Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Marina Daou

Dedication

To my grandparents, Jana and Evgeniy. Their unconditional love is what made this PhD project come true.

Эта исследовательская работа посвящена моим бабушке и дедушке Яне и Евгению. Ничто не бывало и не будет возможным без их безусловной любви.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of the discourses around film editing from the privileged perspective of a film editor turned researcher. This research examines the complex relationship between the theoretical and practice-based discussions on film editing and expands on functions and techniques of editing that have enjoyed less academic attention. An overriding concern of the project is to consider how practice can enhance the study of film editing, above and beyond what written scholarship has offered.

The literature review investigates critical traditions around editing and compares this with how editors talk and write about their work. The critical analysis of a series of case studies looks at five films and related academic theories, exploring editing structures and the different approaches involved. The thesis underscores the significance and importance of videographic criticism as scholarly method, providing novel insights on films and facilitating an in-depth investigation of film material, exploring editing strategies in a form closely aligned to the original, where language-based explorations may not be so effective. The project also draws on original interviews with recognized international industry experts to gain valuable insights into how their current practices accommodate the traditional editing forms. An appendix, providing full transcriptions of the interviews, completes the submitted material.

The project demonstrates the existing strengths of academic scholarship on editing but foregrounds the benefits of drawing on other methods of understanding film editing, especially considering rapid technological change and its implications for the established theories. The results show that the value of the professional voice is a distinctive contribution to this thesis. There is an increasing demand for practitioners to engage further with film scholarship, especially considering the growing popularity and acceptance of videographic criticism, to demystify certain aspects of editing that remain under-researched and to investigate practice uninformed or unconcerned with theory.

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Introduction

While different aspects of filmmaking have received considerable academic attention – particularly directing, but more recently other areas including cinematography and production design – the decision-making process and creative choices involved in editing have not always been as thoroughly explored or widely understood. A potential explanation for this is that in some forms of cinema, editing can be so seamless that it becomes almost imperceptible to the viewer. The audience can become fully immersed in the story, unaware of the editing choices that have shaped their experience. The transparency of continuity editing allows the narrative and emotions to take the central stage without drawing attention to the technical aspects of its construction or the significance of the editor's contribution to the result. Beyond accounting for the conventions of the continuity system, it is noticeable that the most widely known writing on editing addresses montage or other more overt editing practices.

Before commencing the research for this project, I worked extensively as a film editor on short fiction films (both in academic and independent settings) and various types of freelance video projects. Coming from a background of professional context, but having also spent almost ten years in academia, I could not help but notice the difference between academics and practitioners discussing editing, which lies in their respective perspectives, objectives, and approaches to the subject matter. Practitioners often possess specialised skills and insights not readily accessible to academics and their expertise can shed light on industry practices, emerging technologies, and contemporary trends, potentially fostering a more relevant and up-to-date academic discourse. At the same time, a critical discourse can help editors extend their way of talking about their work and its implications. There is a need for a more measured and detailed discussion of editing and the dynamics of the processes, which bridges critical claims and practitioner discourse. This thesis addresses how the practitioners' input can help bridge the gap between film editing theory and application, ensuring that findings are relevant, applicable, and impactful within the industry. Research can be more effectively translated into practice by involving practitioners in academia, and vice versa, promoting a symbiotic relationship between theory and real-world application.

This study aims to identify the most suitable and compelling methods of exploring the intricacies of editing practice. I investigate different approaches and techniques by linking scholarly analysis to the editor's perspective, as in addition to critical interpretation, I explore opportunities to intervene in film sequences more decisively. I seek to contribute to the broader understanding of editing while facilitating meaningful exchange and mutual benefit between

practitioners and the academic community. By addressing the gaps and challenges, scholarship can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of film editing, encompassing technical innovations, experimental techniques, diverse cultural perspectives, and the artistic nuances inherent in the editing process.

In the project, I aim to address five research questions related to film editing and its intersection with academic scholarship and practitioner experiences:

1. What are the differences and similarities in editing knowledge shared and communicated in three sources: theoretical discourse written by academics, texts written by filmmakers and practitioners, and interviews with film editors?

2. What is the relationship between the principles of editing in academic writing and the experiences of practitioners?

3. How can audiovisual essays contribute to academic critical engagement with film editing?

4. How can film editors contribute to videographic film criticism and academic discussions surrounding film editing?

5. What are the decision-making aspects and editing functions that can be explored and presented more effectively through audio-visual criticism?

Consequently, the research objectives are, as follows:

1. To develop an understanding of editing by performing comparative analysis across different traditions of academic writing, interviews with film editors and texts written by practitioners, aiming to identify commonalities, differences and trends.

2. To investigate traditions of critical writing around editing and compare them with the way in which editors talk and write about their work, drawing on new interviews with a selection of film editors.

3. To analyse editing in a series of case studies, selected to engage with different editing traditions and with different moments in film history.

4. To investigate film editing through a series of audiovisual essays with an outlook that this developing methodology can provide formally sympathetic ways of developing insights into editing strategies.

Case studies & Methodology

This research explores different editing models and traditions. As Don Fairservice observes, 'A work that sets out to explore the history, theory and practice of editing must also be prepared to explain how current practice accommodates to those conventional editing forms that have been historically determined' (Fairservice 2001: 4). Fairservice's emphasis on the need for detailed examination of the practice at different points in its development to understand the logistics of the film editing process significantly contributes towards my methodology in this project. The thesis investigates two major cinematic traditions, Soviet and Hollywood cinema, to explore the evolution of film editing practices across different periods, movements, and schools of thought. The variety of practices is traced and observed through five independent but connected film case studies – *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein 1925), *All I Desire* (Douglas Sirk 1953), *Mirror* (Andrey Tarkovsky 1975), *Reds* (Warren Beatty 1981) and *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (Chris Weitz 2009). The selected films exemplify diverse approaches to editing, highlighting a range of aesthetics and techniques. Each film offers distinct perspectives that showcase the richness and breadth of film as an art form, reflecting a creative and thoughtful engagement with its historical development. Case studies are supported by selected writings from different publications and the analysis of these various sources, along with closer audio-visual observations, contribute to subject-related knowledge by proceeding with practical considerations.

The beginning of my research journey was framed by Sergei Eisenstein and *Battleship Potemkin*, predominantly motivated by my engagement with editing modules during the very beginning of my BA in Film Production. Even though I acknowledged the great variety of scholarship dedicated to the Soviet school of montage (and Eisenstein, in particular), I found it essential to look at his film from an academic perspective, as Eisenstein's theories had long inspired my professional editing practice. To continue investigating editing practice, I studied the range of Hollywood films with a similar Russian Revolution theme and selected *Reds* as the following case study. There were a few reasons why I chose this film: first, it allowed me to turn to a contrary editing style as opposed to montage approach; second, the film was an example of a Hollywood system, and I limited my case studies to Soviet and American films only; third, the obvious complexity of the film due to its long running time, the large scale of production and the inclusion of intermission signalled that a more complex underlying editing structure is present, that is entirely different than that in *Battleship Potemkin*. I had been studying *Reds* and paying particular attention to the multi-strand narrative for quite some time,

lacking something apart from the written analysis to process the findings into a more focused criticism. In the meantime, I started thinking about the following case study, and having struggled with rewatching *Reds* repeatedly to note more insights on editing, I decided to include *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* as the next example, demonstrating the modern Hollywood editing approach. I found the film under-represented in academic research, especially from the perspective of its editing, and I had always been a huge fan of *Twilight* films before. Unlike *Reds* that I was struggling to break down through conventional means of written criticism, *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* prompted was known to me by heart already, and as the literature review brought me to David Bordwell's intensified continuity concept, I started to find it more and more challenging to address the complex relationship between rhythm, camera movement, shot sizes and lens choices in the film's hybrid editing approach within the framework of written reflection. I first learned about audiovisual film studies from my principal supervisor, Professor John Gibbs, and the idea of including video essays as part of the range of approaches became more and more compelling, especially as video essays are a form that depends extensively on editing. I turned to using the tool that I am most confident with – editing software. Therefore, one significant feature of this project's journey was adopting an additional methodology – videographic criticism – which turned a project that started as a purely written project into practice-as-research.

