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The Mediascape Q&A: Chon Noriega, Professor, Cinema and Media Studies

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The Mediascape Q&A is a series of interviews designed to explore the work of UCLA faculty and graduate students beyond the classroom.



— Dr. Chon Noriega

Interviewer: Matthias Stork

Mediascape Blog: Since I have not yet had the pleasure to take a class with you, Professor Noriega, could you briefly explain what it is exactly that you do in the department? And additionally, could you illuminate some of your past and current research projects?

Chon Noriega: OK. I've been a faculty member in the Cinema and Media Studies program for 20 years now. And for the last 10 years I've also been directing the Chicano Studies Research Center, which

currently accounts for about half of my time, primarily on the teaching side. I am still a full-time faculty member, in terms of service, in terms of student advising. But on the teaching side, it's been reduced, although in 2011-12 I agreed to do a startup on our Colloquium. So, I taught five courses that year, and three of them were the Colloquium. The idea for the Colloquium was to create an intellectual commons where the faculty and the graduate students could come together to learn about new research by students, faculty in the program, faculty across the campus, and visiting scholars. But it was also designed as a forum for town halls to discuss programmatic issues related to the M.A. or the Ph.D. curriculum. I'm in the process of assessing this experiment right now, to understand whether we actually accomplished what we set out to do and how it could continue. In terms of my teaching, I try to balance it between doing core courses in the program and

then the electives on the graduate side. In the past I've also taught undergraduate courses. The one I really like is "The History of African, Asian, and Latin American Cinema." And I think, with the exception of Teshome Gabriel, I've been one of the few people that actually teaches all three regions rather than emphasizing just one of them. And I really enjoy it. It's probably one of my more popular undergraduate courses. And the TAs [teaching assistants] really get a lot out of it, because it's difficult to cover the vast majority of the population of the world in terms of cinematic history over a century. So you have to give up the idea that you're going to be comprehensive, but what I do is to start in the 1930s and just say that in each decade we'll look at a national cinema in one of these three regions in the world in which that decade was pivotal or transformative for that national industry. And we'll look at it in the context of the national history, industrial history, and then the contextual cinematic histories that relate to either the author, the genre, the particular mode of filmmaking, or whatever is pertinent in the cluster of films that we'll look at that week. So we start in the 1930s in Mexico. We work our way to the 1940s to Japan. In the 1950s we go to India. Essentially, we move around the world decade by decade. And the fascinating thing is you begin to see there are some recurring similarities in terms of transformations taking place within a national—a non-U.S. national cinema. And some of these have to do with the formation of the industry. Some of them have to do with the place of cinema within emerging nationalist periods, in many cases due to civil war or independence. And in terms of the relationship between the producers, the distributors, and the exhibitors, there are fairly consistent themes that have to do with the fact that the exhibitors will make a profit off the Hollywood films, not so much the national product, with very few exceptions. And it's fascinating to see how that plays out decade over decade. And the last time, I even brought it up to Korean cinema. I happened to have a former Ph.D. student from South Korea who's now an assistant professor at UC Berkeley, and he was able to work out loans with the Korean Embassy. So we were able to see some fairly contemporary films that otherwise were not getting commercial release throughout the United States. They were shown at some festivals here and there. The last few years, I typically alternated the historiography class with Vivian Sobchack [professor emeritus]. She's going to be teaching it next year. We teach it very similarly, which is to try to combine a theoretical approach to historiography with some hands-on historical research and historical writing. The other core courses I've been teaching include "Film Criticism," which I think is in serious need of revision. It has been on the books pretty much for the history of the program, but what "film criticism" means in our field has shifted rather drastically and I think it's open to question right now about what we want to achieve here. The way I've just finished teaching it is more as a professional development course. So the students—these are first-year Ph.D. students—they brought in a paper they had written in one of the first two quarters that they felt merited further development. And the goal was to revise these papers in a workshop mode throughout the quarter and to—by the end of the course or early in the summer—submit it to a journal. It was really an excellent exercise for the students because you have to realize with most students you've been an undergraduate, you've been an M.A. student, now you're a Ph.D. student. Every quarter you write three or four papers that are essentially first drafts. And you never have a formal opportunity within the curriculum to revise anything. And that's where the real thinking starts to take place. The first draft is what any first draft is, it's your first attempt to process information that you've brought in, critical frameworks that you've been discussing, and just put it out there. They typically are longer than they need to be because a lot of the writing is exploratory. With the revision process you're going back and saying, What have I discovered that I need to emphasize and frame in ways that are of consequence or significance to the field? And then, What do I need to do in order to develop that argument further? It's a very different and difficult kind of writing process. So I think it went very well and it was kind of exciting to see the papers develop. I've taught "Theory and Method," which is the other Ph.D. core course. And I think one of the ironies of our field is that there has been a lot of theory but there was often really only one method, and that was close textual analysis. Today the field has diversified to such an extent that you can't do what you claimed to do 20 years ago, which is keep up with everything [Laughs]. There's all these subsets even within what have emerged as the key areas in our field: film, television, video,

