Editing

• The Invisible Art
  • No technical glitches
  • Feels natural and logical
  • Good editing is unnoticed
Editing

• Craft
  • Mastered by practice
  • Anyone can learn this

• Art
  • Intuitive
  • Native ability
  • Experience
  • Sensitivity
  • Not everyone can do this........
The Invisible Art - DW Griffith
The Invisible Art

- DW Griffith (Birth of A Nation)
  - 1st great editor
  - basic grammar of film
    - close ups
    - flashbacks
    - parallel action
  - The invisible cut
    - match action
  - In service of the story
The Invisible Editor

• Editors not partners
  • hands for hire
  • worked in shops
  • 2nd class citizens
• Jimmy Edwards Smith
  • Griffith’s editor
• The Last Tycoon (Alfred Kazan)
  • editor dies in screening room.......no one notices
Editing

• controlling and structuring a sequence of shots
• 7 topics
  • I. juxtaposition
  • II. timing
  • III. transitions
  • IV. alternative transitions
  • V. continuity and the logic of editing
  • VI. montage
  • VII. the “art” of editing
I. Juxtaposition--Film experiment

- Kuleshov Experiment--1917
- same image--actor neutral expression
- expressionless face of Tsarist matinee idol Ivan Mozzhukhin
  - CU-soup-CU.....hunger
  - CU-woman-CU....love
  - CU-coffin-CU...grief
- Viewers praised the acting
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grCPqoFwp5k
• Kuleshov Experiment
Juxtaposition

• The standard Hollywood movie today has 5000 cuts.
  • Walter Murch

• The average shot length (ASL) for U.S. films released in 2007 was 2.5 seconds.

• Each one changes the one before it and the one after it
Juxtaposition -

- meaning of an image changes according to what precedes and follows it.
II. Timing of shots

a. when to change shots--determined by
  - dialogue
  - Content/complexity of shot
  - director/editor intention--
    - Tease/confuse
    - inform/explain
    - pace/rhythm-fast or slow
Timing of shots

- When to Change also determined by:
  - too long, attention wanders.
  - too short, cannot comprehend
  - subject familiarity
  - how much action, change or movement pic has
  - Picture quality (contrast, detail, composition)
Timing of shots

- correct duration depends on purpose
  - Nuclear bomb fuse
    - Lengthy shot ok for explanation
    - 1 sec ok for drama about terrorism
Timing of shots

- Pace—audience perception of speed of show
  - affected by
    - attitude to topic
    - psychological and emotional perception
- Rhythm—actual timing and duration
Timing of shots

- Rhythm
  - beat/pulse of the film
  - has accents
  - affects mood and feel
  - similar scenes altered by rhythm
  - one of most important elements
  - requires sensitivity, understanding
Timing of shots
Deconstructing Harry--Woody Allen-1997

• Rhythm
Timing of shots
Deconstructing Harry--Woody Allen

• Rhythm
  • Fast cuts
    • jump cuts, pans
  • angles
  • close ups, medium close ups
• Disagreement
• Warmth and immediacy
• uneasiness
Timing of shots

Cries and Whispers--Ingmar Bergman

• Rhythm
Timing of shots
Cries and Whispers--Ingmar Bergman

• Rhythm
  • frontally shot
  • little dialogue
  • sound is minimal--clicking/clattering
  • tight space-confined (metaphor)
  • slow pace/rhythm
    • accelerates when glass breaks, but slows
    • magnifies the accident
• Cold relationship
Timing of shots

*The Good, the Bad, the Ugly*—Sergio Leone

- Rhythm
Timing of shots

The Good, the Bad, the Ugly--Sergio Leone

- Rhythm
  - music as a rhythmic device
  - music first, then shooting and editing
  - begins slow
  - builds to crescendo
  - rhythm of cutting dictated by music
  - tighter shots
  - builds tension
  - Tension releases after gunshot
Timing-One frame counts
One Frame Counts

- Quentin Tarantino (Pulp Fiction)
  - Writer---word
  - Musician--note
  - Editor--frame
    - one frame is difference
- Spielberg (Jaws)
  - Verna Fields (mother cutter)
  - 2 frames made the shark real
- James Cameron (Terminator)
  - cut a frame every 24--junk
  - every frame important
III. Transitions

• Why do we change shots?
  • show something new
  • closer look
  • emphasis
  • intensify
  • build or lessen tension
  • establish or reestablish
  • to confuse or to explain
  • show reaction
• It is easy to overcut--be sure you have reason to change
Transitions

• a. CUT--most common, least obtrusive, most natural
  • resembles changing field of eye
  • motivate cut--have a reason, not arbitrary
  • - cut on action
Cut on the Action
Transitions

• b. FADE--to or from black, says finality or big change
  • like curtain
  • speed varies effect
  • out then in may be passage of time
    • Crossfade
      • from image to black to image
• Fade then physical wipe-from *Ryan*
Transitions-

- c. DISSOLVE--Blend of shots, don't overuse
  - compose shots
  - speed varies effect
  - smoother bridge than cut
  - minor change in time or place
  - creates connections
Dissolve

- From the *Famous Last Words*
superimposition--a kind of HELD dissolve

- comparison
  - similarity or difference
    - baby and old person
- spatial montage
  - events occurring concurrently in different places
  - bombs falling over peace demonstration
- thoughts, dreams
  - ghost effect
Superimposition

• from *Neighbors* Buster Keaton 1920
  • connection -- ring to cheap products