



UCLA'S JOURNAL OF CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES

# MEDIASCAPE

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## Scholars on the Subject of Media, Politics and the Academy

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In the currently heightened sense of political consequence in this presidential election year in the United States, Mediascape "Meta" posed a series of questions to several scholars about the relationship among politics, media, and the academy. These questions were designed to prompt discussion, interpretation—even argument—as the respondents turned reflexively toward an examination of their own profession in the current political climate. As respondent and scholar Chuck Tryon observed in a preamble to his remarks, "In working through many of these questions and revisiting some of the scholarly debates that have informed them, I found myself questioning many of my most closely held assumptions about the role of the scholar both in the classroom and in the public sphere."

Such contemplation is evidenced in the answers provided by all of our respondents—professors Bill Nichols, Allyson Field, Toby Miller, and Chuck Tryon. Despite sometimes contrary responses, what emerges from this virtual roundtable is a picture of media scholarship as a critical lens for creating—and deconstructing—political meaning. Turning again to Tryon: "I found myself returning to the very clear conclusion that media studies, broadly defined, provides us with an important avenue for thinking about the current state of political discourse."

### Respondents



**Allyson Nadia Field** is Assistant Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA. Her primary research interest is in race and ethnicity in American film, including non-theatrical film production, independent cinema, and Hollywood. She is currently completing a book titled Filming Uplift and Projecting Possibility on African American uplift films of the 1910s and the film production of southern agricultural and industrial educational institutions. Field is also working on a project on black independent filmmaking in the 1970s-1990s. In 2007-2008, she was a Sheila Biddle Ford Foundation Fellow at the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University.



**Toby Miller** is chair of the Department of Media & Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside. He edits two journals, [Social Identities](#) and [Television & New Media](#), and is the author and editor of over 30 books. His work has appeared in translation in Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, Japanese, and German. His next book is [Makeover Nation: The United States of Reinvention](#).



**Bill Nichols** is a Professor of Cinema at San Francisco State University and author of [Introduction to Documentary](#), [Representing Reality](#), and [Ideology and the Image](#), and editor of [Movies and Methods](#). His next article, on documentary reenactment, will appear in the Fall 2008 issue of [Critical Inquiry](#).



**Chuck Tryon** is an Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies at Fayetteville State University. He has published essays in [Film Criticism](#), [Post-Identity](#), and [Rhizomes](#), as well as a number of anthologies. His book, [Reinventing Cinema: Movies in the Age of Digital Convergence](#) will be published by Rutgers University Press.

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*Craig* [11/05/2008 12:39 PM](#)

This is such a novel approach!

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