

Lights, Camera, Action. Marxism, Semiotics, Narratology.

Posted on Frameworks Search by Google

From: Alena Williams (alena@xxxxxxx)

Date: Sun Jul 13 2003 - 09:08:44 PDT

Subject: Lights, Camera, Action. Marxism, Semiotics, Narratology.

It seems that some industry people are just beginning to get clued in...

-alena

+ + +

COVER STORY - Los Angeles Times Magazine

***'Lights, Camera, Action. Marxism, Semiotics, Narratology.
Film school isn't what it used to be, one father discovers.'***

By **David Weddle**, Special to The Times

July 13, 2003

"How did you do on your final exam?" I asked my daughter.

Her shoulders slumped. "I got a C."

Alexis was a film studies major completing her last undergraduate year at UC Santa Barbara. I had paid more than \$73,000 for her college education, and the most she could muster on her film theory class final was a C?

"It's not my fault," she protested. "You should have seen the questions. I couldn't understand them, and nobody else in the class could either. All of the kids around me got Cs and Ds."

She insisted that she had studied hard, then offered: "Here, read the test yourself and tell me if it makes any sense."

I took it from her, confidently. After all, I had graduated 25 years ago from USC with a bachelor's degree in cinema. I'd written a biography of movie director Sam Peckinpah, articles for Variety, Film Comment, Sight & Sound, and written and produced episodic television.

On the exam, I found the following, from an essay by film theorist Kristin Thompson:

"Neo-formalism posits that viewers are active that they perform operations. Contrary to psychoanalytic criticism, I assume that film viewing is composed mostly of non-conscious, preconscious, and conscious activities. Indeed, we may define the viewer as a hypothetical entity who responds actively to cues within the film on the basis of automatic perceptual processes and on the basis of experience. Since historical contexts make the protocols of these responses inter-subjective, we may analyze films without resorting to subjectivity . . . According to Bordwell, 'The organism constructs a perceptual judgment on the basis of non-conscious inferences.' "

Then came the question itself:

"What kind of pressure would Metz's description of 'the imaginary signifier' or Baudry's account of the subject in the apparatus put on the ontology and epistemology of film implicit in the above two statements?"

I looked up at my daughter. She smiled triumphantly. "Welcome to film theory," she chirped.

Alexis then plopped down two thick study guides. One was for the theory class, the other for her course in advanced film analysis. "Tell me where I went wrong," she said.

The prose was denser than a Kevlar flak jacket, full of such words as "diegetic," "heterogeneity," "narratology," "narrativity," "symptomology," "scopophilia," "signifier," "syntagmatic," "synecdoche," "temporality." I picked out two of them "fabula" and "syuzhet" and asked Alexis if she knew what they meant. "They're the Russian Formalist terms for 'story' and 'plot,'" she replied.

"Well then, why don't they use 'story' and 'plot?'"

"We're not allowed to. If we do, they take points off our paper. We have to use 'fabula' and 'syuzhet.'"

Forget for a moment that if Alexis were to use these terms on a Hollywood set, she'd be laughed off the lot. Alexis wants a career in film. She chose UC Santa Barbara because we couldn't afford USC and her grades weren't lustrous enough for UCLA. Film programs at those schools have hard-core theoreticians on their faculty, as do many other universities. Yet no other undergraduate film program in the country emphasizes film theory as much as UCSB, and the influence of those theoreticians is growing. We knew that much before Alexis enrolled. In hindsight, we had no idea what that truly meant for students.

I flipped through more pages and landed on this paragraph by Edward Branigan, the premier film theorist at UCSB: "Film theory deals with basic principles of film, not specific films. Thus it has a somewhat 'abstract,' intangible quality to it. It is

like looking at a chair in a classroom and thinking about chairs in general: undoubtedly, there are many types and shapes of 'chairs' made out of many kinds and colors of materials resulting in different sizes of chairs. What must a 'chair' be in order to be a 'chair'? (Can it be anything? a pencil? a car? a sandwich? a nostalgic feeling? a ledge of a building that someone sits on? the ground one sits on and also walks on? Can a 'chair' be whatever you want, whatever you say it is?) Here's another question: what must a chair be in order to be 'comfortable' (i.e., what is the 'aesthetics' of chairs?)?"