new media, and games. And there's also been a shift from primarily focusing on textual analysis to looking at various contextual factors, initially through the lens of cultural studies but now through industrial analysis and cultural policy/legislation. So it's an exciting moment, particularly for the students that want to find a through line across several research areas and methodologies as a way of trying to get at something that otherwise has not really been fully articulated or fully visible within the field. And I think that's exciting but it's also a challenge to figure out how do we implement all that into the core curriculum? How do we in some ways at least gesture toward everything that's out there?

MB: Quite a challenge, indeed. [Chuckles] You actually covered several follow-up questions that I had prepared.

CN: It's been a while since I've taught core courses on the M.A. side, but I've done them all except for "Classical Film Theory."

MB: Professor [Kathleen] McHugh taught it this quarter.

CN: Yeah, I think she's really come up with an innovative way of tying that in with contemporary concerns, which is ultimately where we take that course when you come to the back end with your comprehensive exams.

MB: It was a very engaging class. I would like to hark back to your teaching. I am wondering whether you have a teaching philosophy that you cultivate and, if so, whether it has evolved over time.

CN: Yeah, I've noticed that every five to seven years I feel I've reached the end of what I've been able to do within one framework. And then I go through a period of a year or two of rethinking what it is I am trying to do in the classroom. I think it shifts depending on whether you're doing a core course or an elective, whether you're working on something directly related to your research or a general area of interest—all of those are variables. But I think over time my relationship to the seminar has shifted from where it began as a junior faculty to now and in some ways my approach to seminars has become truer to the original spirit of the seminar as a pedagogical format. A professor is supposed to facilitate discussion and create a workshop atmosphere in which people read similar texts to talk through an area, whether it's a topic area, a research area, a methodological area. And that really requires shifting the responsibility over to the student to advance that dialogue. That said, I do think as the teacher you always have to be aware of what are the core takeaways that you feel are essential to the course. And I feel I've gone from a model that probably wasn't very good early on—but it was where I was at intellectually and professionally, where I did more in the way of lecturing—to now, where it's really facilitating discussion among the students and then figuring out where are the moments in which you need to bring in essentially a mini-lecture to make sure that everybody has some kind of baseline information, but also to shift out the responsibility to students to do some of that as well. I think the key intervention within a seminar for me is to make sure that we have really sufficiently worked through a particular passage or a particular idea. Or grappled with a particular tendency or even a mistake that sometimes occurs within the secondary literature, not because it's a mistake per se but it's indicative of certain presumptions that are commonly shared within the field, and therefore don't have to be argued and supported with evidence. Every field has them [Laughs]. I think it is important to become self-aware of those presumptions, not only to participate more effectively in the field but also to understand what you're doing in your own research and writing.

MB: I find it very valuable to be taught how to be self-reflective in your own work as a student. Do you strive for this particular effect in undergraduate courses as well?

CN: Well, with undergraduate teaching it's very different. There, I think our relationship with the TAs is more on the order of training them how to handle a large lecture class but then also the discussion sections. How it is that you move a large number of students through a topic without leaving them entirely in a passive position relative to learning. And part of that is really having your lesson plan down for each class, knowing what the questions are that you want the students to be able to answer. And what I found was very helpful was just to hand

those out, to say, Here are the study questions. Some of these questions will be on the midterm or the final, but not all of them will be there. By that, you ensure that the students have taken away something that you felt was important for them to know and to be able to process. The short essay questions capture the rest in terms of the ability to then take all of that information and apply it to critical and historical analysis. (By the way, our program has an exceptional training program for TAs—taught by advanced Ph.D. students, but the campus also has significant resources for TAs through the Office of Instructional Development.) In any case, I love teaching large classes, too, it's very performative.

