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 Mozhukhin
  - 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

• 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
Transitions

d. WIPE--new pic replaces old, most artificial transition
  • calls attention to itself
  • split screen
    • compare events or images
    • interaction from different places (phone conversation)
    • more obvious separation than super

• Connection
• from *Star Wars*
IV. Alternatives to Traditional Transitions-

- we expect the normal transitions
- do the unexpected
  - a. Cam movement
  - b. Performer movement
  - c. Focus/Depth of Field
  - d. Plastics (lighting, sets)
- The First Editor is the Director
Camera Movement--more than “cool” moves

- Swish Pan (Whip Pan)
Camera Movement--more than “cool” moves

- Pan from *Breathless*
Camera Movement--more than “cool” moves

• Tilt
Camera Movement--more than "cool" moves

• Zoom from the Stendahl Syndrome
Performer Movement + Camera Movement + Cut

- From Slumdog Millionaire
Rack Focus

- change focus from one focus plane to another—from DaVinci Code
V. Continuity and the Logic of Editing

- Continuity
  - preserve the essential sequence of an event (without necessarily showing it all)
  - In many ways, the editing is done in the shooting
  - the shooter must think like an editor
    - must understand editing
- The Logic
  - control the viewer’s perception
  - Manipulate the experience
  - manipulate the rules
Continuity Editing

• Preserve Screen Direction and Location
  • a. AXIS
  • b. Jump Cuts-
    • can use for effect, intensify (Deconstructing Harry--Woody Allen)
    • size
    • angle
    • direction
    • position
    • mvt to stationary
    • discontinuous action
Axis
• The camera must stay on one side of the axis so that they appear in opposite sides of the frame (because 2D space)
• “Crossing the line” causes disorientation
• jump cuts
• Reason to break rule? Creates confusion/action
• If you must edit across the line, use a cutaway
• [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdyyuqmCW14](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdyyuqmCW14)
Axis and the 180 degree rule
Continuity Editing

- Cut ins and cutaways
- Matching Action
- Cut on the Action
  - movement hides the cut