My daughter was required to take 14 units of film analysis and theory before she could graduate with her bachelor's degree in film studies. That's the equivalent of going to school full time for one quarter, which made it relatively easy to crunch the numbers. Including tuition, books, school supplies, food and rent, it cost about \$6,100 for Alexis to learn how to distinguish between a chair and a nostalgic feeling. I don't like to complain, but that just didn't seem like a fair return on my investment.

Is there a hidden method to these film theorists' apparent madness? Or is film theory, as movie critic Roger Ebert said as I interviewed him weeks later, "a cruel hoax for students, essentially the academic equivalent of a New Age cult, in which a new language has been invented that only the adept can communicate in"?

At USC cinema school a quarter-century ago, one of the most popular teachers was Drew Casper, a young, untenured professor with an unbridled love for movies. Casper didn't lecture, he performed: jumping on a chair to sing a song from the musical he was teaching, covering his blackboard with frenetic scrawls as he unleashed a torrent of background material on the filmmaker's life, the studio that produced the movie, and the social forces that influenced it.

Casper, and most other film studies professors at USC, approached film from a humanist perspective. He taught students to focus on the characters in the movies, the people who made the films, and the stories the movies told and what they revealed about the human condition, our society and the moment in history they dramatized.

Yes, students read theoretical essays and books. But they were about the nuts and bolts of moviemaking. Aristotle's "Poetics" laid out the basic principles of dramatic writing. Sergei Eisenstein explained the intricate mechanics of montage editing, which used quick cutting to provoke visceral emotions from audiences. And André Bazin described how directors Orson Welles and William Wyler used a "long-take" method of filming scenes that was the opposite of montage, the camera and actors moving poetically around one another in intricately choreographed shots.

Students also studied the first French cinematic doctrine to reach American shores, the auteur theory. It held that directors were the primary creators of films and that they, like novelists, created bodies of work with recurrent themes and consistent world views. At the time, the auteur theory seemed revolutionary, and in Hollywood particularly among members of the Writers Guild it remains controversial because many argue that movies are created not by a single auteur but by a complex collaboration of hundreds of craftspeople, beginning with the screenwriter.

Whatever its merits, the auteur theory remained solidly within the humanist tradition Casper once taught. Perhaps he knows what happened to film theory in recent decades.

He does. "Unfortunately, film studies has moved away from humanist concerns," says Casper, who now holds the prestigious Hitchcock Chair at USC's School of Cinema-Television. The change began in France in the late 1960s, he says, offering explanations echoed by other film and English professors interviewed for this article. French theorists of the New Left pushed their own liberal social agendas. They discredited the auteur theory as sentimental bourgeois claptrap. Auteurists, they believed, had constructed a pantheon of great directors, almost all them white males, whom they worshiped as demigods. Moviegoers passively allowed the genius to spoon-feed them his interpretation of their socio/political system, and they never dared question the validity of those perceptions.

New Left theorists decided film viewers should liberate themselves, bringing their own thoughts, interpretations and responses into the process. Moviegoers should look at films not as the product of a unique creative spirit, but as cultural "artifacts." Films could be analyzed as a series of Rorschach inkblots, providing insights about the collective unconscious of the society that produced them. Thus it was no longer the artists' views of the world that counted. They were merely channeling the zeitgeist. Theorists became the new high priests of culture, and they followed their own concrete, left-wing social agenda.

By the '70s, film theory was spreading to the United States, and moving beyond simple politics. A kind of metaphysical inquiry into the nature of cinema was underway. Discussions about movie characters, plots and the human beings who created them were on the way to being replaced by theories such as semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalytics and neo-formalism.

Film metaphysics, to use an Edward Branigan-style analogy, is like looking at a statue of a man and instead of asking what it expresses about the human psyche, wondering what it reveals about the nature of marble. Or studying a painting to find what it says about the meaning of the color red.

Hershel Parker, respected author of a two-volume biography of writer Herman Melville, says the transformation of film studies mirrored that in many college

English departments. "There's no room for anyone in English departments who wants to talk about author intention," says Parker, who goes into Old Testament rage at the mention of the subject. When the New Left theories invaded American English departments, Parker believes it all but wiped out serious scholarship. "I was a freak for wanting to go into the library manuscript collections."

