

Editing

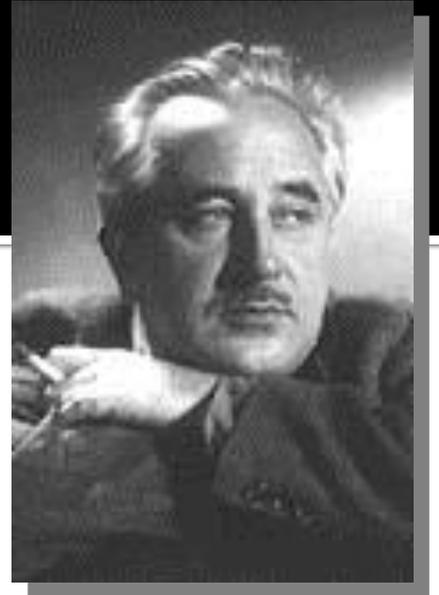
what distinguishes movies from other dramatic and visual arts

What is editing...

- Process of selecting, arranging & assembling the essential components of a movie to tell a story (...in a unique way)
 - essential components: visuals, sound, effect
- A craft with the ability to join shots and produce meaning that did not exist individually in each shot
 - Defined as: The Kuleshov Effect

The Kuleshov Effect

- Origin, Soviet Film Theory (~1924-1930)
 - What is film being used for?
- Central belief: the viewer's response in cinema depends less on the individual shot and more on the editing/sequence of the shots



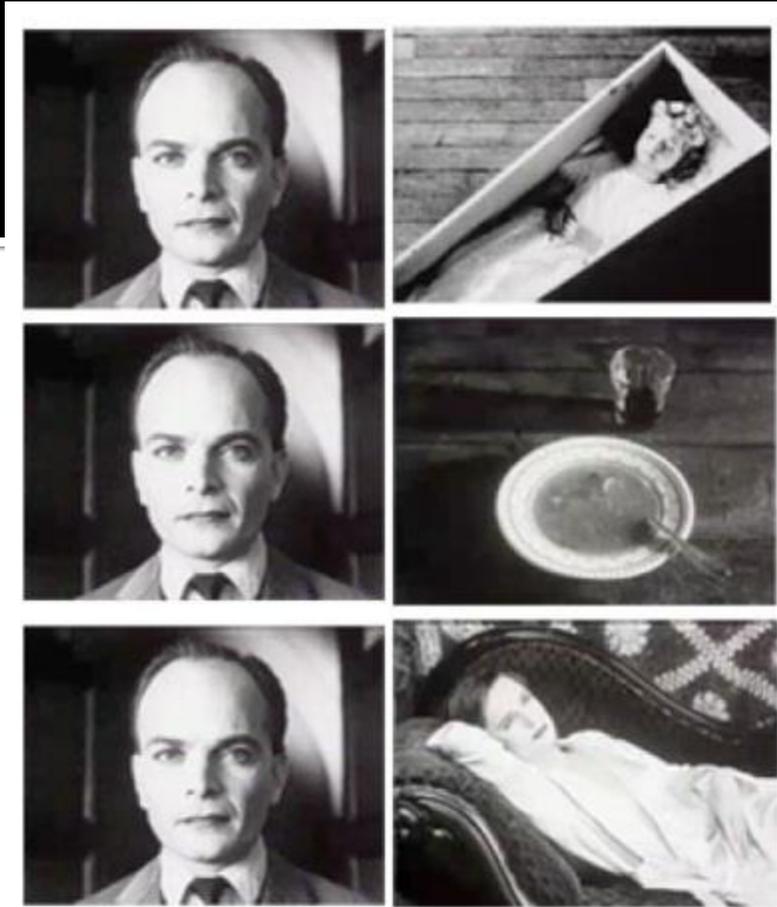
Lev Kuleshov teacher at VGIK

Kulshov's experiment with shot juxtapositions:

→ First shot: close up of actor with neutral expression, then joined shot to:

- close up of a coffin with a corpse
- close up of a bowl of soup
- close up of woman laying down

Viewers praised the actor's ability in showing hunger, sorrow, and pride, even though the shot of the actor remained exactly the same each time



...The Kuleshov Effect

- Hitchcock
- Definition: One of the basic theoretical principles of editing – the meaning produced by joining two shots together transcends the visual information contained in each individual shot
 - (A+B=C)

The Kuleshov Effect*

*The juxtaposition of shots (montage) alters the meaning of those shots.