Adobe Premiere Pro afforded me new ways of presenting related scenes and sequences to explore the possibility of translating my findings and written analysis into a video essay. The explanatory video essay that explores editing in *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (2009) (my stepping stone in investigating how to bring the critical text into direct contact with videographic practice, even though it appears as the fourth case study in the final form of the thesis) has more overlap with the written part of the case study than some of the videos. Encouraged by this experience, I then began to develop video essays for all of the case studies, deliberately adopting a range of videographic forms as appropriate to the film and questions being explored, expanding on different modes of engaging with the film material and learning how certain poetically imaginative strategies can reveal important aspects of the media object that are easily missed via conventional viewing.

As I discovered Adobe Premiere Pro and started to learn more about videographic criticism, I could return to my analysis of *Reds*, in which I implemented the timeline breakdown for various parametered narrative layers in the software for the first time. This discovery was substantial as it became the tool to make video essays and became a part of the research to support parts of the written chapter. *Reds* video essay was the first videographic work in this

thesis that expanded on my use of the editing software for critical analysis; however, the video in the form presented for this thesis' submission was only finalised towards the end of my PhD, as until I finally "polished" my skills of academic video making, I was struggling to re-edit it to the standard I was satisfied with.

The Twilight Saga: New Moon prompted the selection of the following case study, another example of a Hollywood film, *All I Desire,* by Douglas Sirk. As the project aims and research questions were becoming more subject-focused, I decided that rather than perceiving case studies as Soviet vs Hollywood film pairs, the project should instead present an investigation into five unrelated films that demonstrate different editing approaches but still fall under Soviet or Hollywood traditions. On the other hand, the essential criteria were to select a film that would cover the prominent cinematic movements, and, having looked at both Classical Hollywood and post-modern Hollywood styles, it was also essential to consider the Studio Hollywood continuity. The written reflections on *All I Desire* were greatly supported by the use of markers in the timeline, as well as the film breakdown in Adobe Premiere Pro, and the growing confidence in audio-visual criticism prompted me to experiment more with video forms that would best reflect the editing strategy I was discussing.

The case study on Tarkovsky's *Mirror,* a stark opposition to Eisenstein's approach, was concluding my research journey (unfortunately, due to time constraints, I could not include the sixth case study, an example of a modern Russian editing school). The only remaining chapter missing practice-as-research remained *Battleship Potemkin*, and the PechaKucha approach that I was introduced to at the beginning of my investigation of videographic criticism was the missing puzzle piece. The rationale for structuring the thesis in a non-chronological order in terms of the research process lies in my decision to present the selected editing approaches in a way that would facilitate closer reader engagement with the variety of techniques investigated. In the introduction to each chapter, I signpost thematic similarities between some of the chosen films and compare the approaches and cinematic traditions discussed (as well as situating them historically). The current project's structure demonstrates the key findings of each case study, emphasizing the most important critical observations and addressing interactions between different editing practices, not considering when they were supported by videographic criticism. For methodological clarity, however, the role of video essays in communicating editing knowledge is examined, assessing whether they provide more informative insights than traditional written forms of analysis. Each case study includes a section discussing the process of working on the video essay, reviewing issues that emerged during the task, and explaining the formal choices and parameters I followed when examining

the film. The practice-as-research part of each chapter demonstrates how video essays find the right forms to explore the topics they are engaging with.

It is important to note that this is a thesis which uses the video essay as one methodology among several to explore its wider concerns around editing, rather than being a thesis *on* the audiovisual essay. Rather, this thesis incorporates a practice-led investigation, aiming to deepen understanding of the editing process by actively engaging with the existing knowledge and film material as both an editor and a scholar. By bringing my professional editing experience to bear on both the research process (of written reflections and the creation of video essays) and the final videographic outputs, I demonstrate the potential of practice-based videographic analysis in enriching film studies (particularly in research of editing) showcasing its unique visual exploration and analysis capabilities when compared to conventional written approaches.

The selection of films for the case studies allowed me, within available resources and constraints, to address the research objectives while acknowledging the broader landscape of editing practices and conventions. This thesis focuses on fiction feature films but also considers and explores documentary elements in some of them, and how editing strategies deal with the challenge of striking a balance between authenticity and dramatization and further exploring the interplay between them. Documentary and fiction editing share fundamental qualities, such as rhythm and pacing. However, the unique nature of the source material, questions of narrative structure, and various creative and ethical considerations make editing documentaries a distinct and specialized practice, as well as presenting a distinct set of challenges that require a completely different process of organization. With the primary focus of the case studies being fiction films, references to documentary cinema are also incorporated through interviews with practitioners who have experience working in both genres. This inclusion allows for valuable insights into the intersection of editing practices and the cross-pollination of techniques between documentary and fiction filmmaking. By narrowing the selection to fiction feature films while acknowledging the influence of documentary filmmaking, this research maintains a focused examination of editing techniques within the chosen parameters while still recognizing the broader context of documentary practices.

Thesis Structure

Following this introduction**, Chapter 1** presents the literature review and comparative analysis of theoretical observations from film scholars, practitioners, and texts featuring

interviews with film editors, exploring differences and identifying common ground. One of the underlying challenges in this research is that film editing is not a monolithic subject and includes many different practices. What may be true for one editor may not be true for the other, as practitioners have varying practical approaches and personal perspectives. Hence, this work focuses on various ways of explaining editing strategies and approaches from multiple viewpoints without privileging any one of them. By reviewing the literature on film editing, I address the gap between the theoretical perspective that is of interest and relevance but offers insufficient insight into the decisions behind editing and practitioners' first-hand insights who have had less opportunity to contribute to the scholarship and can turn into crucial elements of bringing the creative practice together with academic discourse. Most importantly, by presenting practitioner voices through interviews, I consider how professional perspectives can enhance the study of film editing, providing newer and exciting insights compared to what written scholarship has offered.

The case studies bridge from the literature review by examining in the first study some of the editing theories of Sergei Eisenstein, whose ground-breaking contributions to the field had a profound influence, allowing him to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. With a particular focus on *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)*,* **Chapter 2** extends the arguments surrounding Sergei Eisenstein's methods and their impact on the viewer. As a native Russian speaker, I have accessed the original writings without the constraints of selection and translation. These resources provide invaluable insights and serve as references for observations incorporated throughout this thesis, enriching the scholarly discourse on film editing. While acknowledging Eisenstein's authority as a prominent filmmaker and theorist, this section aims to critically examine the effectiveness of the techniques he employed to engage the viewer, taking into consideration the reservations raised by scholars such as V.F. Perkins, who questioned the level of emotional engagement and authenticity achieved through Eisenstein's use of exaggerated imagery and stylised editing (or, more particularly, the claims made for these strategies, in some cases by writers coming after Eisenstein). As a practice-as-research element, the chapter offers a series of PechaKucha videos dedicated to each of Eisenstein's five methods of montage.

Chapter 3 turns to a New Hollywood film and looks at *Reds* (1981). *Reds* shares similarities with *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) as both films engage with the challenge of dramatising the history of revolutions, providing constants across films of different approaches from very different contexts. This section concerns the informative and aesthetic possibilities of intercutting between documentary inclusions and fictional scenes in historical films. An

explanatory video essay with extensive animated graphics and the rich inclusion of Adobe Premiere Pro film's timeline breakdowns accompanies this chapter. It seeks to find a form to handle the complexity of the *Reds*' narrative and editing structures.

Chapter 4 introduces a contrasting example and analyses a film from the Hollywood Studio system, the melodrama *All I Desire* (1953). This case study explores the functions of editing transitions and the range of narrative connections these establish. Accompanying the written analysis are different videographic approaches: a video essay in explanatory mode, a videographic re-editing experiment, and a supercut, which features all dissolves and fades to black in the film. The chapter introduces videographic criticism as an essential approach to investigating editing practices. It reviews the affordances of audio-visual techniques to deal analytically with the functions of editing transitions.