MB: Could you elaborate upon the notion of the "performative"?

CN: I think some people are actually intimidated by standing in front of a large group of people. If you stand in front of them as your private self, yes, it is very intimidating, because the private self really only corresponds to you and maybe one or two other people in your presence. So you have to step into a public persona that correlates to who you are. I think doing that is not just about broadcasting, it's about finding a way to connect individually with many different people all at once. And I think that it's important to attend to that dimension so that the students don't slip out into a passive or distracted mode. I think one of the huge challenges of the last decade has just been the fact that students, whether they're graduate students or undergraduates, they're online while they're sitting in the classroom. They're texting. They're looking things up on Google or Wikipedia to challenge you or to verify what you said. Some of that is good, but a lot of it is just very distracting. You have to try to work with that but you also have to work against it. And it's not always very successful to just try to shut that down. You have to provide a more compelling alternative.

MB: Yeah, I have to admit that before I came here I was not accustomed to the use of online media in the classroom. But I have not yet started using a laptop myself.

CN: It's an interesting phenomenon. Everybody does it now, even faculty. And you say, But don't use Wikipedia, but then you turn around and use it. So I think what you have to do is you have to teach the skepticism that can make those *useful* tools. And that's often missing. And I noticed that even with our graduate students, if you haven't spent time going through the stacks, going through archival collections, and really balancing the evidence you find against itself, you're going to have a much harder time figuring out the value of what you can easily find online. Even as we find more and more stuff online you still have to be able to pose those questions, and be able to put forth an argument about the validity or the evidentiary value of what you have there. [Laughs] Wow! Any more questions?

MB: Of course. [Laughs] But before I pose them, I would like to give you an opportunity to issue a general word of advice to CMS graduate and undergraduate students.

CN: A general word?

MB: It can be specific as well.

CN: Floss. [Laughs]

MB: [Laughs]. Very valuable indeed.

CN: A general word of advice. Gee, you know, 10 years ago I would've known. [Laughter] 10 years ago, we would have said, "See a lot of films, get a good viewing history." But you know what? No one would admit to it, or tell you what it was, exactly, but we were all working from a canon, right? And every time you try to draw that out people resist. But we're doing these things. We're forming canons. We're dealing with authors. We're identifying genres. And as problematic as all of these are, you're hard-pressed to do something without having that factor in because there is just too much stuff sitting behind you. You have to filter it in some way. And you have to filter in ways in which there's a large degree of consensus, otherwise no one has a reason to listen to anyone else. But that also sets up a certain structure of thought by which you also challenge that consensus.

I still feel the need for getting a good viewing history, of looking at films broadly, with national contexts, within different modes of filmmaking. In the past, access to screening films, and the fact that as many as 90% of American films before 1929 are lost, acted as a de facto filter. You saw whatever you could see. Now that's sort of flipped around. What can't you find on YouTube? You are not going to be able to see even a very small percentage of what *is* available in the moment. So it's hard to say that's what you have to do, but it's kind of still what you have to do, in the same way that you need to read deeply within your area of expertise and broadly across the field in whatever way makes sense to you, because there's not a good road map. There's just not enough time in the day. I think if you're an M.A. student, look broadly across the field, even if you have a clear idea of your interest. As a Ph.D. student you have to drill deep but you also have to begin bringing in two or three other areas, either within our field or external to it, that will help you do that kind of specialist research in a way that is going to be more compelling to people other than the dozen or so folks that are sharing that interest with you. [Laughs] Long-winded answer. [Laughs]

MB: Long-winded answers are very much appreciated. And in fact, I think it was rather concise. OK, now is your chance to...

CN: I'm getting so many opportunities.

MB: Well, this is an opportunity to recommend essential books for undergraduate and graduate students.