Since authors no longer matter, Parker says, many researchers believe they no longer need to go back and read the author's correspondence and working manuscripts, or study the events that shaped his or her sensibility. "It's naïve New Criticism, where all you do is submit yourself to the text," says Parker. "These people have no clue about going to do research. They don't know you can find out about a person's life or work. They have not, and their teachers have not done real research."

Annette Insdorf, director of Undergraduate Film Studies at Columbia University, recruits film theorists for her faculty because she believes her students should be exposed to a discipline that has had a major impact on cinema scholarship. But she remains ambivalent.

Film theory caught on in the 1970s and 1980s, she points out, a time when many cinema professors were struggling to win the respect of their colleagues. "Don't forget that film studies always labored under the handicap of being perceived as too easy and fun within many universities," Insdorf says. "I sometimes suspected that professors were trying to ensure their own job security by utilizing an increasingly obfuscating language. The less understandable film theory became to faculty from other departments, the more respectable it seemed."

As curriculum shifted, students moved further from the practical considerations that have always driven filmmaking and continue to drive Hollywood today. "You get people who are graduating with master's degrees who know nothing about the history of movies," Casper says. "They have never even heard of Ernst Lubitsch, have never even seen Hitchcock movies. They know the different film theories, they know their Marx, their Freud, their Althusser, Derrida."

Constance Penley is a thin, plainly dressed woman in her late 50s, her short white hair combed forward in the manner of Gertrude Stein. She speaks in a soft Southern accent, her slender ivory hands shaking ever so slightly as they gesture to illustrate a point.

Penley is director of the UCSB Center for Film, Television and New Media. She also is one of the founders of *Camera Obscura*, a highly influential feminist film journal, and is one of the primary architects of film theory in the United States. As author or editor of nine books on film and media theory, she is constantly on the move, whisking off to speak in Rome, London, Warsaw, the Whitney

Museum of American Art, and at UCLA, USC, UC Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Princeton and Harvard.

Like many theorists, she exudes an almost religious fervor for film theory and its power to transform. Penley vividly remembers the moment of her conversion. She arrived at the University of Florida in 1966 with the intention of becoming a high school or community college teacher. But the campus' burgeoning counterculture quickly radicalized her. She marched in peace demonstrations, got tear-gassed, worked on the underground newspaper, attended feminist consciousness-raising groups and came to realize that becoming a mere teacher would be to surrender to the pressures of a patriarchal power structure.

One night she went to a screening of "Pierrot le Fou," a labyrinthine, perplexing, yet mesmerizing film by the premier French New Wave director, Jean-Luc Godard. The plot was impossible to follow, but the spontaneity of the acting, the unconventional staging and elliptical editing seemed to Penley to burst beyond the screen. "I walked out into the steamy Florida night and I was baffled. I set out to try and figure out: 'How is this a film?' "

She went to see more European movies, hallucinatory concoctions by Luis Buñuel and Federico Fellini that catapulted beyond all traditional notions of genre or narrative. Her excitement and questions multiplied, even if she still didn't know how to define what she was seeing.

Then she took a film class from W. R. Robinson, who had edited a book titled "Man and the Movies." "He was one of these crazy English professors who loved movies and wanted to legitimize them so he could show them in class," Penley says.

At the time, only a handful of universities had film programs, most prominently USC, UCLA and New York University. At most colleges, the notion of seriously studying cinema was mocked or ignored. But gradually, instructors on some campuses persuaded the English, philosophy, or even the rhetoric departments to allow them to teach a film class or two.

At the University of Florida, Robinson taught a number of courses, including "Narrative Analysis." One of the textbooks was "Structuralism," by Jacques Ehrman. "It was one of the very, very first things on structuralism translated in this country," Penley says. Derived from the work of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, structuralism is an investigation of the "deep structures" found in a society's myths, artwork, literature and films structures through which the society defines itself.

In it, at last, Penley had a tool for picking apart works of literature and these new foreign films, a tool for bringing order to the chaos, understanding to her confusion.

After earning a master's in English education in 1971, Penley wanted to go to the "the most radical place, the farthest away I could get from Florida. "That was Berkeley." There she found a fantastic Day-Glo wonderland, a frothing kettle of New Left politics. She joined a Marxist study group, attended classes at the East Bay Socialist School, screenings at the Pacific Film Archive and film theory classes and seminars taught by professors in Berkeley's French and rhetoric departments.