To broaden the project's scope with a less researched film, **Chapter 5** looks at *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (2009) as an example of post-classical, modern mainstream Hollywood cinema. Providing some continuity within difference, like *All I Desire* (1953), the film is a melodrama that centres on a woman caught at the centre of a love triangle. This chapter draws upon David Bordwell's observations on intensified continuity, which shape the analysis and inform the structure of the accompanying video essay. This case study advances our understanding of the creative capacities of continuity editing, exploring their expressive potential. It also benefits from drawing on the insights of the film's editor, Peter Lambert, who I had the opportunity to interview. The accompanying audio-visual essay examines modern methods of filmmaking in *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* and their effect on such editing strategies as the use of close-up and wide shots, fast-paced cutting, and free camera movements.

Chapter 7 attempts to explore the relationship between editing construction methods and the non-linear storytelling structure in *Mirror* (1975). The case study utilises shot-by-shot and vertical timeline breakdowns to analyse editing strategies and explore them in dialogue with the ideas Tarkovsky developed in his scholarship and with Artavazd Peleshian's less well known montage-at-a-distance theory. The videographic analysis of *Mirror* looks into the film's assembly principles and structures of poetic linkage and editing strategies.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion, and is followed by the **Appendix**, which presents five interviews with renowned international film editors conducted during the thesis. The interviewees were selected to cover a cross-section of professional editors working in academia and the film industry, including big-budget Hollywood productions, documentaries and independent feature films. In preparation for the interviews, a series of critical questions

addressed the research objectives, and these are also included. Additionally, Appendix G contains a supplementary link to a different version of the audiovisual work on *Mirror* (1975).

Chapter 1: Academic and Industry Discourses Around Film Editing

Although much has been written on film, the relationship between practice-based and scholarly-led discourse on film editing remains less understood and rarely researched. This chapter looks at different types of literature that investigate editing practices, including books written by film theorists, texts by film practitioners, and compilations of interviews with film editors. The emphasis on editing draws attention to investigating 'practice informed by theory, and a theory informed by practice' (Murphy 1992: 32). This chapter provides a thorough account of film editing practice, and looks at the notable examples of scholarly and, most importantly, professional voices that allow me to broaden the scope of my enquiry beyond the academia.

In part one of this chapter, I will examine the scholarly discussion on theoretical notions of film editing, privileging the academically established critical analysis. In part two, I will look at film editing from the practitioners' perspective. In parts three and four I will explore the first-hand insights provided by the filmmakers in published collections of interviews and findings from my conversations with five international film editors. These interviews provide important refreshing knowledge on practical editing attributes based entirely on practitioners' direct interaction with the medium. Inviting film editors to reflect on their practice opens the conversation to broader audiences and makes editing more accessible and understandable. This project recognizes the importance of knowledge that comes from outside the academic film criticism, and by this intentional emphasis I hope to analyse how such resources can support and develop the discourse on filmmaking practice. Finally, part five offers a concise overview of videographic criticism that will introduce the reader to this project's methodological approach of its practice-as-research.

Part One: Film Theorists Writing About Editing

Valerie Orpen's introductory study on editing from 2003 helpfully categorises different kinds of writing about editing:

> The existing literature on editing can be divided into three categories: textbooks or general studies on film, either solely on editing or with a section on editing; editor's handbooks; and interviews with editors, which include autobiographies, transcripts of lectures, essays, anthologies of interviews and individual interviews in periodicals. (2003: 10)

Orpen's classification can be extended by adding two more kinds of books: film theory that is relevant for practitioners, and books on the history of editing, which can facilitate exploring the subject and the range of possibilities (Pearlman 2012: Methodology section). The breadth of knowledge and specific focus areas in these books greatly determine their relevance to different audiences, ranging from academics, film enthusiasts, students, and editors.

Ken Dancyger highlights the intriguing dual nature of and different perspectives surrounding filmmaking and its relationship with editing by addressing how filmmakers continually explored and challenged these contrasting notions:

> Much has been written suggesting that the art of film is editing, and numerous filmmakers from Eisenstein to Welles to Peckinpah have tried to prove this point. However, just as much has been written suggesting that the art of film is avoidance of editing, and filmmakers from Renoir to Ophuls to Kubrick have tried to prove that point. (2014: 371)

One of the early examples of theoretical writing on editing is Rudolf Arnheim's texts, in which he suggests that cinematic aesthetics are based on Gestalt psychology and the perception of visual wholes. After analysing previous attempts of Vsevolod Pudovkin and Semyon Timoshenko to classify principles of editing and rightly calling these attempts 'unsystematic enumeration of factors' (1957: 93-94), Arnheim proposed his classification of four montage categories (Table 1.1). Arnheim's taxonomy considers various aspects of the edited shots (time/ space, shape/ content or splitting into pieces/ joining pieces) and reviews the role that editing plays within a given scene or an episode.

The interaction of different methods and principles presented in the table below allows us to transform the temporal dimension of editing and introduce it to real-time, with techniques like flashbacks, flash-forwards and retrospective montages creating new, cinematic time. Arnheim's observations are a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the character and nature of graphic relations, which use fundamental opposition of similarity and contrast when describing various aspects of editing coherence.

Montage principle	Time relations	Spatial relations	Relations of subject matter
Length of the edited shots (long shots, short shots, a combination of long and short shots, irregular combination with no rhythm)	Simultaneity (whole scenes – sequential and parallel montage; details)	Different environment at different times (scene comparisons, retrospective montage)	Based on the similarity of shapes (object and movement) or subject matter (various objects or whole scenes)
Montage of whole scenes (sequential, interlaced, insertion)	Before and after (sequential montage – scenes succeeding each other, retrospective montage – comparison of scenes that have already occurred/ will occur; comparison of different views within one scene)	Change of environments (between scenes – sequential or parallel montage; within the same scene – different parts of one scene)	Based on the contrast of shapes (objects and movement – thin vs thick, fast vs slow) or subject matter (individual objects – hungry man in front of the shop window with food; whole scenes – house of a rich man vs house of a poor man)
Montage of individual shots (a combination of long shots and close-ups: transition from long shot to details; transition from details to whole; succession of long shots and close-ups; succession of detail shots)	Associative montage (temporal coherence is not necessary: pieces of action linked by the subject matter or various views linked by the subject matter)	Spatial relations are not necessary (associative montage)/ neutral	Combination of similarity and contrast (similarity of shape and contrast of meaning; similarity if content and contrast of shape)

Table 1.1: Montage principles proposed by Rudolf Arnheim (adapted by the author based on Arnheim 1957: 94-98)

From the early editing handbooks, maintaining 'a continuous stream of action' (Reisz 1953: 48) and constructing a flowing continuity have been named one of the editor's central preoccupations. Reisz outlines conventions of continuity editing, naming match on action cuts, directional continuity and analytic cut-ins to be critical when preserving the consistency and direction of an action within a shot (1953: 216-226). Particularly notable is Reisz's emphasis on the role of dramatic necessity in shaping editing decisions:

> All the "rules" of smooth cutting are subject to the much wider discipline of the *dramatic*, as opposed to the *mechanical* demands of the continuity, so that they are not to be taken as binding or universally valid. (1953: 216)

Reisz's observations are significant within the theoretical framework, as he delves into the creative and intangible elements of editing that contribute to constructing visual and narrative coherence. By highlighting the importance of dramatic necessity, Reisz's approach aligns well with my exploration of the ambiguity often found in practitioners' discussions when elaborating on their creative workflows, as it emphasizes the artistic and subjective aspects of editing, further enriching the understanding of the editing process in relation to narrative and dramatic effectiveness.