CN: OK. Recommending books. I think it doesn't hurt to read some of the work by the faculty in the program you're applying to or the program you're in. This will be true when you get your Ph.D. and go out into the market as well. That's a practical matter but I think in light of what I just said it has a broader function. For me it's hard to recommend anything particular. I mean, I taught a course on film and the other arts and I assigned a book I hadn't read before, which is something you do to a certain extent as a way of reading new things. And it wasn't a new book per se—it was Victor Burgin's *The Remembered Film*. And for some reason it took me by surprise because I hadn't expected it to be so overwhelmingly psychoanalytic in its approach. But Victor Burgin is also not a traditional film scholar per se. He's an artist. And there's a slightly different vantage point in terms of what he's doing as well, in the same way that probably one of the most influential articles in our field, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," was written by a filmmaker [Laura Mulvey], was really written as a call to action for filmmakers, right? It had that kind of interesting approach. And while the class uniformly did not like the book [Laughs], I found it really, extraordinarily engaging. It opened up my own thinking, because it was in some ways so distant from it. So it's less to recommend that book—although I think it's a very good book—than to say sometimes the things that really have an impact on you are the things that come from an unexpected place. When I was doing the research on my book *Shot in America*, there were two books from the 1970s, from the historical period I was looking at, that opened up my thinking in general. And then because they were from the period, they gave me a theoretical framework that was not something imposed from critical debates taking place now. It was a way of drawing out to a theoretical level some of the ways in which the issues had been framed at that time. And they weren't necessarily canonical works that had stood the test of time. They just very effectively articulated something about power relations in a moment of profound social change, that gave me a good analytic framework to go back to and look at the period. And then to bring in some contemporary theoretical work looking at state theory, regulatory agencies, social movements. So one of the books was Francisco Lewels's *The Uses of the Media in the Chicano Movement* (1974). Its main impact was that it cited an immense amount of articles that were in the television and regulatory trade publications that were off my radar for various reasons. Now, the book got every citation wrong. [Laughs] And it missed a lot, too. But it gave a good framing in terms of the significance of those sources from the perspective of a social movement. It added another year to my research. But it represented an entire set of sources that were completely outside the framework of how my area was looked at before, what constituted the visual texts and what constituted the appropriate primary sources that related to those texts. The other book was comparable in that it

theorized the feminist movement, Jo Freeman's *The Politics of Women's Liberation* (1975). And it was doing it in ways that really complemented the literature that was being produced at that time in the Chicano Movement and media. But it also gave me a very useful approach to theorizing social movements that resonated with the literature that was emerging at that time. So this was over 10 years ago, where suddenly more analytic work on social movements emerged in the U.S. context. It was nice to have this but it was a certain understanding that was being articulated within the context of the social movements themselves by feminists, by labor activists. Another book that was very influential rather late in the process was Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* (1971), because everybody I was writing about had read that book. And this explains why they did certain things. It's like, "Oh my God, they were just following what Saul Alinsky told them to do." [Laughter] One of the major radical figures of the mid-twentieth century. [Pauses] I forgot what the question was, but that was the answer.

MB: I can assure you that you responded to the question. [Laughs]

CN: [Laughs] So yeah, just interesting things. I will just say the book I just finished reading, it took me a long time because I was enjoying it so much, was Stephen Greenblatt's *The Swerve: How The World Became Modern*. Greenblatt is a Renaissance scholar and one of the founders of New Historicism. *The Swerve* looks at how Lucretius's *The Nature of Things* was recovered about 1,000 years after it had been written and then reintroduced into Europe at precisely that moment where the Renaissance was beginning with the Reformation, including a lot of the underlining brutality that is in the nature of the exchange of ideas because of how they correlate to power structures. He wrote it almost like a novel. And what was fascinating to me was the fact that I often feel like my generation is the last generation to collect books and to feel the imperative to have (and be) a personal research library. You have in some sense direct access to a broader room of knowledge that is strictly within you, but it can only be potentially within you to the extent that you're reading these and studying them, and as objects making that knowledge part of your extension. It's an extension of you, in reference to Marshall McLuhan. But this idea also correlates to Walter Benjamin's "Unpacking My Library," that sense of having a library that moves through space with you. And as he says at one point, some of the most important books in his library are the ones he hasn't read. But they fill a space for him. They fill out a grid of knowledge that he's carrying with him. So reading *The Swerve* and seeing how its story in fact is in some ways very much like *Fahrenheit 451*, now that Ray Bradbury is no longer with us—the way in which these books transmit information is that people would go and they would find them in a monastery and they would transcribe it. And then that copy would get transcribed. So it's like this human photocopy machine across time. Then suddenly there are many more multiples and they're more accessible to a broader range of people. So I think this history is pertinent now because in some ways we're at a turning point. The proliferation of texts is much greater, but their relationship to object-ness, to being a thing, is very different. And I noticed that in the class I just finished teaching I was the only one that actually had a hard copy of the book, everybody had bought it as an eBook because it was just too expensive for them. But I couldn't tell them what page to go to as a consequence. [Laughs]

MB: There is almost never a direct correlation between the page numbers of a book and its eBook version. I have fallen victim to that as well.