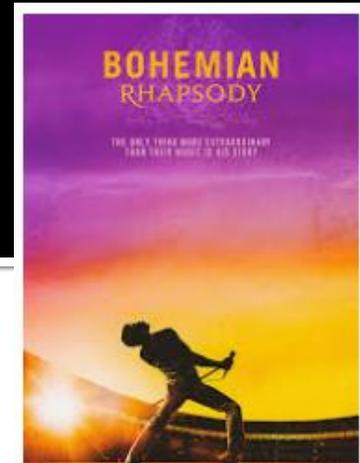
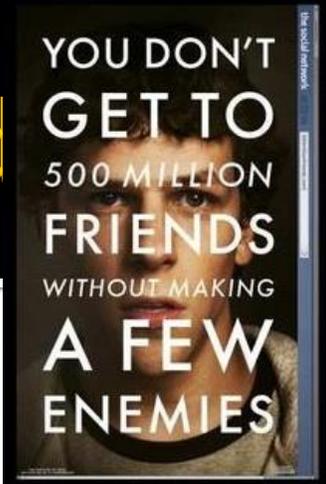


Sweet Alfred

The Montage



- The power of montage:
 - manipulate the viewer's perception and understanding
- Audiences can derive meaning from juxtaposition of two completely unrelated shots
 - Meaning created by juxtaposition of shots, not the content of individual images
- Sound and visuals can be independent or used together
 - Footage and music can be put together to increase the impact of a key shot
 - rhythm of music can accent the rhythm of editing/the montage ([Marie A, Rushmore](#))



- The editor's job is to create meaning
- Ex: an opening sequence: shots can intro character, mood, conflict, space, etc. in a short unambiguous way
 - ([Children of Men](#), [opening scenes](#))
- Ex: historical dramas/Sci Fi films rely on the power of editing to convince us to believe in the world created ([The Hobbit](#), [Gatsby](#))

- Editing manipulates the presentation of plot time on-screen
 - **flashback**
 - *Atonement, Babel, The Bourne Supremacy, Kill Bills, Memento, Up, Forrest Gump, Casablanca*
 - **flash-forward**
 - **ellipsis**
 - marked by an editing transition (a fade, dissolve, wipe, jump cut, or change of scene) to omit a period or gap of time from the film's narrative
 - **& the montage**

Hitchcock:

“What is drama but life with the dull bits cut out.”

- The enter-late-leave-early rule
 - when filming or writing a scene, filmmakers should start scene at the latest possible moment for it to be understood and felt by the audience
 - *Example: if doing a scene about a couple having a fight in a restaurant, it may not be relevant to show the couple leaving home, arriving at the restaurant, parking, and being seated. Perhaps a better start would be to simply start the scene with the wife ordering the most expensive item, and the husband nagging her because they can't afford it; and it spirals down from there. They are talking divorce before the dessert arrives.*
- Where does the editor fit in to this?
 - editors are the third and final storytellers of any film
 - writers and directors will cut as much as they can, but they never know what will work or not – it's the editor's job to make the final judgment call

- Editors can **control the rhythm of a film**
 - varying the duration of the shots in relation to one another = controls the speed/tempo/focus of the film
 - also non-formulaic editing: *Run Lola Run* ([ex](#))
- Editors can use this rhythm to build excitement/tension
 - ie: all Hitchcock movies

Approaches to Editing: Continuity and Discontinuity

- Most movies use **continuity editing**
 - the point is to tell the story as clearly, efficiently, and coherently as possible
 - to achieve logical, smooth flow: establish & resolve the character's problem

Discontinuity Editing

- Breaks rules of continuity editing by aiming to create transitions between shots that are not smooth, continuous or coherent
- Instead of invisibly moving story forward – calls attention to itself
 - [Memento](#)
 - [Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind](#)

Continuity Editing: The Master Scene

- Director begins shooting a scene with a master shot (usually long shot) that covers the characters and action in one continuous take
 - establishes location, situation, spatial relationships, etc.
 - may cut to various subjects then back to master to reacquaint viewers

Maintaining Continuity Techniques

- **Shot/reverse shot**
- **Match cuts** ([here](#))
- **Parallel editing** *Silence of the Lambs* (*)
- **Point-of-view** *Rear Window* (*)

Other Transitions Between Shots

- **Jump cut:** *Taxi Driver* (1:32:16 – 1:33:30)
- **Fade**
- **Dissolve** (frequently shows the passing of time or between what's in the shots)
- **Wipe** (esp. change of time or place ([Sith](#)))
- **Iris shot**
- **Freeze-Frame** (functions like an exclamation point, *400 Blows*)
- **Split screen**
 - [To Die For / Timecode](#)



- Movies run ~2 hours today with 2,000 – 3,000 shots
 - Approx. ratio between used and unused footage to be 20:1
 - Apocalypse Now: 235 hrs of footage to 2hr 33 min movie
- Good editing: choosing the right length of each shot, right rhythm for each scene, right movement for cutting to create the right spatial, temporal, visual, and rhythmic relationship between shots
 - Editing is unnoticed

- Martin Scorsese *(including influences)*
- Camera work in TS4
- Costume
- Camp Kuleshov