Noël Carroll's *Theorizing the Moving Image* (1996) presents a broad overview of existing strains of film theory and extends our understanding of how films work. Carroll describes editing as a film construction principle or a tool for the spectator's comprehension and interpretation. To support this argument, Carroll suggests that 'with editing, relations are implied that the spectator is supposed to supply by induction' (1996: 64), 'editing can communicate (such) knowledge' (1996: 67) and 'the event is implied by the editing and the narrative.' (1996: 71) Carroll also insists that editing does not supply the whole picture but serves as a partial representation of the story. It is the task of an audience to respond to new information contained in shots and fill in knowledge gaps. Carroll writes:

> Usually, he or she does this by supposing an account which makes the new information in the shot chain maximally coherent with what he or she already takes to be the facts of the story. The spectator's role involves inference while the filmmaker's involves implication. (1996: 404)

Noël Carroll makes useful observations when analysing matched movement editing within the context of *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov 1929) and *Rude Awakening* (David Greenwalt and Aaron Russo 1989) and argues that while the expressive potential of cinematic

ampliation[1] mainly contributes to the standard linkage of impossible events, it can also be used to 'signal unique commitments when embedded in particular contexts' (1996:172). Carroll's observation that shots can possess multiple dimensions, and simultaneously encompassing elements of comparison and contrast, is especially compelling. Carroll writes:

> This style begins in the realization that a shot may either match or contrast with adjacently preceding or succeeding shots in virtue of colour, subject, shape, shade, texture, the screen orientation of objects, the direction of camera or object movement, of even the stasis thereof. (1996: 177)

In more recent texts, authors frequently expand on how new technologies and international developments have influenced practice. Dancyger maintains the tradition of conceptualising classical editing as invisible storytelling and, similarly to Karel Reisz, argues for seamlessness as the editor's ultimate goal (2007: 362). The author is concerned with the technical side of the process as he looks at the fundamentals of constructing continuity, which include providing adequate coverage, matching action, maintaining screen direction and directional cutting. Dancyger insists that 'the creativity of editing is based on pragmatic [not theoretical] solutions' and adds that the 'editing problem begins with the individual shot' (2007: 361). Dancyger's pragmatic approach to creativity recognises the collaborative and problem-solving nature of the editing process, where editors must strike a balance between artistic vision and practical constraints to achieve the desired result. While technical perspectives may be significant, they provide a limited understanding of the creative considerations that drive the workflow.

John Gibbs identifies a common mistake in some of the writers' works, which is to curtail the discussion when only a single stylistic decision or consequence has been discovered. He claims that this phenomenon directly influences writing about continuity editing, as authors often conclude their analysis as soon as they establish temporal and spatial continuity and do not proceed with looking at other ways in which the effects of cuts might be subtle and various. Gibbs points out that 'whilst montage, or other overtly consequential patterns of editing, are frequently celebrated, there remains a marked tendency to underplay the expressive potential of continuity editing' (2002: 52).

Gibbs is challenging a widespread – if false – opposition between continuity editing and alternative forms, where the expressive potential of editing is associated with the latter and

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[1] Ampliation is the creation of a movement onto the second object of the already existing movement of the first object (Tarnay 1997).

discussion of the former is frequently restricted to its role in the construction of time and space. Valerie Orpen recaps the existing knowledge on continuity editing and refers to Fairservice's view of it 'being perceived as entirely subservient to the narrative' and 'not sufficiently creative or original' (2003: 29). In this sense, it would follow that continuity editing, 'coupled with its unobtrusiveness, does not seem compatible with expressiveness' (2003: 17), but Orpen attempts to challenge this view by examining two examples of Hollywood films: *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock 1964) and *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese 1980). Orpen observes:

> The existence of an editing rhetoric precludes the existence of so-called 'seamless' or 'invisible' editing. If editing is intended through its patterns, its rhythm or its timing to convey an emotion or affect, it has to be noticed to absorb our attention. Consequently, the whole argument of continuity editing being 'invisible' is challenged: continuity editing may well appear smooth, logical and linear in terms of narrative coherence, but as soon as editing becomes expressive, it also becomes visible. (2003: 117)

Various film scholars have further challenged the idea that continuity editing cannot be expressive, including David Bordwell, who attempts to track short-time changes in the continuity style. With precise attention, the author shows how the long take has become less often employed in modern American cinema due to rapid developments in digital technologies and because other visual techniques have become essential to accelerate the way the traditional stories are told. As a result, Bordwell introduces a new term, 'intensified continuity,' to describe the natural evolution of the classical continuity style.[2] Bordwell suggests that certain filmmaking techniques were already present in the early cinema; therefore, the concept of intensified continuity is not a completely radical transition but rather an extension of the existing form that has transformed into a more expressive version.

The last consideration in this section, intuition in editing, is under-theorised in the scholarly discourse. The source of the editor's intuitive process and its influence on shaping the film are amongst the most abstract definitions predominantly brought up by practitioners through personal responses to their work. It will also be evident later in the discussion that intuition[3] in editing is one of the most prevalent recurring themes in the editors' testimonials. The meaning of intuition in editing is difficult to conceptualise as it is believed to develop from work experience and the obtained skills; therefore, it is highly subjective.

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[2] Intensified continuity model and its four features are explained in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.
[3] Editors sometimes refer to intuition as 'instinct'. Here, it is crucial to make a clear distinction between instinct and intuition, as the latter is an acquired knowledge that editors can learn and improve during their creative and professional practices.

Ken Dancyger briefly brings up intuition in his discussion on rhythm as one of the leading editing principles (2007: 376). Pearlman's book *Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing* makes an important intervention in expanding on the common view of many editors that their work is driven by intuition. Pearlman starts by reviewing the six components of intuition and states that expertise, implicit learning, judgement, sensitivity, creativity and rumination specifically apply to the editor's work process (2015:11). Pearlman also refers to the criteria that the Australian Screen Editors Guild introduced to judging editing (2015:92), which includes movement of a story, movement of emotion, movement of images, style and structure and rhythm aggregates. These criteria are somewhat similar to Walter Murch's 'Rule of Six',[4] as it is also an example of how separating observations on various kinds of movement and rhythm can help shape and judge editing. Both Murch and Pearlman focus on peculiar and unique editing characteristics rather than prioritising narrative structures while assembling a film, expanding scholarly knowledge by proposing various editing theories and terms. Most importantly, Pearlman argues that 'intuition is commonly used as an excuse to avoid technical or scientific explanation of the editor's craft, thus allowing the editorial practice to remain mysterious'.[5] Pearlman attempts to define intuition on several levels and claims that intuition and rhythm are cognitively apprehended, not just felt. She adds that 'creativity in rhythm and spectators' expectation about rhythm is also learned' and these processes can be explained (2015: 7). In the following sections featuring interviews with editors, I will gather more insights on the issue of intuition and explore any additional considerations preventing filmmakers from providing a comprehensive explanation.

So far, I have presented different historical accounts of conceptions on the expressive functions of editing, as well as on the conjunctions of spatiotemporal coherence and story construction and the value of intuitive solutions. The academic counterpart advances our knowledge of the basic conventions of film editing, but sometimes pays little attention to analysing and interpreting editing-specific methods and the editor's contribution to the overall shape of a film. I suggest looking at the industry-based perspective and testimonies of practitioners as an essential next step, as editors are the direct source of knowledge about creative decisions made in the editing room.

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[4] For Murch, the ideal cut joins six criteria, which are arranged in the order of their effect: emotion (51%), story (23%), rhythm (10%), eye-trace (7%), 2D plane of the screen (5%) and 3D space of action (4%) (Murch, 2001:18).
[5] As noted in Cari Ann Shim Sham's review *Cutting Rhythms: A New Perspective on the Rhythmic and Choreographic Nuances of the Edit* (2009: 107).

Part Two: Practitioners Writing About Editing

In this section, my emphasis turns to practitioners writing about film editing, thus steering away from the discourse commonly associated with academic texts. Alongside the history of writing on film theory, it is also crucial to distinguish literature composed by practitioners and their theoretical observations, which has become an invaluable source of guidance in professional practices. It is also essential to identify specific tools and approaches editors use in their work process that can unveil the concept of intuition. Most writing on editing by practitioners and filmmakers provides different terminology and different areas of emphasis, such as technical challenges, director-editor relationships, or individual tips and tricks that they typically use in the workflow. Such practical concerns are rarely reviewed and analysed in detail by academic writers.

