

ARTHEMIS

Advanced Research Team On History and Epistemology of Moving Image Studies

WHO ARE WE?

ARTHEMIS is a research team directed by Martin Lefebvre at Concordia University and funded by FQRSC. It is affiliated with the FIGURA Research Center at Concordia and UQAM. Its object of study is the study of film and the moving image as a historical and cultural practice and a form of knowing. The core membership of the team is currently made up of 10 faculty members

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WHAT ARTHEMIS DOES

Moving Images have become the dominant form of visual expression of the 20th century and the most important image-making industry in history. Today, thanks to digital technology, moving images are everywhere: in movie theaters, on the Internet and a multitude of screens: cellphones, computers, game consoles, MP3 and portable DVD players. Their uses and genres keep multiplying: fiction, documentary, art, video games, news broadcasts, music videos, medical imaging, surveillance, cartoons and advertisements. Moreover, the trending idea is that all these screens now mutually refer to one another in a “post-media condition” dominated by “media mix” and “convergence”. It is what the attacks on the World Trade Center unexpectedly illustrated more than a decade ago; for many viewers, the scene broadcast live on television seemed to come straight out of a film. This is also

an illustration of the importance films and moving images have on contemporary imagery, how they impact our lives and the forms of mediation they takes on. When faced with these facts, and the increased presence of cameras and screens, there is no question as to the need for an expertise which focuses on the moving image and its uses in order to articulate, dig through and clarify the social, cultural and political issues linked to it. Be it a question of understanding the impact of these images on behavior (do violent movies and video games make us violent?), how we understand them (how do audiovisual narratives and arguments come into being?), or even how images are distinguished from a “transparent” recording of perception (which ideologies are conveyed by these images? Must we distinguish between the violence of an image and the violence in an image?), the 20th century was a period in which vast discursive networks were developed and where concepts were forged, that made possible such an expertise. If the moving image

marked the 20th century, so did the study of the moving image.

It is precisely this expertise that ARTHEMIS (the Advanced Research Team on the History and Epistemology of Moving Image Studies) explores by examining its conditions of emergence, growth, and consolidation, as well as its migrations, challenges, conceptions, and the epistemological principles guiding it. Originating as a response to the increasing space occupied by film in the public sphere from the middle of the 1910s, when cinema was undergoing significant mutations linked to its institutionalization, expertise on film and the moving image has developed today mainly in university “film studies” and “communications” departments. In North America and Europe, these disciplines (or “interdisciplines”) are rapidly expanding. However, they are recent and have not yet given rise to many reflexive historical or epistemological examinations. It is also a field whose “culture” has radically transformed over the course of the 20th century. The ARTHEMIS project seeks to fill these historical and epistemological gaps as well as to define the institutionalization

and development of the (inter)disciplinary field that constitutes Film and Moving Image Studies today.

The general objective of our current project is to show how creating expertise in Film and Moving Image Studies requires a set of precise conditions which determine its rise, transformation and diversification, while the sociocultural penetration of moving images proliferates and their uses diversify. This research aims (1) to unearth the multitude of factors and determinations, the different conditions of possibility that were involved in the emergence of an expertise, a learned discourse on the moving image and in the rise of a recognized academic (inter)discipline, using historic and comparative perspectives; (2) through epistemological considerations, to study the nature of concepts elaborated by Film and Moving Image Studies, to study the field’s discursive rationality with regards to its different epistemic aims; (3) to unearth the constitution and issues specific to a Film and Moving Image Studies “culture” through its different national and transnational traditions.

AXES OF RESEARCH

The current ARTHEMIS project can be broken down into 3 axes: *Axis 1: The history of Film and Moving Image Studies; Axis 2: Epistemology of Film and Moving Image Studies; Axis 3: Film and Moving Image Studies Culture(s)*. Together these axes examine the main factors, views and practices that have contributed to the emergence, development, and consolidation of Film and Moving Image Studies as an epistemic endeavor and academic field of research.

Context of the Project.

