

## **UNDERSTANDING ORLOVA: YOUTUBE PRODUCERS, HOT FOR WORDS, AND SOME PITFALLS OF PRODUCTION STUDIES**

PATRICK VONDERAU

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**Abstract:** In 2009 Pelle Snickars and I edited a book entitled *The YouTube Reader* (Snickars and Vonderau 2009). One of the essays in the collection discussed the ways in which YouTube brings together media companies, new media entrepreneurs and users in its “co-creative” culture. In their article, “The Entrepreneurial Vlogger: Participatory Culture Beyond the Professional- Amateur Divide,” Jean Burgess and Joshua Green pointed to the dynamics inherent in YouTube as a platform for “participatory culture.” There was ample evidence in Burgess’ and Green’s analysis of YouTube star Marina Orlova’s channel *Hot for Words* ([hotforwords.com](http://hotforwords.com)) that “produsage” was more than a hollow catchphrase. The interview I conducted with Marina and the research preceding it once again challenged my conception of a “produser” in the YouTube economy and also, on a methodological level, the usefulness of doing interviews with media producers generally. The lessons Marina taught refer to our general capability as media scholars to analyse how YouTube and production on and via YouTube operates.

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In 2009 Pelle Snickars and I edited a book entitled *The YouTube Reader* (Snickars and Vonderau 2009). One of the essays in the collection discussed the ways in which YouTube brings together media companies, new media entrepreneurs and users in its “co-creative” culture. In their article, “The Entrepreneurial Vlogger: Participatory Culture Beyond the Professional- Amateur Divide,” Jean Burgess and Joshua Green pointed to the dynamics inherent in YouTube as a platform for “participatory culture,” a dynamics relying on direct and reciprocal activity between consumers and producers (Burgess and Green 2009). There was ample evidence in Burgess’ and Green’s analysis of YouTube star Marina Orlova’s channel *Hot for Words* ([hotforwords.com](http://hotforwords.com)) that “produsage” was more than a hollow catchphrase. Addressing her viewers as “my dear students”, Orlova has been adapting the “vlog” or video blog format widespread on YouTube for playful and enticing 3-minute lectures in English etymology. Since her show debuted back in March 2007, Orlova gradually has become a top celebrity both on- and offline, with her YouTube channel today ranking among the most subscribed of all time. Her online success has made the Russian-born philologist a partner in YouTube’s revenue sharing program, a regular on mainstream TV shows such as Fox’s *The O’Reilly Factor*, and a branded personality to be extended into a potentially endless stream of photo calendars, HarperCollins’ books, iPhone apps (“Zombie Bikini Babes from Outer Space”), magazine articles, and promotional campaigns. More to the point still is Marina’s obvious capacity to engage with the large community of “YouTubers”. She seems to interact breathlessly online with viewers and

commentators in the making of her very own show where she features word requests send to her by video or email and invites feedback in a charming and convincingly personal way. In Burgess' and Green's words, Orlova acts as an "entrepreneurial blogger", a "quasi-professional producer" that is, and at the very same time as an "authentic participant in the YouTube 'community'" (Burgess and Green 2009: 104).



Figure 1 <http://www.youtube.com/user/hotforwords?feature=mhw4#p/u/44/EgcBKGFaM0A>

Pelle Snickars and I soon learned about Orlova's producing power ourselves. When a major Swedish newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet* (*SvD*), posted a review of *The YouTube Reader* online, Orlova referred to that review on her website, consulting the community for translations of the piece. "SvD writes an interesting article about how YouTube is so different from traditional media", Marina commented, "that traditional media icons, like Oprah, are having a hard time harnessing it" (Orlova 2009a). She also referred to our book "called *The YouTube Reader* where they mention yours truly while discussing the YouTube phenomenon". It took barely three months before that particular *SvD* news item became the most read article of its kind on *SvD*'s webpage (Anon. 2010). Following Orlova, at least 12 bloggers linked to the *SvD* site. Flabbergasted by the fact

that a YouTube celebrity would lend her name to draw attention to an academic book, I wrote her an email, thanking her for the free promotion and offering to send her Burgess' and Green's article where she was mentioned, and "as many free copies of the book as you want. Thank you for HotForWords and what you have made of YouTube!" (Vonderau 2009). After a few hours Marina wrote back: "That would be amazing!!! I tried to order the book but it says two-month delivery on Amazon! If you could get me the PDF of the part about me... plus perhaps 2 copies of the book. If you want me to send me a couple additional copies I can send some to the people at YouTube if you'd like me to get the book out there!" (Orlova 2009b). She ended by giving me her Los Angeles address and phone number.