She abandoned the idea of getting a PhD in English. "I thought: If I go into English, I'll have to be like everybody else. I'll have to find one Shakespeare sonnet that hasn't been done to death and spend the rest of my life doing it to death. Film seemed so wide open." She decided to get a doctorate in rhetoric and write her dissertation on film theory.

Then the opportunity of a lifetime presented itself. Bertrand Augst, a French professor who taught courses in semiotics and structuralism at Berkeley, started the Paris Film Program. American college students could study in France with the great film theorists, including Christian Metz whose name I encountered on Alexis' final exam.

Metz founded the theory of cinema semiotics. He presided over a think tank in Paris where scholars did not make movies or interview filmmakers or do archival research. Instead, they pondered the metaphysics of film, the manifold neoplastic mysteries that semiotics revealed.

Semiotics is the study of the myriad "signs," verbal and nonverbal, that human beings use to communicate: body language, images, icons, social rituals, and, of course, written language and movies. A semiotician sees an ordinary advertising billboard as a complex "hierarchy" of signs: the slogan, the image of the product, the people consuming the product, the clothes they are wearing, the colors used in the graphics and so on. By closely analyzing each sign, or visual element, and their relationships to each other, the semiotician can glean a treasure trove of insights about the social system that both created and now consumes this pattern of images.

First developed at the end of the 19th century by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics was later picked up by French theorists such as Lévi-Strauss, who applied it to anthropology; Jacques Lacan, who applied it to Freudian analysis; and Metz, who turned its prism upon the cinema. "In his books 'Film Language,' and 'Language and Cinema,' Metz was trying to look at the way film is structured like a language and if we could study its elements with the same precision with which structural linguists were studying language," Penley says.

She spent two years in Paris with about 40 other scholars. "Metz was a beautiful, beautiful, gentle man in his 50s, trained in linguistics," Penley says, with the I-can-hardly-believe-I-actually-got-to-hang-with-him glow of a teenager who's met a rock 'n' roll idol. She also attended seminars and lectures by some of the great French researchers in the pantheon of semiotics: Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Raymond Bellour.

Penley returned from Paris after two years with the academic cachet to establish herself as one of the leading film theorists in North America. She earned her PhD at Berkeley and, in 1991, was hired at UCSB, where the film program was being methodically constructed by professor Charles Wolfe, who holds a doctorate in film studies from Columbia University.

"I wanted to build a strong core curriculum stressing film history, theory and analysis the way I was trained," Wolfe says. The practical side of filmmaking how to write dramatically sound screenplays, elicit performances from actors, light a set, place a camera and edit film became secondary. "Students who had strong interests in production could take classes" in addition to core curriculum.

Penley joined Branigan, who had been on the faculty since 1984 after earning a doctorate from a leading film theory school, the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Wolfe now had two major film theorists and the momentum to turn the film program into a full-fledged department in 1996.

Any way you slice it, UCSB's small band of radical theorists has pulled off a remarkable feat. They now hobnob with the Hollywood elite and are building a complex that will put their film studies department on par with UCLA, USC and NYU. They have overthrown the old school humanists and broken free of the fascist thought control designs of the artistic genius auteurs.

How did they do it? "We were right, that's how!" department chair Janet Walker says with a triumphant laugh.

The department has 11 full-time and three tenured part-time faculty members and 456 undergraduates, twice that of a decade ago. Wolfe has in many ways created a strong department. It offers courses in screenwriting, 16mm film production and animation, and a number of Hollywood professionals have come to teach classes, including director John Carpenter, cinematographer Haskell Wexler, and the late Paul Lazarus, a production executive who worked at Columbia, Universal and Warner Brothers. Guest lecturers have included Jeffrey Katzenberg, Jeff Bridges, Michael Douglas, Jodie Foster and screenwriter John Lee Hancock.

The cinema history classes are demanding. Students cannot get away with regurgitating passages from encyclopedias; they are required to pull original production files on movies from such archives as the Motion Picture Academy's

Margaret Herrick Library. But film theory remains at the core. Students are required to take 14 units of film theory and analysis, and just one four-unit production course that deals with the actual writing, shooting and editing of a film or video project.