Film and Moving Image Studies has expanded rapidly since the 1960s in the United States and Europe. They are now developing in other areas of the world. This field of study impressively made its way into colleges and universities and there are now Ph.D. programs educating and cultivating specialists. Professional associations and scholarly journals have been established and coupled with already existing institutions just as the conditions of the “cinematic experience” were transforming. Yet, we have hardly explored the status of Film and Moving Image Studies as a field of study, its presuppositions, conceptions, the knowledge founding it as well as the knowledge ensuring its foundation. For one thing, Film and Moving Image Studies has had difficulties integrating academia its disciplinary structure; rather early on, it became evident that, following the quick and massive incursion of the moving image into the sociocultural fabric,

Film and Moving Image Studies brought up important interdisciplinary issues that higher education had trouble accommodating, even though many human and social science disciplines were directly affected by its massive success. That is why, even if there now exists academic departments exclusively devoted to film studies, it is often the case that Film and Moving Image Studies are housed (even today) in other departments, such as Communications Studies, English or Comparative Literature (and national language departments), Humanities, and even sometimes Art History. Considering this variegated path and the interdisciplinary surge of people who study moving images, how do we construct Film and Moving Image Studies? Our research shows that, as regards Film and Moving Image Studies, there is no hard core around which a discipline can be elaborated, which is what the recent introduction of “new media” into Film and Moving Image Studies illustrates today. Painting a broad picture of Film and Moving Image Studies as well as the issues which led to its rise requires us to take into account the constant interaction between incessant hierarchizing and reorganizing, exclusions and inclusions, and to consider disciplinary goals often left implicit. There have been some attempts to define certain specific sectors of Film and Moving Image Studies: works dedicated to some aspect or another of Film and Moving Image Studies, the practice of film history, the history of film theory or of the Cinémathèque Française, or even certain works on cinephilia. Others have examined the history of certain journals (cf. deBacque on the Cahiers du cinéma, etc.), the integration

of a film-maker within the discourse of Film and Moving Image Studies (cf. Kapsis on Hitchcock, etc.), etc. However, these studies tend to limit their horizon to a single institution or filmmaker and do not take into account the whole field of Film and Moving Image Studies nor the conditions of its emergence and development or, its epistemological perspectives and culture(s).

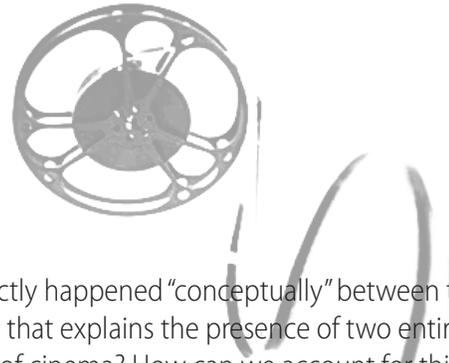
Description of the axes of research:

1st Axis: History of Film and Moving Image Studies.

This axis seeks to identify the conditions of emergence and consolidation of Film and Moving Image Studies in academia. It revolves around 3 main issues: the study of conceptual conditions, material and technological conditions, and institutional conditions.

Conceptual Conditions: Constructing the history of a disciplinary field also means constructing the history of ideas fostered by this field. Since 1895, the very idea of the moving image has undergone many transformations. Moreover, these conceptual transformations helped in some measure to establish Film and Moving Image Studies, be it through their integration into the humanities (for instance, the moving image as a form of expression and an “art”) or into the social sciences (for example, the moving image as shaping morality and even leading to the disintegration of social fabric!).

For instance, it is reasonable to think that the possibility of interpreting the moving image constitutes one of the founding moments of film studies and of its integration into academia. But in hindsight, that which seems obvious is actually the result of a complex trajectory whose history is yet to be written. If one takes as a starting point the first Lumière films, it seems obvious that, in 1895, none of the spectators screening *L’arrivée d’un train (...)* (Lumière, 1895) ever conceived of this train barreling toward them as a “metaphor” or an “allegory” of modernity or even progress and a fortiori as a *mise en abyme* of cinema itself. Yet just a few years later, by the time of Gance, Eisenstein or Vertov, the situation had changed altogether: it was (among other things) because of their symbolic status that machines and trains were used by filmmakers. But how did this change come about?



What exactly happened “conceptually” between these two moments that explains the presence of two entirely different ideas of cinema? How can we account for this desire to see “more” in moving images than what they give ordinary perception? Where does this desire come from? Today we know very little about the emergence of the idea of the interpretability of moving images. Why and how – in which discursive and social contexts – and for what purpose did we start interpreting films as a social practice? For what reasons? What were the required conditions to do so, from the viewpoint of both the spectator/interpreter and the films and their uses. Were the notions of intentionality, “auteur”, or fiction required? What were the first kinds of interpretations produced? What kind of films were first interpreted? In what ways did the practice of interpreting spread from one discursive genre (newspaper accounts, criticism) to another (scholarly discourse)? Which interpretation strategies were dominant from one period to the next and what do they tell us about our changing conceptions of cinema? It is clear that a whole set of factors contributed to this conceptual transformation.