Soviet Montage

Lev Kuleshov was one of the first Soviet film directors and theorists who formulated a new meaning from comparing shots set side by side during editing. One of his experiments, creative geography or artificial landscape, communicates that the correct organization of actors' actions in adjacent frames during the edit would be perceived as continuing uninterruptedly in the same space. Lev Kuleshov asserts that 'the essence of the cinema, its method of achieving maximal impression, is montage' (Kuleshov 1922: 14-15). The director refers to American cinema, as his interest in Hollywood practices was an inevitable step to adapt and extend the new film language, which was essential for creating distinctive revolutionary Russian cinema. Kuleshov claims:

> If preparations are performed correctly, the final film's edit will be easy to implement (without major alterations and changes). Therefore, the better the editing script is made, the easier and more convenient it is to shoot a film based on it. The quality of the editing script will be higher if the director has prepared for filming and his preparation is reflected in it. Without a precisely designed editing script, a film shoot becomes unacceptable. (my translation, Kuleshov 1941: 107)

Despite the unique features of some Soviet writers, who see montage as the main driving force, they certainly understand and present it in a much broader sense than just the post-filming process. In *Non-indifferent Nature,* Eisenstein claims that Soviet filmmakers had the task not only to make films but also to understand, build and formulate the primary principles of cinematic culture and aesthetics (1964: 289). Eisenstein stands at the beginning of the tradition

of interdisciplinary research of cinema, its origins and expressive means. By sharing his deep practice-based theoretical research with references to various fields of humanities (history of art, psychology, linguistics, ethnography, anthropology, and others), Eisenstein expanded the level of theoretical understanding of cinema. A central argument of Eisenstein's theories was the dialectical approach to film form, where editing confronts incompatible concepts to unite them into a new meaning. A thought is born in a collision rather than in the cohabitation of neighbouring frames. Eisenstein argues that in this way, a montage can be created by juxtaposing often unrelated details:

> An attraction (in relation to the theatre) is any aggressive aspect of the theatre; that is, any element of the theatre that subjects the spectator to a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional shocks which, when placed in their proper sequence within the totality of the production, become the only means that enable the spectator to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated-the ultimate ideological conclusion. (Eisenstein 1974: 78)

Eisenstein defines this juxtaposition as a 'free montage (assembly) of arbitrarily selected independent effects (attractions) to establish a certain final thematic effect' (Eisenstein 1979: 79). Attractions are unexpected bursts of aggressive and sudden movements independent of the narrative that produce a strong sensory impact on the viewer. Most importantly, in *The Fourth Dimension in the Cinema* (1929), Eisenstein distinguishes five methods of montage, which I will focus on in Chapter 2 in the context of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Eisenstein's montage theory establishes relationships between film shots and creates meaning through their juxtaposition. Metric, rhythmic, tonal and overtonal techniques are purely physiological, while intellectual montage engages the viewer's thought process.

Eisenstein also focuses on montage from the poetic perspective and argues that it has to be viewed through the prism of the artistic perception of a work of art. He writes:

> The power of montage is that the emotions and mind of the viewer are included in the creative process. The viewer is forced to follow the same artistic path that the author went through, when creating the image. The viewer not only sees the visual elements of the work, but he also experiences the dynamic process of the appearance and formation of the image as the author experienced it. (Eisenstein trans. by Glenny 2010: 309)

Eisenstein appeals to increasing the spectator's activity and developing such cinematic composition, where the artist seeks to convey his attitude toward the subject and engage the

viewer in action. When these three points are united, he suggests, the film is perfect, and its impact is enormous. Eisenstein's arguments suggest that a work of art is a place where the artist's and viewer's psychology intertwine and create complex interactions.

Certain Soviet ideas and elements of the Russian School of Montage are still used in contemporary practices and discussed in modern film literature. Tom Gunning argues that 'every change in film history in its address to the spectator, and each period constructs its spectator in a new way' (2005: 44). The contemporary influence of Eisenstein's montage of attractions is more relevant today than ever in forms such as advertising that are ideologically removed from the context in which the theory was initially developed. Leon Gurevitch suggests that as digital attractions emerged, narrative and spectacle have transformed unexpectedly (Gurevitch 2010). For instance, video-sharing sites like YouTube are also argued to demonstrate qualities of the cinema of attractions, as they produce engaging visual experiences full of surprises and shocks.

Perspectives from Hollywood

Edward Dmytryk, the American director who started his career as an editor, argues that the famous phrase 'saved in the editing room' is an exaggeration. Even though the editor's job involves clever manipulations, such as eliminating excessive dialogue, selective editing of poor acting, controlling the film's pace and rhythm, or improving the effects of poorly assembled scenes, it still is a work on a directed film. Dmytryk argues:

> Even if the editor creates a "miracle", the fact remains that the material carries *all* the ingredients of that miracle except, of course, for the creative ability brought to the cutting process by the editor. Finally, it must be borne in mind that although the editing "magic" is created in the cutting room, its creator is quite often *not* the cutter. (1984: 4-5)

Dmytryk also explains who a 'cutter' is:

> In the 1920s and early 1930s, a cutter who called himself a film editor would have been considered a snob. Then came the Wagner Labor Relations Act and unionization. In an attempt to raise the status of the craft, which was considered by the less knowledgeable executives of Hollywood to be five or six rungs from the top of the filmmaker's ladder, it was decided that *film editor* had a more imposing sound than a *film cutter*, and henceforth that became the official terminology. (1984: 1)

Dmytryk's discussion provides reflections on directors' experiences when editing films. He acknowledges that 'many directors have little understanding of the needs of the editor' (1984: 12) and criticizes editing while directing, which is often used on set to save time and money. Dmytryk calls this technique self-defeating, as it limits further creativity and possible improvements in the editing room and allows the actors little opportunity for improvisation, which can sometimes result in more realistic performances.

A significant contribution by Dmytryk is his seven rules of cutting. He writes: 'Never make a cut without a positive reason' and 'When undecided about the exact frame to cut on, cut long rather than short.' (1984: 23); 'Whenever possible, cut in movement.' (1984: 27); 'The 'fresh' is preferable to the 'stale'' (1984: 37); 'All scenes should begin and end with continuous action' (1984: 38); 'Cut for proper values rather than for proper 'matches'' (1984: 44) and 'Substance first – then form.' (1984: 145). Dmytryk's methods have been undoubtedly influenced by the era he worked in, especially if we reflect on his advice to cut long. When physically editing on film, editors had to be more precise when splicing: if the wrong cut was made or a new positive print was needed, extra production costs would occur, and more time would be needed for the laboratory to reprint the footage. Consequently, the editors would leave longer shots to play to avoid later costs if changes needed to be made.

Some practitioners claim that practice is one of the primary elements in getting to the root of technical skills, as it is useless to only know the theories. Coleman and Friedberg share an important professional insight:

> There were some notable rules that a few editors shared. Jonathan Pontell (editor/ producer) shared his one-eye rule and John Heath (editor/ director) shared a 2-frame rule. I have stolen some great rules and theories, and made some up as I went along. These rules are suggested starting points. Just the basics that help keep a scene clear and smooth. They will help you work out the problem scenes that come your way. Once you know these rules, feel free to throw them out of the window and create your own. (2016: 41)

On the contrary, Crittenden emphasises the technical side of the process and acknowledges the importance of existing film conventions by arguing that 'attitudes to editing must never be reduced to the opportunist or merely imitative' (1981: 21).

Academic writers rarely mention the cooperation of editors with other film crew members, often only paying attention to the director-editor relationship. Being aware of the editor's job routine, Walter Murch suggests that the editing room does not restrict the process. Even though the editor might be the main working force and generator of ideas and meanings in some stages of post-production, the director, actors and sound designer also significantly

contribute to the final film edit. Walter Murch stresses that the nature of filmmaking is 'collaborative' (Murch quoted in Chang 2012: 24), as it can often result in a surprising occurrence of unexpected ideas. Moreover, in Michael Ondaatje's book *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film* (2012), Murch claims that working with other editors can benefit the result and is one of the quickest ways to acquire a sense of rhythm and intuition. He says:

> You pick up the good things that other editors are doing and you metabolize those approaches into what you're doing, and vice versa. It's kind of like women who live together eventually having their periods at the same time. (Murch quoted in Ondaatje 2012: 109)

By using such a metaphor as an example, Murch refers to the process of collaboration as *embodied*, which allows the exchange of knowledge and skills, and picking up essential techniques. These significant neural mirroring patterns (Pearlman 2012: 16) can form aspects such as technical proficiency, adapting specific workflow and project organisation methods, or problem-solving approaches (to name a few).

