0.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.806	0.554	0.374	0.227	0.016	0.224	0.038	0.054	0	0.303	0.54	0.262				0.022	0.041	0.376
V15 - "Helping people understand film better is not my primary role as a reviewer."	Pearson Correlation	0.299	-0.205	-0.073	0.006	-0.521	0.185	-0.68	0.025	0.129	0.55	-0.687	-0.084	0.031	-0.416	1	-0.064	-0.192	-0.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.882	0.423	0.405	0.604	0	0.879	0.002	0.869	0	0.047	0.001	0.468	0.031			0.836	0.933	0.097
V16 - "It is not my job to tell people whether or not a movie is worth seeing."	Pearson Correlation	-0.13	0.163	0.165	-0.394	0.394	-0.257	0.252	0.083	0.088	-0.352	0.267	0.172	0.262	-0.024	-0.064	1	0.165	-0.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.076	0.529	0.959		0.11	0.838	0.266			0.471	0.79			0.586			0.532
V17 - "The job of being a reviewer precludes complete objectivity."	Pearson Correlation	-0.546	0.158	0.337	0.085	0.167	-0.024	0.274	0.119	0.051	-0.107	0.283	0.176	0.235	-0.01	-0.192	0.165	1	0.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.261	0.163	0.165	-0.394	0.16	0.025	0.028	0.475	0.45	0.002	0.02	0.138	0.022	0.836	0.586		0.156	0.445
OPNLDR	Pearson Correlation	0.202	-0.012	-0.092	-0.038	0.128	-0.037	-0.013	0.09	-0.019	-0.123	0.105	-0.039	-0.104	0.257	-0.073	-0.089	0.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.082	0.916	0.431	0.743	0.272	0.75	0.912	0.443	0.872	0.292	0.372	0.738	0.376	0.027	0.532	0.445	0.919	

APPENDIX F

IRB FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 2/11/03

Date: Tuesday, February 12, 2002   IRB Application No   AS0244

Proposal Title: ROLE MODEL: AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT THE ROLE OF MOVIE CRITICS

Principal
Investigator(s):

Cory Cheney   Tom Weir
223 S. Berry   316 JB
Stillwater, OK 74074   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved *

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

*NOTE: Survey Typo - page 3, line 10.

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VITA

Cory Stephen Cheney

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: ROLE MODEL: AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT THE ROLE OF MOVIE
CRITICS

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Charles Page High School,
Sand Springs, Oklahoma, in May 1991; received
Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism and
Broadcasting from Oklahoma State University,
Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1996. Completed the
requirements for the Master of Science degree
with a major in Mass Communications at Oklahoma
State University in May 2002.

Experience: Employed as a staff reporter for *Urban
Tulsa Weekly*; employed as associate marketing
manager for the Tulsa Performing Arts Center;
employed by Oklahoma State University, University
Extension, International and Economic Development
as a Publications Coordinator, June 2000 to
present; author of weekly movie review column for
Urban Tulsa Weekly, September 1998 to present.