Similar questions have affected the integration of Film and Moving Image Studies into the social sciences from the famous Payne Fund Studies, which started at the end of the 1920s, to filmology in the 1950s – an iconophobic conception of film as a harmful social agent which leads to criminal behavior or submits spectators to subliminal messages. These ideas had a determining role in the rise of media expertise.

To study these phenomena ARTHEMIS researchers use comparative analysis for discourse on film and cinematic practices. This includes examining the representation of film within different genres of discourse so as to examine in which type of discourse and at what moment did networks of pertinent notions emerge (i.e. “auteur”, “œuvre”, “intention”, “meaning”, “aesthetic value”, “fiction”); and examine how these notions break down historically and transform, and more generally how they contribute to intellectual and sociocultural interaction with the moving image from one period to the next.

Technological Conditions: It has been said over and over again: before being an art, before being an industry, cinema

is first and foremost a technology. If the initial fascination for the mechanics of moving images quickly faded in favor of the films themselves (narratives, stars, etc.), an interest of the same order nonetheless resurfaces at different key moments in the history of film and moving images: the arrival of sound, color, and big screen projections, the development of television and now that of the Internet are among the best known examples. In this regard, the advent of digital technology constitutes the latest large-scale innovation to shake up the field of moving images. The recent rise of certain so-called “archeological” approaches to media and “intermedial” studies has pushed many historians of moving images to reinvestigate different areas of technological history. Being that all moving images are partly determined by technology, it goes without saying that technology partly determines how we study films and moving images. That being said, rarely have scholars looked into the impact that these technological innovations – i.e., the new technical devices which affect the way moving images are manufactured, distributed or presented – have had on the study of film and moving images. Our work aims precisely at exploring such issues, by insisting on the way in which technological transformations can abruptly alter our conception of the moving image, its fundamental properties and its uses. Research on the emergence of the 16mm projector and the parallel networks of distribution that it fostered (which facilitated an educational access to films), on contemporary cinematic practices (blockbusters as well as different forms of paratextual “media mix”), and on the emergence of video and DVD devices (which offer new forms of access to cinematic material and new uses such as image freezing, the ability to freely forward and rewind, variable speeds, and non-linear access on DVD) allows ARTHEMIS researchers to contextualize the impact of technological innovations on the historiography and theory of cinema and moving images.

Institutional Conditions: Finally, our field requires a history of the institutions that have played a key role in the institutionalization and consolidation of Film and Moving Image Studies. Our research chiefly examines 3 institutions and their interactions with Film and Moving Image Studies – institutions of cinephilia; institutions of social and community activism; pedagogical institutions.

Institutions of Cinephilia. Are Film and Moving Image Studies an outgrowth of cinephilia? According to Metz, one of the prerequisites to the emergence of Film Studies is love of cinema. Cinephilic institutions, like film clubs, cinemathèques, and film journals have indeed played a key role in forming Film and Moving Image Studies by giving them both a space for archives and viewing as well as a first

important collection of concepts and notions. Our research seeks to link the history of cinephilia and its institutions with that of Film and Moving Image Studies. In particular, we study the different “taste cultures” (Bourdieu) to which cinephilia has given rise. For a long time the lines were blurred between the “study” of film and the “love”, “desire”, and “defense” of it as an art form. In constructing discourse and knowledge on film there are several notions, such as auteur or style, that belong as much to cinephilic rhetoric as to the academic study of film. On the one hand, it is partly because of cinephilia that Film and Moving Image Studies was able to carve out a spot for itself in universities alongside disciplines like art history and literature. On the other hand, using “evaluative” discourse (as a form of appreciation and desire of/for film), cinephilia constitutes an excessive discourse (pathemic) in which categories of taste are mixed with a very particular version of the cinematic experience. Consequently, from the end of the 1960s, cinephilia’s actual status as a basis of Film and Moving Image Studies has been put into question (by semiology, Marxism, feminism, etc.) Metz, for example, notes that in accordance with the powerful role that cinephilia plays, film theory is constantly in danger of slipping into a contradiction, a discourse of the object now risks being substituted with a discourse on the object. Furthermore, this distinction, whose issues need clarifying, became established between the knowledge of cinephilia and the expertise of film studies, both of them often focusing on the same objects. A reasoned history of cinephilia (its institutions and practices), in association with the field of Film and Moving Image Studies, must show, despite its defense of cinema, its participation in educating a cultivated public and its elaboration of important concepts and notions for Film and Moving Image Studies, while at the same time being a space of resistance to (academic) Film and Moving Image Studies.

