At the moment in my life when I rejected the possibility of other, more lucrative, less time-demanding professions, there was only one book that explained the ‘process’ of working in the cutting room. I went through several copies of Ernest Walter’s *The Technique of the Film Cutting Room* – lending them to assistants, friends, etc. who, predictably, never returned them.

In the introduction to the 1973 revised edition Walter wrote, “Although hardly yet out of the experimental stage, it is already possible to see far-reaching effects on the mechanical side of editing stemming from the immense advantages of the swift manipulation and organizing of images that become possible with such electronic aids.”

Okay, you know what happened. About the only thing that has not changed in the cutting room described by Walter is the primal experience: sequential frames on a screen changing fast enough for our eyes to perceive motion. But before we put Walter’s book up on the shelf next to the instruction manual for a Linotype, a tip of the hat must be paid to him for his clear descriptions and wonderful attitude to the profession he loved.

Given this sea change, it is a great relief to find *Image Processing for Cinema* by Marcelo Bertalmío. He wrote it as a textbook for graduate students in areas including applied mathematics, image processing and computer science, as a comprehensive guide to digital cinema for industry professionals.

If you open this book to a random page, chances are you will see equations meaty enough to choke a horse. Don’t be intimidated. This book is a stealth source for the work we do. Bertalmío’s explanations are in a league with Walter – written in a way that doesn’t cause the eyes to glaze over. It is technical writing that we can read. It takes the reader into a subject but gives him or her exit points at various levels of curiosity satisfaction.

Bertalmío begins with basics – light, color, optics, camera – and then moves to issues of motion – compression, denoising, demosaicing, white balance, image stabilization, stereoscopic 3D, color gamut transformations, inpainting and more. Each subject begins with a clear definition in practical terms and then dives deep into the mathematics and literature behind it. In every case, more than you need to know. Or not. As we are leaving the photochemical era behind, the gap between the artist and the technology has widened. In the new digital era, the process may be more accessible and democratic but the advent of layers of technology leaves us at the mercy of ‘great and powerful Ozs’ behind curtains.

The solution for the editor is to learn enough so that he or she can survive when faced with crippling facts, dispiriting facts, half-facts, wrong facts and opinions posing as facts.

And this book is a resource of in-depth information on digital image technology. It contains potent ammunition when confronted with the conundrum articulated by Chico Marx in *Duck Soup*: “Who are you gonna believe, me or your own eyes?”

–Jay Cassidy, A.C.E.