Wolfe argues that the rigorous intellectual regimen produces better filmmakers, noting that for three consecutive years (1999-2001), UCSB alumnae were nominated for Academy Awards. The most prominent is Scott Frank, nominated for his screenplay for the thriller "Out of Sight" in 1999. Frank has since written the script for "The Minority Report."

It's worth noting that Frank graduated in 1982, before Branigan and Penley and the greater emphasis on theory. He credits Lazarus with helping him to hone his craft and says he learned a great deal from Wolfe's film history classes.

Frank co-chairs the advisory board for UCSB's Center for Film, Television and New Media. The board is peppered with other Hollywood heavyweights, including Danny DeVito, Michael Douglas, "Ghostbusters" director Ivan Reitman, TV producer Dick Wolf and Fox Entertainment President Gail Berman. The center is scheduled to break ground in 2005 and will include an editing room, production space and a theater.

When I show Frank examples of the film theory that mystified my daughter, he is bewildered. "This is the first I've ever heard of these terms. 'Narratology?' 'Symptomatic interpretation?' 'Syuzhet, fabula, analepses, prolepses', my goodness! I'm really shocked that they even teach anything like this."

Other Hollywood professionals and film experts offered harsher reactions. Some criticized the curriculum or the political agendas at work. Some simply couldn't get beyond the turgid academic language.

I read from my daughter's study guide to Gary A. Randall, who has served as president of Orion Television, Spelling Television, and as the executive producer of the TV series "Any Day Now." "That's what your daughter's being taught?" he says. "That's just elitist psychobabble. It sounds like it was written by a professor of malapropism. That has absolutely no bearing on the real world. It sounds like an awfully myopic perspective of what film is really supposed to be about: touching hearts and minds and providing provocative thoughts."

From movie critic Ebert: "Film theory has nothing to do with film. Students presumably hope to find out something about film, and all they will find out is an occult and arcane language designed only for the purpose of excluding those who have not mastered it and giving academic rewards to those who have. No one with any literacy, taste or intelligence would want to teach these courses, so the bona fide definition of people teaching them are people who are incapable of teaching anything else."

From Kevin Brownlow, the world's leading silent movie historian, author of "The Parade's Gone By . . .," and co-producer, with David Gill, of acclaimed documentaries: "You would think, from this closed-circuit attitude to teaching, that such academics would be politically right wing. For it is a kind of fascism to force people practicing one discipline to learn the language of another, simply for the convenience of an intellectual elite. It's like expecting Slavs to learn German in order to comprehend their own inferiority. But they are not right wing. They are, regrettably, usually left wing, quite aggressively Marxist, which makes the whole situation even more alarming."

UCSB's film studies faculty is upfront about its political agenda. The professors are, as in most other film programs, almost uniformly on the left end of the political spectrum. Penley's generation forged their political beliefs in the 1960s counterculture, and they show a strong preference for hiring younger professors who share their liberal beliefs.

Lisa Parks, 35, joined the faculty in 1998 as a specialist in global media and broadcast history. While an undergraduate at the University of Montana in 1991, Parks and other students lay down on the basketball court at the start of a nationally televised game to protest the Gulf War. She passionately opposed the war in Iraq, and believes that film and media theory can win the hearts and minds of her students back from the mass media conglomerates that Parks says are controlled largely by conservatives.

"Many of our faculty are really concerned about the relationship between media images and social power outside of the screen," Parks says. "Even though in our classes we're often watching stuff and trying to segment, analyze and discuss it, we hope that by the time our students graduate, if they do go into the industry, it affects the way that they actually produce."

In some respects, it's not fair to single out UC Santa Barbara's film theory and analysis curriculum simply because my daughter went there. On the other hand, UCSB does consider its film theory program to be its signature.

Faculty members are aware that many students are reluctant if not outright hostile to being force-fed so much theory, but they maintain that the curriculum is valuable even for production-oriented students. "We want them to be able to understand other ways of thinking and looking at these works of art that perhaps exceed their own reactions," Wolfe says. "That may be people from different time periods, cultures, genders or social orientations."

When I share the criticisms of film theory with UCSB staff, they look truly wounded, then quickly mount a vigorous defense.