Institutions of social and community activism. As early as 1915, H. Münsterberg recognized the educational potential of the moving image. The rise of the documentary movement at the end of the 1920s (following the development of the 16mm format) made way for the emergence of public and para-public institutions interested in the social function of cinema (information, education in general, and more particularly the education of citizens regarding public life). Different groups organized viewings of films which were often followed by a discussion. During the 1930s, the war effort led to an unprecedented unification of these groups and at the same time governments recognized the role cinema had in forming public opinion. This interest in cinema as a social intervention agent led to the founding of several entities, such as the National 16mm Advisory Com-

mittee (USA), the Canadian Film Institute, and the National Film Board of Canada. After the war other institutions started surfacing, like the Film Council of America and the Educational Film Research Institute (USA), while institutions associated with cinephilia, like the BFI (British Film Institute) and the Cinémathèque Française began promoting an educational use of cinema. In Canada, the Yorkton Film Festival, the Ontario Film Association with its Grierson Seminar, as well as the Cinémathèque Québécoise and Cinematheque Ontario have all had a considerable impact on the teaching of and through cinema. In this multi-headed network, avant-garde, experimental, documentary, and scientific films occupy a special place. Our objective consists in showing and documenting the decisive influence of this network on Film and Moving Image Studies.

Pedagogical Institutions. Dana Polan's work (2007) shows that the first film class in the United States took place in 1915. At that time (1915-1935) teaching film in a university setting was rare and only handful of classes were given in

different departments (psychology, philosophy, literature, commerce). In Great Britain and France film studies made its way into universities only later. Following in Polan's lead, the objective of studying pedagogical institutions is to research and document the entry of Film and Moving Image Studies into universities. In the case of France alone, we are examining precursor projects like the École technique photo-cinéma (1926), the Centre Artistique et Technique des Jeunes du Cinéma (1940), IDHEC (1944), and the Institut de filmologie at the Sorbonne (1950-1961), as well as the role played by the EHESS and CNRS (1960s), in order to understand the conditions for success or failure of these projects. Our also looks to document the Canadian experience. Furthermore, we are concerned with how the split between filmmaking and film studies took place in higher education.

2nd Axis: Epistemology of Film and Moving Image Studies

Film and Moving Image Studies does not constitute a unified disciplinary field at the epistemological level. In the Euro-American sphere, these studies have been historically divided between the social sciences, human sciences, and humanities, Film and Moving Image Studies generate a wide range of knowledge in relation to often very different epistemic aims. However, the rise of academic discourses and their institutionalization had led to various questions concerning the reproduction and legitimation of knowledge in Film and Moving Image Studies. For instance, how are to distinguish between academic discourse and discourses that fall under the heading of "nonacademic criticism" (including serious forms of criticism)? Are hermeneutic practices different in these two types of discourse? Are their epistemic aims distinct? Do we have to distinguish between the different types of knowledge that are thus produced? The rapid growth of what was called "Theory" beginning in the 1970s, followed by historiography in the 80s, appears to offer ways of distinguishing and legitimizing different epistemic prac-

tices both within academic Film and Moving Image Studies and when they are confronted with other discourses on film, such as cinephilia. However, Film and Moving Image Studies have not yet extensively investigated their epistemological foundations — their the tools, their concepts, their modes of knowing and their forms of rationality.

The starting premise of work developed in this axis can be described as follows: the only way to explain the epistemological issues of Film and Moving Image Studies is by studying the epistemic aims (and values) that (sometimes only implicitly) guide them, be they aesthetic, ethical or logical. The epistemological complexity of scholarly discourse in Film and Moving Image Studies deriving from the fact that different epistemic aims inspire them concurrently.