Having been sceptical from the outset in the face of the hype surrounding YouTube's 'pro-am revolution' (i.e. the ways the platform seems to bridge the professional and amateur divide, see Leadbeater and Miller 2004), I only could join in the enthusiasm for the Internet economy at that point. Marina really acted like a media producer: as an independent entrepreneur-performer co-operating with her online community as much as with mainstream media audiences world-wide. Not only did she skilfully *perform* the role of a YouTube producer in her vlogs, she also *produced*: attention, revenue, content, fans, word of mouth, links, reviews, ideas, shout-outs and even booksells in the far-away-field of media studies scholarship. And although Marina Orlova had a fixed address in Los Angeles as the world's most productive production centre, she reached out within minutes to any user and made even us, the writers of *The YouTube* book and contributors to *SvD* a new node in her ever-growing network of production. Quite naturally, I in turn mentioned that contact on Facebook, thus integrating Orlova, the star, into the realm of my own personal production of media memories. When one of *Widescreen*'s editors for this special issue on production encouraged me to contribute, I immediately came to think about my newly gained 'friend' in the field of new media production and contacted Orlova via email about an interview. "Of course I'll do the interview! Send me the questions and I will respond to them via email", she responded within only three hours (Orlova 2009c).

However, both the interview I then conducted with Marina and the research preceding it once again challenged my conception of a "produser" in the YouTube economy and also, on a methodological level, the usefulness of doing interviews with media producers generally. The lessons Marina taught me thus have less to do with her entertaining video performances on etymology. Rather, they refer to our general capability as media scholars to analyse how YouTube and production on and via YouTube operates.

### **Lesson #1: The meaning of the word "authenticity"**

Marina Orlova certainly is a "quasi-professional producer" and a productive "participant in the YouTube 'community'", as Burgess and Green have noted, but it is futile to search for "authenticity" with regard to her participation in that community. Who produces, and on whose behalf? With the help of textual analysis and archival research I soon found out that *Hot for Words* is not (or at least not entirely) Marina Orlova's own channel. The United States Patent and Trademark Office ([www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)) mentions Charles T. Como as having registered *Hot for Words* in February of 2007 as an "educational and entertainment services, namely, a continuing

program about the origin of words accessible by radio, television, satellite, audio, video and computer networks". According to the *Los Angeles Times*, since 1995 Como has created Internet sites for music bands and developed the Underground Network, "an electronic hodgepodge of work by recognized and unknown artists" ([www.underground.net](http://www.underground.net)) (Huftstutter 1995). Is this important? Perhaps not, nor does it speak against Marina's ability as a performer and a producer of which she started to give evidence when she posted her first video, "Intro to Philology ;-)" on March 7, 2007. Yet in the common understanding of a YouTube vlog, ownership and authorship are tightly connected, as we tend to assume that the person uploading a video, the owner of the channel, the producer of that channel's content and the performer in the video are identical.

### **Lesson #2: On the notion of "credit"**

Without unwarrantedly attempting to deconstruct Orlova as another *lonelygirl15*, it would still be interesting to know who actually speaks as Orlova, when and why. Her videos lack any credits, and both on her website and in her interviews Marina stresses that she is a hard-working single and sole creator of her show. But her website also features a number of "teacher assistants" ([www.hotforwords.com/ta/](http://www.hotforwords.com/ta/)),<sup>i</sup> "helping" her out with what appears to be the maintenance of the website and especially the handling of incoming viewer responses and word requests. How many Marinas are there? Asked about the technical set-up of her work, during our interview Marina replied: "Usually, it's just me in a room by myself, I aim the camera at myself, I have the output running to a TV so that I can see what I look like and I start recording. The beauty of what I do is that it can be done by a single person with a camera"



**Figure 2** I use a Sony HVR-V1U - I've rigged a teleprompter to take the video out from the camera so that I can see myself while I am recording. This is necessary as I move around a lot in my shots. Having the screen off to the

However, the (semi-) professional gear she is using and the actual look of her videos seem to testify to the contrary. Even a superficial formal analysis of her video work indicates that she must have been relying on a division of labour already early on, with professional still photography being one of the first and obvious external contributions, followed by some animation work in the brief title sequence. Since 2008 her show has also significantly changed in technical terms and now relies on a very consistent pattern of lightning, particular editing pace, and the use of a Blue/Green Screen, a teleprompter, and a Sony HD camera. Again, the format of *Hot for Words* is not less ‘authentic YouTubean’ today, but nevertheless comes closer to a collaboratively produced web TV show, while collaboration is still not openly acknowledged.