"Film theory is philosophy, and people have made the same criticisms of philosophy for years," Branigan says. "They say, 'What relevance does philosophy have to the real world? It's merely idle thought, personal feeling, pointless speculation.' If we listened to them, we would do away with teaching and studying the works of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Wittgenstein and Sartre. Do we really want to do that? I think not."

Anna Everett, an associate professor who specializes in new media, says, "It's galling for me to hear those kinds of charges when we expect our students to be able to grapple with complex ideas in math and science and a lot of them won't go on to use them. Math and science are part of our everyday lives. So why is it then illegitimate for us to ask students to be just as rigorous with something that has a much greater impact on an everyday basis?"

"Art, film and video games really do help to shape their ideas and experiences and their relationships. I think the critics are unfair. It's a way of thinking that doesn't really take into account what the university is about. We're not a trade school. We're trying to develop minds, to create a better world."

Is it working? The voices of two students:

"I love film theory," says Chris Scotten. "When I graduate, I want to write, direct and produce. I'm shooting for the moon. The great thing about UCSB is, I could have gone to USC and sat around holding a microphone boom pole, but then I wouldn't understand the theory behind filmmaking, to understand how film exists in relation to our lives. We learn how film psychologically manipulates us, and the power inherent in the language of cinema. It can be two things, a useful propaganda tool in a communist revolution, or part of the capitalist superstructure, a way of lulling the working class into a haze to subdue them and give them an escape from the pressures of reality. The old communists writing about film theory in Russia and Germany really had something to say, and it's still relevant today. You've got about six companies that own the biggest, most awesome propaganda machine in the history of the whole wretched world. What are the consequences of that?"

Yoshi Enoki Jr., who graduated in 1995, believes he has succeeded despite the film theory classes, not because of them. He has built a thriving career as a location scout and manager for such films as "American Beauty," "Terminator 3" and the Coen brothers' forthcoming remake of "The Ladykillers."

Some of his fellow students were not so lucky, Enoki says. They took to heart the portrayals of Hollywood as the embodiment of corporate evil that inevitably corrupts authentic artists and crushes their spirit. "That world

view has given them a rationalization for failure," he says. "So they don't even try to break into the industry. These kids, I call them kids because they behave that

way, have developed this cynicism, so much so that it eats them alive. Everything becomes negative. They don't want to connect with people. One of my best friends said to me, 'When I'm in Hollywood, I can't be myself.' But they don't even know what Hollywood's all about because they've never really been a part of it."

During my interview with Janet Walker, she glances at the clock and gets a sudden inspiration. Branigan, the department's premier cognitive film theorist, is teaching a class this very moment. "You've got to see Edward lecture," she says, leading me to a lecture hall. "It's a theatrical experience."

Walker ushers me into a 147-seat theater that is about three-quarters full.

Branigan stands before a blackboard covered with rectangles and hexagons heavily notated with abbreviations. They appear to be the complex equations of an astrophysicist, but are in fact illustrations of semiotic theories of "narratology." Branigan has tangled brown-gray hair, a shaggy beard, large glasses coated with flecks of dandruff and fingerprints, and wears an oversized gray sweater and corduroy pants. As he speaks, his hands grasp at the air, shaping it as he shapes his thoughts. He punches certain words out with an odd, inflectionless emphasis. "The nature of the photography: Benjamin says the camera strips people who are in front of the camera lens like actors and alienaaaates them from their labor! Alienaaaation! False coooonsciousness!"

Branigan's oratory mesmerizes many of the students. They lean back, deep into the seats' red upholstery, eyes staring blankly into space. Some give up and close them altogether. A brunet with a Huck Finn cap pulled over the bridge of her nose shifts about for a more comfortable position and drifts off again. A fellow traces the stubble on his cheek and squints, trying to follow as he takes notes. A tall young man in a backward baseball cap doodles a series of spirals, and at the back of the hall another reads a paper. Two girls in the back whisper to each other.

Branigan takes no notice. He leaves them far behind as he ascends faster and faster along a spiral of rhetoric into the pure white ether of theory. "Benjamin says the camera does not show the equipment that's used to make the film. It obscures or hides or masks THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION! Now in Marxism if you hide the process of production, you are obscuring and further alienating the labor that goes into that, the BOOODILY labor that yooooou are contributing to that manufacture. OK? Which is a bad, bad fact. . . ."

*

David Weddle last wrote for the magazine about comedy.