To conduct an epistemological survey on a field like Film and Moving Image Studies, we must first investigate what epistemological values the field seeks to fulfill. In more "unified" fields, such as the natural sciences, "truth" constitutes such an epistemological value. Here, the search for truth as the logical translation of an ideal (which is also both aesthetic and ethical) enables the development of the scientific method whose task is to ensure and guide the rationality of positivistic science and of its discourse. In short, the scientific method of inquiry ensures that reasoning be reactive to something other than itself. It is this "reactive" relation that makes critique possible. Whence we know that the hard sciences seek to produce theories capable of measuring up to worldly facts in such a way as to lead to the rational formation of stable beliefs and expectations. "Truth" in this context is a regulative hope of inquiry. But what, if anything, constitutes an equivalent regulative hope for inquiry in Film and Moving Image



Studies?

If the field of Film and Moving Image Studies is not presented as a unified (or “compact”) discipline, it is precisely because there is no single epistemic horizon or value from which either method or critique ensue. Nor is there a single, closed, object of inquiry: studying film and moving image means opening oneself to studying an undefinable set of networks, a vast series of series: a series of media, social, cultural, historical, economic, aesthetic, identity, ethical, philosophical, psychological, technological, ecological practices and objects. Yet this leaves us with the impression that Film and Moving Image Studies forms an interdisciplinary field more or less kaleidoscopic or anarchic, often dominated by unfounded beliefs (or vague hypotheses and simple analogies, cf. Bouveresse), or even “self-fulfilling theories”.

In this context of incertitude with regards to with the aims of Film and Moving Image Studies and under the combined effects of two very important movements in recent years, historiography and cognitivism, ARHEMIS scholars investigate the nature of knowledge and theories produced by Film and Moving Image Studies, particularly with regards to their connection with the human sciences and humanities. In recent years, debates have started in the field that reprise some of the basic arguments of classical epistemology of science. As a result, we have seen nominalist and relativist theories comparable to those leading to Kuhn’s and Feyerabend’s positions as well as to various forms of skepticism are now conflicting with the positivist and empiricist theories that are closer to, among others, Popper’s falsificationism. In the first case, certain authors (for example M. Turvey or R. Allen) attempt to show that science and theory have no place in Film and Moving Image Studies if the latter belong to the “humanities” where there is no empirical evidence to be had. In this regard, Film and Moving Image Studies ought not explain anything (according to the distinction made between *Erklären* and *Verstehen* in the German tradition). In the second case, there are authors (like D. Bordwell or N. Carroll) who believe that the theories posited in Film and Moving Image Studies have to espouse an explicative approach by adopting a natural science model, without which Film and Moving Image Studies will not produce knowledge and will fall into the category of pure metaphysical speculation, pseudo-science, dogmatism or even irrationalism (beliefs that have been either adopted or rejected in an uncontrollable manner, without any kind of testing coming from outside its own realm).

The research positions advanced in this axis seek to break free from the trap set by this epistemological dualism by distinguishing the different forms of rationality at work in the theories of Film and Moving Image Studies. ARHEMIS

researchers work at demonstrating that anti-foundationalism doesn’t necessarily lead to skepticism and relativism and that choices other than dualism are available. This implies resisting any impulse to either translate Film and Moving Image Studies (and their theories) into the terms of nomothetic science, or else to reject rationalism, or even to convert more strictly scientific approaches in terms of “textualism”. Rather, one must instead recognize that (1) it is primarily through reason and not through an access to “truth” (in the metaphysical sense of the word) that general epistemology is possible and (2) that the work of reason, which is to say the critique and the control of belief, is based on different operations and requires a different framework depending on whether a discourse’s aim is aesthetic, ethical or logical. These principles are consistent with contemporary epistemological work (Putnam or Tiercelin) which states that, be it a question of empirical science or humanities research, it is only through forms of life (and therefore through lived experience) that one can judge the value (including the truth) of concepts. For instance, it follows that certain theories — like aesthetic theories in Film and Moving Image Studies — need not be “true” (or falsifiable) in the way that that positive science intends it in order to be “rational” and subject to critique. This means that critique can lay its basis “elsewhere”, on a different epistemological value. In the case of aesthetic theories, regulative hope may lie instead in a theory’s ability to account for habits of feeling, or for its ability to make us revise them or develop new ones.

Such hypotheses, which concern the bases for knowledge in the supposedly “soft” fields of the social sciences and humanities — domains which have historically played an important role in Film and Moving Image Studies research — guide ARHEMIS researchers in their work on of the forms of rationality that occur in academic discourse pertaining the study of film and moving images. They allow researchers to differentiate the various epistemological ties to theories and concepts in Film and Moving Image Studies. Special attention is devoted to hermeneutic discourse (thus connecting this research to that of the first axis). The different approaches to these types of discourses (among the most common: historical, cultural, and social “explanations”; interpretation as “seen as”; interpretation as the expression of an aesthetic experience or as the desire to spark interest in a work, etc.) and the means put in place to carry them are examined closely as are “background” presuppositions and beliefs with regards to moving images (film as text, for example).