### **Lesson #3: The origin of the term “visibility”**

During quite a few interviews with Marina, the interviewer obviously did not meet her in person.<sup>ii</sup> I am no exception to the rule.<sup>iii</sup> Although I asked her several times about a face-to-face meeting she only responded by email. This was due to her cramped schedule (as she told me), but it also does not allow me to verify that I have indeed communicated with Marina herself and not with one of her assistants. So while on the one hand a famed YouTube producer like Orlova is much more accessible than any celebrity in the analogue world, the identity and agenda of that person get more difficult to come to grips with. I am not suggesting that Marina Orlova is a fake; I am merely pointing to the obvious, namely that there is more to ‘Marina Orlova’ than Marina Orlova. The concerted fabrication of her appearances on- and offline makes her look more like a conventional celebrity and less “geeky” than what YouTube performers would want to appear like. It also reveals how readily we, scholars and journalists, are persuaded to believe that there indeed exists something like an alternative to the mainstream media in the digital sphere. “Deception is a co-operative enterprise”, as Edward Jay Epstein recently noted with regard to the willing suspension of disbelief among entertainment journalists (Epstein 2010: 98).

### **Lesson #4: How to understand “economies of scale”?**

“Youtopia” very much builds on the implicit viewing contract that what you see is what you get. Have a look on the comments Marina receives for her videos: the vast majority of them refer to her sex appeal rather than anything else.<sup>iv</sup> So whilst Marina in her videos is performing the YouTube producer (or more precisely, vlogger) role, she is also literally seducing us to co-produce her very own success (and most of us are more than eager to join in!). “Produsage” then gets entirely different connotations as originally conceived in new media scholarship; for this mode of produsage builds on an informational divide, a calculated asymmetry between what we are supposed to know and the information available, similar to the common top-down information management in the commercial media industry. The fact is that ‘Marina’ speaks with many voices (as an amateur-turned-YouTube-celebrity, as a promoter for a sponsor such as Go Daddy, and as a Fox commentator on the notion of “liberalism”, for instance), not all of which match with the idealized authorial image of Marina. One may wonder if the economies of scale related to an YouTube phenomenon such as Orlova (“My videos have been watched 300 MILLION times”, see interview below)

can at all be reconciled with the idea of personal and immediate interaction. From this point of view Marina Orlova appears as a meme, a cluster of keywords and search terms generating traffic rather than as a human being doing production work. As Marina herself aptly remarked, “if somebody asks me what’s your name, I just say google the word sexy” (Orlova 2009d).

### **Lesson #5: What does “cross-promotion” entail?**

The first list of questions I send to Marina in January 2010 contained a number of questions pertaining to authorship and ownership, production networks, barriers of entry and related issues. “Successful YouTube entrepreneurs are often portrayed as amateurs”, I wrote to her, “who have come to wealth and fame almost instantly and without being dependent on anyone else – much in contrast to what careers in the entertainment industry normally look like. This new role model, which you almost ideally seem to impersonate, makes YouTube look like an idyllic place. What about conflicts and problems in producing a successful online video?”. And I went on: “What about content ownership? Could you migrate your channel elsewhere? (...) Again, speaking of a role model, it seems to me that you are a perfect fit to what the Internet economy is expected to look like. When I undertook some research during the Writer’s Strike in Los Angeles in 2008, YouTube performers like you were hyped even by traditional media (i.e. network) producers. As a ‘branded personality’, it seems that you move freely between different media platforms, bypassing the problems of a fragmented TV industry, generating revenues wherever you want to. Would you say that it is possible for newcomers in the entertainment industry to copy this strategy? (...) I also wonder if ‘new media’ production is so very different from established older practices of media production after all.” I concluded by asking her about the role Charles Como played in setting up the *Hot for Word* channel (Vonderau 2010a).