CN: Yeah, and I think for people of my generation the eBook is for the things we care less about, so for pleasure reading, stuff like that, that you don't necessarily want to have a physical manifestation of, the idea of holding onto it.

MB: I wholeheartedly concur.

CN: There's something going on there with the nature of memory as well. I remember like 10 years ago you'd be at a dinner party with middle-aged people and we're trying to remember who was the actress in that film? And we'd spend half an hour brainstorming together until suddenly it popped into somebody's memory. And now one of us will pull out our iPhone and speak into it. We'll name the film, IMDb will show up. We'll scan through it and we'll find that person. And we're so comfortable with that that in some sense we've given up the idea of

having a memory or of having a social memory that can be reconstructed in a group. We just know it's out there somewhere? [Laughs]

MB: It is. And it constitutes its own category of memory...but is it still intimately social?

CN: Well, the idea of social memory. There's something very asocial about it in fact because it brings an end to the cocktail chatter, you know? [Laughter]

MB: To conclude, I would like to ask you a personal question which may prove controversial...

CN: Killed them all, yes. [Laughter] Exterminate the bastards. [Laughs]

MB: You briefly mentioned the notion of the canon. And I'm curious as to whether you have a canon of personal favorites, films that in your estimation mark a standard of excellence.

CN: I think as somebody who is a film and media scholar you will always be asked that question. We're one of the unusual fields in that everyone else will feel perfectly comfortable being an expert in your field. You will get nothing deferred to as an authority or expert. [Laughs] And at the same time people will have the fascination to ask what is your favorite film? So that is the primary goal of your scholarship. I'm really horrible at that because I forget most of the things I've seen. I usually remember maybe the third time I'm watching a movie. [Laughs]

MB: You could always look it up on the internet.

CN: [Laughs] Yeah, you can look it up on the internet. You can go to YouTube. I don't know that I have a favorite film per se. I think there's a cluster of films that I gravitate towards that I feel are doing something very significant, *The White Ribbon*, *A Prophet*, *Melancholia*. I think there's something about these films that is almost perfect in the conception of them and what they're able to bring to the surfaces that are the cinema. And I thought *A Prophet* and the very different *The White Ribbon* were probably the two best films of that year, but of course *Avatar* is what got all the attention. [Laughs]

MB: *The White Ribbon* won the Palme d'Or. And *A Prophet* won the Grand Prix if memory serves me correctly. But yeah, you're right. [Laughter]

CN: So there's that aspect of me and then the flip side is I have essentially my counter canon, which is the films that while I know all the problems one could attribute to them, I think in fact they are doing something equally brilliant in the cinema, whether it's idiosyncratic, personal, or profoundly social. In fact, the first article I wrote—it was 25 years ago now—was on *Godzilla* films. And that's because I was taking a horror film class with Linda Williams, who was my teacher at the University of Illinois in Chicago. And she was showing us *Nosferatu and Vampyr* and I'd fall asleep through these films. I was like, "This isn't a horror film." [Laughs] To her credit, she got to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Night of the Living Dead*. She's an amazing teacher. But midway through, I thought, I'm going to write about *Godzilla* films. Of course, those aren't really horror films, but it was the state of mind I was in. And I wrote this very passionate defense of them that over time, with help from Linda and then from Virginia Wexman, who was also a film professor there and who was the editor of *Cinema Journal* at the time, began to engage in the revision process, and turned it into a nice article on sci-fi horror-ish films in a cultural and historical context. And that began a process whereby I have my areas of expertise and the things I look at seriously, and then I have the films that really reflect the other part of me that's a bottom feeder, that unabashedly enjoys mass culture. These are the films that are "bad" with quotation marks around the word, without fetishizing the texts, without turning the viewing of them into some kind of hyper-ironic connoisseurship. I just like things that are bad, you know? And I used to write reviews for *Magill's Cinema Annual*, a reference tool for films released in the U.S. each year. It was a way I made money as a graduate student. But I'd review *Def-Con 4* and *Mandroid*, and things like that, because I wanted a chance to be able to go see them. And after I paid for the ticket I still made about \$110. [Laughs] So the other trash films I've written about include the first film I remember as a narrative—I was about 10 years old—called *Pretty Maids All in a Row*. It's a softcore film starring Rock

