Editing the cutting edge
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-child-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