I did not get an answer to this first questionnaire, although I wrote several mails asking if she had received it.<sup>v</sup> When I wrote to her for the last time (as I thought) she responded: “I am so sorry that I didn’t answer them in the first place! Things got so crazy and I misplaced them and never got around to them! Let me know if you’d like these questions answered that I am attaching? I am not sure about my schedule in that I might be leaving shortly, but I’d like to get these answered right away!” (Orlova 2010). I was more than thankful to receive that response, of course, and proactively downsized the long questionnaire to a more manageable and less academic format, which Marina then responded to only a few hours later.

Should I complain about this? Certainly not! I had to reflect, however, on my original intentions and what happened to them in the process of setting up the interview. For one main reason of conducting that interview was my sense that entertainment journalists reporting about Marina or interviewing her seemed to play down constantly her obvious capabilities as a skilled producer-performer, focussing instead on the 50 dollar-immigrant story, the instant success anyone apparently seems to have on YouTube, and again her sex appeal.<sup>vi</sup> Reflecting about my eagerness to revise my own questions, I also had to think about the pitfalls of “studying up”: of engaging in a critical discussion with the media industries elites (Nader 1969; Ortner 2009). Reading earlier online interviews with Marina (see [www.hotforwords.com/category/press/](http://www.hotforwords.com/category/press/)), some of which appeared to be copy-pasted from third sources, I came to think that

interviewing Orlova is about cross-promotion in the first place. Very much in line with my own rewarding experience of having her link our *The YouTube Reader* to *Hot for Words*, online magazines such as *Associated Content* or *Bloomberg*, web TV narrowcasters such as *Predicto TV*, and even Fox' *The O'Reilly Show*, profit from making Marina part of their production of viewer interest. It is no coincidence that most of those media present similar interviews with Marina as the attention economy they are dependant upon rewards the production of redundancy more than the production of original content. Whatever the original intentions, 'interviewing Orlova' functions as a cross-promotion for both *Hot for Words* and the interviewer. There is perhaps nothing wrong about that, apart from the fact that a critical engagement with the interviewee becomes less probable – that is an attempt to ask questions which go beyond celebrity journalism.

### **Lesson #6: What is “Production Studies” all about anyway?**

Scholars such as John Caldwell, Vicky Mayer or Amanda Lotz, who recently have attempted to redefine the field of Production Studies in the US, make frequent use of interviews with both above- and below the line-production workers in order to give insights into the local production cultures of US film and television making (Mayer, Banks and Caldwell 2009; Caldwell 2008). Yet the use of interviews is rather problematic when it comes to the digital sphere, not least while “studying up” the above the line-talent such as Orlova. The basic insight to be won from what I have described here is that the rather traditional anthropological methodology Caldwell, Mayer and others have added to their mix of cultural studies-informed production analysis overstates the importance of human agency and individuality in a process which is far more complex and in fact rather faceless. Interviews, participant-observation and other methods borrowed from ethnology also produce the very ‘field’ to which the anthropologist-turned-media scholar than can claim to have won ‘access’ into. There is something exclusive (if not elitist) about the idea of becoming a native in any media producing community.<sup>vii</sup> As might have become apparent, doing production studies about YouTube inevitably turns into what Stephen Zafirau (2008) has called “reputation work”. Scholars constructing and then entering the field not only co-produce a given talent’s (or wage worker’s, for that matter) reputation, they also can hardly avoid having their own reputation as industry experts fostered by an attractive industry insider. I was more than proud to be in touch with Marina, and our book sales certainly profited from Marina mentioning the title on her website. I am definitely grateful for both the interview and the promotion, and although I deliberately downsized my questionnaire, there are still some fresh insights to be won from reading it. Having said that, I hope that in the future alternative ways will be explored to help our understanding of what it means to perform in the YouTube economy. How are shifts in production discourse made authoritative? And instead of “studying up” or down, perhaps “studying through” might be a way out of that dilemma, “tracing ways in which power creates webs and relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space” (Shore and Wright 1997: 11).

### **PV: Would you consider yourself a producer?**

**MO:** Technically you could call me a producer since I create my whole show, but you

could also call me a writer, an editor, a camera operator and a sound person, which covers the technical aspects of what I do.. but I like to think of myself as a teacher who uses technology to reach as large an audience as possible.

**Where do you see the limits for what you can achieve?**

I really don't see any limits. There are a million words in the English language and every word has some kind of story behind it, so I don't see myself running out of stories to tell. On top of that, the Internet is still growing and video consumption on the Internet is growing as well, so my audience will only get bigger and bigger.

