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