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
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