**In the making of Hot for Words/Marina Orlova, you seem to be interacting with a number of users and also other media professionals (e.g. such as photographers). Could you tell us about the division of labour in the making of your show, and about the daily workflow?**

That "making of" video you saw happened on a day when I had a reporter visiting me for the week and she wanted to capture some interesting photographs of me working. I called a couple friends over to help me work the camera and lights.. but usually, it's just me in a room by myself, I aim the camera at myself, I have the output running to a TV so that I can see what I look like and I start recording. The beauty of what I do is that it can be done by a single person with a camera. When I am done shooting, I then start editing, which takes 4-5 hours per 3- minute video. So it's a very time consuming process. Then I start researching my next word to shoot on the next day. The whole process of idea to script to shooting to editing takes about 8 hours per video. Then the process of interacting with the viewers online takes the rest of my day (another 6-8 hours!).. that translates to 14-16 hour days!

**I read in a recent interview that you were looking for studio space. Is that true, and if so, what does it imply for your future work?**

I got a little frustrated one day with having to set up my lights then break them down every time I want to shoot because they take up my whole living room.. so in frustration I said that I wanted to find studio space. After I thought about it, I nixed the idea because people on YouTube do not like the look of highly produced content, they like something that is shot in someone's bedroom or living room, so moving my production to a studio would have been counterproductive for me.

**YouTube videos are uploaded and viewed worldwide. How important is Los Angeles and the local creative community for what you do? I do not know any European YouTube performer on a par with you.**

It really does not matter AT ALL where you are located. Not one bit as far as YouTube is concerned. Some of the biggest names on YouTube are in places like Australia or Montana or Belgium, so being in Los Angeles really does nothing for me as far as my success goes. The only thing it does for me is that it allows me to take meetings with people to talk about creating TV shows for example, but even those meetings can be taken via the telephone.

**What would you say are the three most important core competencies of someone**

**who is as successful on YouTube as you are?**

1 – Dedication. It takes a good solid year + of making videos every week, editing them, uploading them and then interacting with your viewers every single hour of every day before you will ever see a dime. So you need to be dedicated in order for your channel to ultimately succeed.

2 – Passionate. You need to be passionate about what you are talking about. You don't have to be a genius, or even especially talented, you just need to be passionate about something as people can see right through fake passion in a second.

3 – Be observant. Look around YouTube, see what's working. Once you launch your channel, read the comments from the viewers. Throw out the stupid hateful comments and look at the constructive criticisms that the viewers give you. If you try something and it seems to be universally hated, look at the comments and see if people are telling you how to improve what you are doing. Because of the interactive nature of the Internet, your audience will help you make your channel better and better, so you need to pay attention to what they are saying.

**Has YouTube changed the role and functions of a producer for entertainment content?**

Since YouTube allows one person to run the whole show, the producer ends up wearing all the hats of most YouTube productions, even starring in the show. It's similar to old indie films where a person could grab an 8mm camera and shoot her own film, but with an 8mm camera you still needed someone to hold the camera! With YouTube, you can do the ENTIRE production yourself with no other person needing to be present!

**Do you think that successful YouTube producers might become more powerful than traditional television network producers in the future?**

Yes, in that any producer can upload anything to YouTube without having to get the OK from a TV executive for example. Because the content can be produced so inexpensively, you don't need to go to money people beforehand, you can just shoot, edit, upload and start reaching millions of people and you don't ever have to fear your show getting cancelled! My videos have been watched 300 MILLION times, which is a staggering number, even by TV standards!

**Do you feel you get enough articulated and useful responses to your show? What could users do to make you happy?**

Quite a lot of the comments one receives on YouTube are by 14 year old boys trying to get a rise out of you, but through the thousands and thousands of comments each of my videos gets, there are still a couple hundred comments that are articulate and intelligent, and it's those comments that make this whole process worthwhile! I also get a lot of video requests from viewers asking me to do a word and I love those as well. But I learned early on to ASK for those things otherwise people will not give them to you.

**What do you think about your European fans? Are they different from your viewers in the USA?**

I can never really tell who is from where since the person's country is not listed right next to their comment. So I find that my viewers are all great, no matter where they

come from.

