

Claire Dutriaux

Associate Professor of American cinema and American studies

Sorbonne Universités – Faculté des Lettres

Claire_Dutriaux@yahoo.fr

Member of SERCIA since 2009

Biography

Claire Dutriaux completed her PhD dissertation on the representation of white men in Southern films from *The Birth of a Nation* to the 2000s in 2011. She then became Associate Professor of American studies and cinema at Sorbonne Universités, and has continued to publish and give talks on her dissertation topic as well as on the larger issues of race and class in American cinema. She recently published an article on train-hopping hoboes in American films in *Film Journal*: <http://filmjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FJ3.5-C.-Dutriaux-withscreenshots.pdf>

Synthetic Cinema, Remediation, and the Transformation of Archival TV Footage in American Historical Dramas of the 1990s and 2000s

This paper intends to explore the relationship between the small screen and the big screen, by examining how American films classified as historical dramas insert and manipulate archival TV news footage, as an example of cinematic remediation. The insertion of newsreel footage in films suggests that History is, by definition, a narrative construct and subject to repetition and reinterpretation. Films such as *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1996) and *JFK* (Oliver Stone, 1991) go further by directly manipulating the archival image / footage with editing and morphing techniques, inserting the lead characters into the newsreel. Others, like Steven Soderbergh's *The Good German* (2006) merge archival footage with documentary-like aesthetics, confusing the relationship between representation and truth. These remediations complicate the concepts of History and memory, as the cinema “would seem to be a medium that now refuses history in the traditional sense of origins, authenticity and documentation,” (Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film*, 2008, 223), deliberately resembling the past without corresponding to any historical reality. This paper will thus examine the diverse ways American historical dramas use and transform archival footage onto the big screen and the effects of such transformations on what it means to present and re-present History.

Keywords

Remediation, archival footage, historical dramas, History, memory