

# Anthropology Colloquia

## Fall 2013

William T.S. Mazzarella  
Professor, University of Chicago

### *Totalitarian Tears, or Does the Crowd Really Mean It?*

This paper explores the reaction, in Western media commentary, to the announcement of North Korean premier Kim Jong Il's death in December 2011. In particular, I focus on responses to the widely circulated images of massive crowds crying on the streets of Pyongyang. These responses obsessively returned to a single question: "Do they really mean it?" I ask why the sincerity of the North Korean crying crowds came to seem at once so necessary and so impossible to non-Korean observers. Why should the passing of this most reviled regime be troublesome to Western observers?



William Mazzarella is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India* (2003) and *Censorium: Cinema and the Open Edge of Mass Publicity* (2013).

Monday, October 28th  
3:30-5:00 pm  
261, Social Sciences 1