**What do you think about brand placements in videos? Is it difficult to generate revenues from advertising without alienating viewers?**

Product placement in videos is the future of advertising. Would you rather sit through a 30 second commercial about laundry detergent or watch a funny video where the person happens to be using a particular brand of laundry detergent? The old days of forcing people to watch a commercial are numbered. What is great about our channels is that we can try different types of advertising to see what works or what ends up pissing off our viewers. If we step over the line and the video appears to be too much like an advertisement, then our viewers let us know, very vocally! We then go back to the advertisers and tell them where they line is that we can't cross and the advertisers are actually listening to us. So, in that regard, no, it's not too difficult to generate advertising revenue without alienating the viewers. It just needs to be done wisely.

*(Patrick Vonderau conducted the interview on March 23rd, 2010 via email.)*

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**About the author:** Patrick Vonderau is an Associate Professor of Film Studies at Stockholm University and Assistant Professor at the Department for Media Studies, Ruhr University Bochum. He has also been affiliated with The University of Southern California, Humboldt University, Berlin, University of the Arts, Berlin and Ruhr University, Bochum. His publications include and *The YouTube Reader* (2009 with P. Snickars), *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media* (2009, with V. Hediger). Vonderau is a co-founder and a member of the NECS-European Network for Cinema and Media Studies.

Contact: [mail@pvonderau.de](mailto:mail@pvonderau.de)

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**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> *Hot for Words* gives credit to a number of teacher assistants, among them Jay Gnospelius, Jack Richards, or Karl Newman. It is not entirely clear to me, however, in what ways they assist Marina.

<sup>ii</sup> A case in point is an interview given for Jules TV (Anon. 2009). There is no information where and how the interview was conducted.

<sup>iii</sup> "I have never met Marina, and only know her through her videos and comments," her teaching assistant PedanticKarl (Karl Newman) writes. Karl also refers to his original doubt that she "probably belonged to some organization, not unlike 'LonelyGirl15'" (Anon. 2008). My own story in fact echoes very much Jan Corn's (2009) account on getting his „My Interview with Sexy Marina Orlova of Hot for Words, YouTube Sensation“ in November 2009: "In July, 2008, I wrote an article here about a young woman, Marina Orlova, who was soaring up the YouTube popularity ranks. (...) Imagine my surprise when Marina herself not only commented on my article but stayed in contact. (...) I recently asked Marina if she'd consent to an email interview, revealing the business and intellectual skills that have skyrocketed her from her Hot forWords YouTube site to appearances on television and - most

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recently, that brand new book called (what else?) *Hot for Words: Answers to All Your Burning Questions About Words and Their Meanings*. I was delighted when she agreed!”<sup>iv</sup>

<sup>iv</sup> To mention just one example from her recent video “Anthropomorphic” where Seesixcm6 (2010) writes: “Dear Marina, You’re always beautiful in your videos. This is a rare treat to see you post a new video during a weekend. I enjoyed it anyway”. All the user interaction regarding this video is handled by Marina’s teaching assistant PedanticKarl.

<sup>v</sup> “Marina, thanks again for agreeing to an email interview. I just wanted to make sure that you received my questions last week? A brief response indicating in which time frame to expect your answers would be great, as I have to inform the publishers of *Widescreen Journal*. Thank you! Patrick” (Vonderau 2010b). Again on February 5th, 2010: “Hi Marina, I figure that my written interview questions perhaps were a bit too long. Would you agree doing a telephone interview instead next week? I could call you any time at your convenience Tuesday-Thursday, for instance. Best, Patrick (interview for *Widescreen Journal*)” (Vonderau 2010c).

<sup>vi</sup> One particularly bad example in this respect is an interview conducted for *The Young Turks Show* on March 17, 2009 ([www.youtube.com/theyoungturks](http://www.youtube.com/theyoungturks)). Sexism is a common strand in most Orlova interviews; see also the *John Kerwin Show* interview, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GO87cS5Qks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GO87cS5Qks).

<sup>vii</sup> In *Production Culture*, Caldwell sums up a half-page of references regarding his “firsthand experience with a range of contemporary film and television production technologies. This experience included either hands-on use and operation by me, or technical demonstrations for me by other professionals (...)” (2008: 350). Caldwell also frequently underlines, as does Mayer, his own practical work as a filmmaker and his personal contacts into the realm of ‘Hollywood’ production. Although all this is great, of course, I cannot but recall Clifford Geertz (1989: 133) commenting on the state of the art of anthropology: “Who is now to be persuaded? Africanists or Africans? Americanists or American Indians? And of what? Factual accuracy? Theoretical sweep? Imaginative grasp? Moral depth?”.

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