Walter Murch also mentions how film editors tend to be biased towards discussing their work and claims that most often, they focus on films that have become the most popular and reached larger audiences, even though some of their less famous projects are of more interest for critical debates. Murch himself often discusses his career and post-production experiences within the frame of *Apocalypse Now*[6] (Francis Ford Coppola 1979), while his other work, such as mixed-reviewed *K-19: The Widowmaker* (Kathryn Bigelow 2002) or biographical war drama *Jarhead* (Sam Mendes 2005), are rarely mentioned in the editor's observations. *Jarhead* was edited in high definition using the DVCPROHD code for the first time, meaning that most of the post-production was tapeless. From the editor's perspective, such innovations and drastic updates to the workflow could become a vital addition to the knowledge of creating a film.

Filmmakers are often subjective and emotional when describing their work, and their experiences inform their opinions. Academic writing tries to be objective, as it often relies on the evidence found in film history, film theories and existing literature on cinema (Dancyger 2007). Both types of literature are interesting for the reader, but they are of different value for film scholars. Literature produced by film editors offers a unique internal perspective on the post-production process, although we must keep in mind that such views tend to be subjective and often emotion-driven. Due to various experiences and events during the production,

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[6] In 1979, Murch won the Best Sound Academy Award for *Apocalypse Now.*

filmmakers undergo different emotional phases, conflicts with other crew members and decision-making challenges. However, some moments can also be positive and highly motivational, including sudden bursts of creativity and enthusiasm. Therefore, an editor's perspective on his or her practices will undoubtedly be affected by such impressions and occurrences, which leads to bias and is not always conducive to critical evaluation. As a subsequent stage of researching the discourse on editing, it will be crucial to look at the perspectives of practitioners embodied in collections and compilations of interviews.

Part Three: Interviews With Editors

An interview's informal conversational style contrasts strongly with academic writing. Practitioners often engage various terms and professional jargon to address their understanding of film editing, and vague language can sometimes make the information imprecise and may cause the reader to understand and interpret it differently. Furthermore, film scholars are sometimes not able to formally articulate the complexity of certain editing decisions. There is a fascinating, invaluable discourse captured in the practitioners' interviews, but there is also a gap between that and the academic discussion, which takes some negotiation. There are different traditions, but often very little interaction between those two discourse sets. Therefore, this section will explore what we can learn from each in a slightly different way. In *Film Editing: The Art of the Expressive* Valerie Orpen suggests:

> Textbooks and technical guides abound, but they have their limitations. Interviews with editors can prove more useful, though they usually do not address the expressive dimensions of the end result of editing. (2003: 14)

Orpen further suggests that although interviews with editors are 'a relatively recent phenomenon' (2003: 12), they are invaluable sources of direct knowledge and provide definitive profiles of editors' practices. She adds that 'before the 1960s, editors were seldom invited to speak about their role and their art' (2003: 12). I discovered a notable exception, which is Margaret Booth's chapter 'The Cutter' in 1938's *Behind the Screen. How Films are Made*.

Booth provides her definition of who a film editor is:

> If you remember that a film is composed of thousands of tiny photographs arranged in a certain order to tell a story, you will realise that to assemble them in the most effective sequence is an exacting and delicate task. I think it has also a claim to be called an artistic one. This shaping and editing of photographs into dramatic narrative form is the function of the film editor. He or she juggles with photographs as another kind of editor does with words – to make them tell a story. (Watts 1938: 147)

Booth concentrates on the editing process and what it strives to achieve by generally using three shots – long, intermediate and close-up. She then adds that the main aim of an editor is to 'intermingle the best of each version of each scene so that its dramatic value is enhanced' (1938: 148). Booth also lists qualities that she thinks are necessary to become a good cutter, including aiming for smoothness and rhythm, being both an artist and a showman and cooperating with a director.

Another example of early mentions of editors is *We Make the Movies,* the 1937 book edited by Nancy Naumburg, which contains various testimonials of that era's leading Hollywood filmmakers, including editor Anne Bauchens, who had a long-standing partnership with director Cecil B. DeMille. Similarly to Booth's observation, Anne Bauchens begins with the notion of editing and what the process involves:

> Many people ask me what film editing is. I would say it is very much like a jigsaw puzzle, expect that in a jigsaw puzzle the little pieces are all cut out in the various forms and you try to fit them together to make a picture, while in cutting films you have to cut your pieces first and then put them together. (Bauchens quoted in Naumburg 1937: 199)

Bauchens refers to her job as both a cutter and an editor but primarily uses 'cutter' to distinguish the division between assistants. She explains that 'the first cutter acts in the capacity of an editor', while the second cutter has to be 'qualified to make a rough assembly of the picture as well as doing the work of an assistant' (1937: 199-120). Bauchens generally provides a very generous level of detail and description to the terms she uses; for instance, she explains that a clapper is 'two pieces of wood used to make a note of sync marks and that trims are pieces of material cut away' (1937: 204). Bauchens is both technical and precise in discussing every step of the editing process, but she also expands on some creative decisions. She mentions that drama, which can be expressed in various ways, can utilise a montage approach to 'heighten the suspense' (1937: 205). Moreover, Bauchens explains editing techniques, including

dissolve, fade-in, wipe-off and inserts (cutaway shots in the modern editing language) and what effect can be achieved when using them.

Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By* pays special attention to film editors who contributed to the history and development of cinema. He conducted various interviews with silent film pioneers, including Margaret Booth and William Hornbeck, and also preserved memories of Bebe Daniels and Dorothy Arzner. Brownlow discusses the contribution of editors to the creative process, presenting it as 'directing film for the second time' (1968: 280), and also reviews some of the important developments in the industry and technical advancements that made the cutter's job more complex and more responsible. Brownlow comments on the lack of recognition and attention to editors and points out that:

> Editors are passed over by the film historians because their work, when successful, is virtually unnoticeable. No historian, without knowing the problems, without knowing the director's working methods, or without being an editor himself, could possibly evaluate the editor's contribution. (1968: 286)

It was not until the 1990s that the first extensive collections of interviews with editors were published– prominent examples include Vincent LoBrutto's 1991 *Selected Takes: Film Editors on Editing* and Gabriella Oldham's 1995 *First Cut: Conversation with Film Editors* and 2012 *First Cut 2: More Conversations with Film Editors.* Both examples present an extensive survey of film editing with the main aim of preserving history and knowledge through the voices of its practitioners.

In *Selected Takes: Film Editors on Editing,* Anne V. Coates suggests her understanding of the editing process and the technical side of decision-making. For instance, Coates expresses her view on the duration of certain shots:

> If something plays really beautifully and it holds, you should play it. I think you should always hold it as long as you can; don't just cut to say you cut it, unless it's a very boring scene. If the emotion and interest is holding, I believe you should hold the shot. (Coates quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 64)

Coates further claims that when making a cut, she entirely relies on emotion and feeling. She proposes that the whole concept of editing is 'knowing how many cuts to put in and knowing when you've got it cut right' (1991: 66).

Coates suggests that when viewing the takes, the editor has to decide which shot presents not only the best visual material but also maintains coherence with the narrative:

> […] it is very important that you always shoot coverage so you've got it. Sometimes something that plays beautifully in dailies doesn't hold with what goes around it when you put it into the finished film. (1991:64)

Coates also brings up one of the previously undescribed tasks of an editor to manage the actor's performance by commenting on her ability to bring certain sensitivity to the relationship between the characters and playing down performances that are too dramatic (1991:63). In this context, Carol Littleton (best known for editing *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Steven Spielberg 1982) also makes a relevant point about manipulating the acting. She explains: 'When the performer is best, he stays on camera; when it starts to fall apart, I go away' (Littleton quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 224). Once the best bits of each actor's performance are assembled, Littleton works on the rhythm and the presentation of the scene.