3rd Axis: Film and Moving Image Studies Culture(s)

Sociologists and education science specialists (i.e., Bourdieu or T. Becher) have shown that academic disciplines are spaces in which identities, “academic tribes” are formed, to use Becher’s expression. Their work also illustrates how practicing an academic discipline is linked to and even creates ways of seeing and conceiving the world. These identities assume many different forms. For example, national traditions of Film and Moving Image Studies in France, the United States and Japan are very different. These differences affect both the institutional places where Film and Moving Image Studies are practiced and disseminated, as well as research topics and the way they are conceived. These questions are distinct from the historical and epistemological problems addressed in axes 1 and 2, but they are certainly not entirely foreign to them either: they provide another angle on a disciplinary field, one that is oriented toward other preoccupations closer to that of sociology and anthropology – or “cultural studies”. Indeed, the history of institutions as well as epistemological considerations regarding approaches and background beliefs emerge from issues that are raised by questions of disciplinary identity and cultural traditions within Film and Moving Image Studies.

The slow and difficult integration of Film and Moving Image Studies into academia has been doubly symptomatic: firstly, the “uncertain” cultural status of film (they were originally a low-brow form of entertainment) has made it difficult to legitimize it an autonomous entity within academic departments whose entire resources would be devoted it; and secondly it is equally symptomatic of an uncertainty regarding how to approach it, how to “discipline” it (as a fine art? A mass form of communication? As psychology? As an industry? And an outgrowth of the novel or theatre?). Approaches, moreover, have varied according to national intellectual traditions.

For example, notwithstanding a few short-lived attempts in France to integrate film studies in the social sciences, it is mostly through humanities and aesthetics that French thought on film blossomed, even when structuralist and formalist approaches was developed in the 1960s and 70s. Moreover, the post 1968 political radicalism that seized part of the theoretical production (*Les cahiers du cinéma*, *Cinéthique*) was quickly sublimated by “poetics” (film semiology, enunciation theory). Yet as soon as the structuralist

perspective made its way across the English Channel in the beginning of the 1970s, it had acquired an unseen political dimension in its country of origin, and took on a more sociological “media studies” tradition. Thus, “Screen Theory”, although it initially referred to French thought (Metz, Althusser, Lacan), remains a deeply Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, having produced approaches to the moving image that are still largely unseen in France even today (feminism, “Queer Theory”, “Identity Politics”, “Cultural Studies”). Similarly, in Japan, starting in the 1960s, the translation of European texts on the nature of technical and mechanical reproduction (in the works of A. Bazin, E. Morin, W. Benjamin), had a considerable impact on the Japanese conception of images (*eizo*), while neglecting the more metaphysical and theological dimension which characterized it in the sphere of Western thought. These examples shed light on at least two aspects of Film and Moving Image Studies culture that are worth studying: the existence of different national traditions for approaching moving images; a complex transnational circulation that affects both epistemic conceptions and practices, which is to say the ways of seeing and conceiving the moving image.

Such studies require we abandon a few stereotypes. The first among them, is the idea that there is no true Film and Moving Image Studies tradition outside of North America, of a handful of western European countries and the USSR at the time of Eisenstein, Kouleshov, and Poudovkin. Various factors (both institutional and cultural) have led today to the existence of a veritable hegemony of Francophone and Anglophone thought on Film and Moving Image Studies, to the point that of sometimes having the impression that – apart from a couple Italian and German outsiders – other national traditions are either non-existent or dead. This is not the case. The ARTHEMIS research team is conducting research that seeks to cover and disseminate work that comes from other traditions (notably in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico; in Asia: Japan and Korea) and to understand the transnational power dynamic marginalizing them. As visual culture globalizes, it is impossible to limit Film and Moving Image Studies to the canonical Euro-American sphere. Indeed, if we take more interest in moving-image productions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Maghreb, it is also important that we learn about the analytical tools, conceptual traditions and categories upon which the moving image is reflected, and understand their functions and genealogy within each of these societies. It is in this context that our research examines the influence exerted by Italian Marxist critique from the 30s and 40s on film culture in countries like Brazil, Argentina and Cuba.