Hudson, Angie Dickinson, and Telly Savalas. It was Roger Vadim's first and last American film, and it was Rock Hudson's first post-studio-contract. He is said to have had the last studio contract... It was produced by Gene Roddenberry. And Francis Pollini was the novelist whose work it was based on—he was a very popular post-Korean War novelist. In short, it was a perfect storm of all of the right people coming together to produce utter trash. [Laughter] And it became the first narrative I remember because my parents wanted to go see it and they didn't want to hire a babysitter. They put my sister and me in the backseat and said, "Sleep." Well, I sat back there watching the whole film aware that there was something about this film that made me want to remember it. And I kept repeating the narrative in my head as I watched, so it wouldn't slip away. And it became the first film I remembered, and still remember. And I went back and I saw it 30-some years later. And in fact I had remembered it perfectly. I knew every scene. Nothing was different. But rather than being this very profound exploration of human nature, it was just utter, unforgettable trash. It's not because my memory has changed. It's exactly the same. It's the vantage point from which I'm viewing it that is profoundly different now. And the irony being that I'm now looking at it as someone who is older than his parents were. And I'm the same age as all of the guys that made it. [Laughs] I thought there's something interesting about all of that. [Laughter] The next such article I'd write would be on *EuroTrip*, but I think I've seen it one too many times and it's lost its aura. Another trash film I've written about is Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls*, with Elizabeth Berkley.

MB: Speaking of fascinating trash.

CN: Yes. [Laughs] In fact, at the time I was on the editorial board of *Film Quarterly*, and during lunch we would talk about all things film. And the other folks had encyclopedic knowledge about classical Hollywood cinema. And they would talk about who the assistant to the costume designer was on a film that I'd never heard of. [Laughter] These were very fascinating discussions. But I thought I'd make a contribution more along the lines of my interests. And I just said, "You know, I think one of the most overlooked films of the last decade was Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls*." And to my surprise Leo Braudy, and Linda Williams, in fact everybody, said, "Yes." They just all jumped in and said, "We agree." And so within about five minutes we had settled on doing a dossier in *Film Quarterly* and we got Noel Carroll to write a piece. And I wrote a piece for it because I was really excited. I had reached a point where I wanted to write an article that's not about race. And this seems to be a film that's so suited to that task. And of course, by the time I finished the article I realized it was entirely about race. But there was something about the film in which I found its badness so informative. It was getting something so absolutely wrong that it became insightful about that moment in time and the shifts that were taking place in the industry. The writer was Joe Eszterhaus. This was the last script he was able to sell having written the concept on the back of a paper napkin. It was like from that point on, "You better draft this one out for us. We don't trust you." [Laughs] The story is set in the fastest growing suburb in the United States. But the racial dynamics of those changes were very interesting as well. And Elizabeth Berkley as a sacrificial lamb to the star machinery of Hollywood, and the way in which that came about, and how it's narrativized in the film, I just thought, "Wow! There's something to say here." And I was really thrilled that a lot of my colleagues agreed. [Laughter] I forgot what the question was.

MB: I believe I asked you to elaborate about your personal canon of films.

CN: Canon, yes.

MB: I believe you established that your favorite film of all time is *Showgirls*. We can leave it at that.

CN: [Laughs] Yeah, *Showgirls* and *Melancholia*.

MB: What a double feature they would make! [Laughs]

CN: They're the exact same film. They're both made by misogynists. [Laughter] Although *Melancholia* is a Lars von Trier film that does not have his usual absolutely enraging misogynist narrative resolution. And, of course, it's also the

film in which the entire Earth is destroyed. [Laughs] All right, well, anything else?

MB: I believe we covered everything...and more. Thank you very much.

CN: Well, it gave you a lot of stuff to transcribe. Hopefully it was recording, right?

Special thanks to Chon Noriega for his participation, reflections, and insights.

Author Bio:

Matthias Stork is currently an M.A. student in the Cinema and Media Studies program at UCLA. He is interested in video essays as emergent forms of film criticism and scholarship, the aesthetics of neo-spectacle, and the intersections of cinema and digital media, especially the synergies between films and video games. Moreover, he is interested in questions of media literacy and post-continuity. You can see his video essay work at <http://vimeo.com/cineessais>.

He also coined the term "[Chaos Cinema](#)."

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