LoBrutto's interviews are organized to provide historical continuity, so it is helpful to observe how, towards the end of the book, the editors expand on their experiences with the transition from film to digital media. Alan Heim, Richard Halsey and Tom Rolf comment positively on using Moviolas and KEM flatbed editors in their work, even as they recognize the variety of possibilities and upgrades to the process new technologies offer. Maury Winetrobe, on the other hand, admits she has not worked on any of the video editing systems, as 'there is something about picking up the film and running it' (Winetrobe quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 107). She recalls one of her conversations with the director Harold Becker, who was against using technology as it limits the thinking process. According to Winetrobe, Becker believed that:

> I see when you mark the film and bring it over, and you're splicing it, you're thinking. I can tell, because you come up and say something, even before we run. I'm afraid an editor would be so wrapped up in what he's doing electronically that he wouldn't have time to think. (1991:107)

Lou Lombardo, who edited Sam Peckinpah's 1969 Western film *The Wild Bunch*, points out that the craft of editing and the skill does not entirely rely on the use of equipment, as just being 'able to operate the machine doesn't make you an editor' (Lombardo quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 134). Like many other practitioners interviewed in the book, he prioritises the natural

talent and instincts of the editor when handling the material rather than advanced technical skills that are indeed important to the process but not paramount.

The use of metaphors and comparisons articulated by practitioners in LoBrutto's book signals the thought-provoking subjectivity of their opinions. For instance, when talking about the selection of the projects to work on, Richard Marks compares the process to marriage:

> We're there for a long haul. It's a marriage. Sometimes you make a bad guess and it's a rotten marriage and sometimes it's a glorious one. Generally, it's a combination of two. As most marriages are, they're tough. You have to make this marriage work under the worst possible circumstances – under extreme pressure. (Marks quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 187)

Craig McKay describes film editing as the 'orchestrations of picture and sound' (1991: 198), and Dede Allen says that the method for cutting a scene resembles playing chess, as the editor has to 'be able to think ahead and think back' (Allen quoted in LoBrutto1991: 198). Tom Rolf refers to the craft of editing itself as being similar to a puzzle:

> It's imposing my choice over yours, having the arrogance to say this is better than that. It's being a critic. It's an art form when you're interpreting. I'm imposing my taste. It's the matter of choices and keeping it straight in your head. It's like having an enormous picture puzzle – 1,000 pieces will make it look perfect but they give you 100,000. It's going through all of the pieces, to try and to get the best parts. (Rolf quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 90)

Unlike academic texts, where authors often reference key historical figures or specific theories and methods that have transformed the craft of editing, I could not find a mention of those in LoBrutto's book. Rather than commenting on general filmmaking rules or conventions, the practitioners always recognise the people in their personal or work environment as having the most influence on their development as editors. Most often, references are made to film directors, which makes the editor-director relationship a prevalent pattern in debates. When commenting on the existence of an editor's style, Ralph Winters acknowledges that 'it is the editor's job to interpret the director's style, which makes it unlikely for an editor to develop his own style' (Winters quoted in LoBrutto1991:36). Michael Kahn rejects the intellectual approach to his editing process and admits he is frequently led by instincts, as 'you can go to school to learn to splice, but not to learn when it plays' (Kahn quoted in LoBrutto1991: 176).

In interviews with LoBrutto, most editors express their own unique approach to preparing for viewing the rushes, making the rough cut assembly, and working with the

directors, but no one has brought up any conventional rules or film theorists relevant to their practices. In the interview with Craig McKay, LoBrutto asks, 'Why do you think that film critics so rarely discuss editing in their reviews?' and McKay suggests that:

> I think film critics intellectually have some idea of what we do, but I don't think they have a real idea of the contribution. They get caught up in the emotional sweep of a film. The cinematographer's contribution is obvious; ours is not supposed to be…They don't know what putting two shots together means; they don't understand the dialectic of editing. (McKay in LoBrutto 1991: 204)

McKay's remark on editing re-emphasizes the notion of the 'hidden art' and the lack of critics' comprehensive understanding of the editor's job calls for closer dialogue between practitioners and theorists.

Gabriella Oldham's *First Cut* (1995) extends the perspective on various editing strategies by separating them into named sections. In 'Telling Stories', Tom Rolf, best known for editing *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese 1976), compares editors to the old storytellers sat around the campfire, who know how to 'accentuate one part of the story and balance the other part' (Rolf quoted in Oldham 1995: 122). Rolf admits he has some self-imposed rules, such as relying on punctuation as his rhythm guiding force, using overlaps and never allowing an actor to start the dialogue offscreen, but he also believes there are no absolutes in cutting films (1995: 125). In 'Maximizing the Moment', Bill Pankow says the sense of timing is intuitive: 'I'm not sure how that timing is created, but when it's wrong, you know it right away' (Pankow quoted in Oldham 1995:177). Furthermore, when discussing the elements that contribute to creating tension in film, Pankow lists the use of time and expressive visual images, which obtain new meanings in the hands of an editor:

> Many things are unique to the film medium as an art form which we as editors can use creatively. Cutting to someone's eyes or an eye or a hand twitching – these images that a director provides can enhance or underline a character's feeling. Film is wonderful because the slightest motion can convey some inner feelings or emotion. A raised eyebrow or a slightly upturned lip on a stage would be difficult to perceive, but in film could have tremendous meaning. (1995: 179)

Pankow also considers non-traditional editing techniques, such as non-optical effects and split screens, permissible and practical, but only when blended into the drama or the emotion visualised on-screen.

On the contrary, Evan Lottman, nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Film Editing for *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin 1973), is a devotee of the invisible editing style, which she believes successfully affects viewers on deeper levels. Lottman suggests that:

> Editing should never call attention to itself. The experience of seeing a movie should be an experience that is divorced from its technique… The dramatic experience should be the smooth, seamless integration of everybody's work on the film. (Lottman quoted in Oldham 1995: 232)

Even when working with more advanced techniques, such as superimposed images in some of *The Hustler* (Robert Rossen 1961) sequences, which initially required montage, Lottman's main concern was to blend everything seamlessly so that no visual entities would be noticeable. He refers to a peculiar music-related term, a 'click track', rarely mentioned in scholarly texts. Lottman describes the click track as follows:

> That's an audiovisual method of indicating a steady beat, a rhythm, and you can translate it into the film time by frames-per-second computation. (1995:223)

Like some of the editor's views presented earlier, Lottman acknowledges that even though editing contributes to subliminal effects on the viewer, the editors are often unappreciated by the audience because people do not know what they do. There is a common misconception in perceiving editors as 'special people who work in dark rooms away from the madding crowd' (Lottman quoted in Oldham 1995: 232), and Lottman even calls editors the 'gray eminences on the production' (1995:233), which are often overlooked as being an essential part of any production crew.

The second book in Oldham's series, *First Cut 2: More Conversations with Film Editors* (2012), is a newer collection of twelve interviews based on the debates on film editing in the twenty-first century. As an upgrade to *First Cut* (1995), this collection of interviews also covers independent filmmaking to emphasize current extensive opportunities in the industry.

In the 'Editing the Self' section, Alan Berliner represents the views of independent filmmakers. Being an all-in-one practitioner (director, writer, cinematographer, editor, sound editor and producer), Berliner's editing is best known for its powerful metaphorical connections. Even though Berliner mentions he has received a formal film education, he stresses that no one has taught him how to edit. Moreover, unlike any of the editors previously interviewed, he references Vertov, Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Welles, and avant-garde figures, such as Kubelka, Connor and Snow, contributing to the development of his analytical and aesthetic thinking. On the other hand, when discussing his first job interview, Berliner admits

that despite having obtained both undergraduate and graduate degrees with the highest honours, he was not ready for the industry:

> I didn't know a thing about how a professional cutting room was set up; I didn't know anything about the industrial protocols of how real films got made. Most importantly, I didn't know a word of the professional lingo or jargon that editors speak. (Berliner quoted in Oldham 2012: 154)

This critical point brought up by Berliner speaks of bridging the gap between theoretical relevance and editing practices, making a fundamental distinction between the two approaches.

One of the book's other sections is dedicated to Kate Amend, a documentary editor. Even though there is a considerable difference between feature films and documentaries, Amend argues that the approach to assembling material remains the same. She compares the editing process to that of writing, as the primary goal of it is finding and telling a story. The editor also discusses some of the main rules in her practices:

> I think that as long as you set up a particular convention for the film, and the audience feels you are guiding them through the story with a clear vision and goal, it can work. You want people to feel comfortable with whatever you set up from the outset so that they will go where you want to take them. You don't want to throw in anything that will confuse them during the presentation and essentially take them out of the story. (Amend quoted in Oldham 2012: 203-204)

This statement can be compared with another interview from the book featuring Lucia Zucchetti, who edited *The Queen* (Stephen Frears 2006). Zucchetti claims she is instinctive in her work, but she also pays particular importance to choosing the most relevant shot to the story or capturing the right emotion. She points out that it is essential to 'preserve and heighten that emotion within the context of other images' (2012: 110-111). Zucchetti offers a compelling metaphor of an editor providing a 'clearheaded' view, which is especially important when maintaining clarity and objectivity, as editors 'learn to decode and interpret and put together different people's responses' (2012: 117). The discussion is brought back to the paradox of editing decisions, as they inevitably involve an interpretative process and flexibility in understanding meanings.

Another valuable interview is with Michael Tronick, who co-edited *Meet Joe Black* (Martin Brest 1998) and worked as a lead editor on *Hairspray* (Adam Shankman 2007). Like Berliner, Tronick attempted to obtain a formal film education but pursued his career with an industrial filmmaking company. He explains that: 'while academic work is phenomenal for what it provides, it still doesn't…' pay the rent (continued by Oldham 2012: 272). Due to his

impressive work experience as a music editor, Tronick provides valuable insights on dealing with sound during the edit. According to him, not only can editing be invisible during the experience of watching a film, but the same applies to music. As Tronick explains, this does not mean the use of sound is not efficient:

> Music in a film can be absolutely successful if you're *not* aware of it. As an editor, though, I'm always looking at scenes without music and sometimes realize how effective they are. Other times, I really miss the music because it contributes an emotional component that simply isn't there without music. (Tronick quoted in Oldham 2012: 279)

First Cuts 2 (2012) engages the interviewees with more discussion on the expressive nature of editing than reviewing the technical aspect of filmmaking. The list of questions Oldham selected for interviews motivates the editors to expand on their personal preferences and practices. The amount of knowledge preserved by Oldham in the series is also remarkable, as the first book was a labour-intensive process due to the manipulations required to arrange, conduct, transcribe, edit and organize the interviews. According to the author, the primary motivation for releasing a second book was not to revise the information communicated in the previous volume but rather a desire to pick up where the first book left off (Oldham 2012: 2).

By looking at another book, Justin Chang's *FilmCraft: Editing* (2012), various parallels can be made about other interviews previously reviewed in the chapter, including the issue of defining the notion of editing and discussing the shift from film to digital technology. Chang's book presents an extensive anthology of interviews with film editors from different nationalities and academic and amateur backgrounds. While the book primarily focuses on American cinema, the editors discuss various films ranging from British period dramas, blockbusters, and Taiwanese erotic films to romantic comedies and avant-garde films. These interviews examine and define editing from different perspectives, including challenges during the process, relationships with the director, specific rules and principles, anecdotes, and real-life examples. For example, an interview with Hong Kong editor William Chang Suk-Ping is a very reflective piece of reading. It provides an example how an editor describes certain creative decisions and how that can differ from academic discussions.

When explaining how he edited one of the scenes from *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar-Wai 2000), where Maggie finishes talking to Tony and leaves the flat, Suk-Ping says:

> I used three very short, fast dissolves to convey a sense of her departure. For me, these dissolves feel very regretful – you talk, time goes by, and then you leave. It's as if you did nothing, as if you didn't talk in the first place. (Suk-Ping quoted in Chang 2012:286)

Suk-Ping locates the setting, explains who the characters are, and comments on the scene's feelings, concluding that the effect he was aiming for was a sad sense of departure. The paragraph does not present a shot-to-shot analysis or film images, which would have been helpful for those readers who do not know the story. This visual evidence enhances the clarity of the author's analysis and empowers readers to actively participate in the interpretation and discussion of the film. A more detailed and analytical approach is necessary to transfer knowledge to practice, encompassing broader principles, techniques, and methodologies that can be replicated and adapted in various editing scenarios.

Angus Wall, who was an editorial consultant on *Fight Club* (David Fincher 1999) and also co-edited *Panic Room* (David Fincher 2002), makes a comparison to a crossword when talking about his daily routine:

> The great thing about what we do is that every day is different. In a way, every day you go down the rabbit hole. It's not colour-by-numbers. It's more like you get a series of words and you have to put together the *New York Times* crossword puzzle. (Wall quoted in Chang 2012: 366)

In one of the interviews, Stephen Mirrione begins the discussion by addressing the issue of editing being wrongly viewed as similar to editing an essay or a newspaper. Even though Mirrione acknowledges the difficulty in articulating the concept of editing, he insists that it is an independent discipline (Mirrione quoted in Chang 2012: 104).

Dylan Tichenor, who edited *Magnolia* (Paul Thomas Anderson 1999) and *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee 2005), is sceptical about introducing modern editing equipment, as he believes it has drastically changed how editors work nowadays.

Tichenor says:

> Nonlinear editing is a huge, tremendous change in our industry and a boon, and it enables us to try many different things and save different versions. But I think some skill and focus can be lost with that freedom. It doesn't encourage deep thinking; it encourages shallow thinking. (Tichenor quoted in Chang 2012: 130)

Tichenor also adds that the advancements in technology have influenced the potential of aspiring filmmakers to acquire a sense of rhythm and sensitivity as, in the old days, this had to be done by observing other editors and going through the material together with them.

Several references to the editor's style are also made throughout the book. For instance, Tim Squires stresses the importance of not developing a style, as it always has to be informed by the footage (2012: 165). Virginia Katz addresses the concept of the editor's style in a slightly different way and calls it 'the way of cutting'. She argues that:

> As an editor you have to find your own way of cutting. If you were to line up five editors, you'd get five different versions of the same scene. You eventually find your own rhythm and sense of timing, and I don't think it's something that can be taught. You figure it out instinctively. (Katz quoted in Chang 2012: 214)

Similar to findings in LoBrutto and Oldham's compilations of interviews, the concept of cutting intuitively is acknowledged by many other editors in Chang's book. Editors do not seem to offer an explanation that could accompany this nonconscious thinking, which supports my claim that they have difficulty precisely communicating their intuitive ways of making cuts rather than not wanting to share their insights. William Chang Suk-Ping claims that 'there are no formulas' (Suk-Ping quoted in Chang 2012: 284). Michael Kahn admits, 'I can't explain how I do what I do' (Kahn quoted in Chang 2012: 7), and Anne V. Coates states that she cuts the way she feels (Coates quoted in Chang 2012: 44) with no further comments. Michael Kahn tries to re-think what it is that helps him to feel when the rhythm is smooth, but he keeps referring to *something* that dictates his editing choices and *something* inside him, and he never accurately states what it is. Kahn says:

> I can't explain how I do what I do. I suppose there's some circuitry in my brain that allows me to appreciate when things are harmonious, when the rhythm is smooth, when I'm telling the story with the visuals. Something tells you when it's right. I wasn't schooled for this; it's just something that's in me. I'll just get a feeling that the way I cut in this time is good enough that I can show it to Steven.[7] (Kahn quoted in Chang 2012: 236)

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[7] Michael Kahn refers to Steven Spielberg here.

Another observation is that even though editors tend to use extensive professional vocabulary, jargon and various technical terms, they often do not describe what their function is informatively or how they contribute to certain scenes. There have been a few examples of insider terms that are under-theorised, one of them being Michael Kahn's 'cold cut'. In his interview, Kahn says:

> We had a producer who would tell me, "Never put in a cold cut." A cold cut isn't something you eat; it's when you cut to something where there's nothing happening. If you want to overlap something, it should never be to a cold cut, because that stops the picture; it stops the forward movement. And he also said, "Never overlap a joke." If you have a line, let the line finish, and then go to the reaction. And that's not a cold cut, because you're going there for a laugh. We had a lot of rules like that, and they stood me in good stead. (Kahn quoted in Chang 2012: 235)

Having reviewed the variety of existing literature on editing, it becomes important to seek for more examples of practitioners critically evaluating existing literature on editing. A critical examination of theoretical aspects of editing and the ways that current practices accommodate those conventional editing forms that have been historically established is an important step to reveal an insight into existing practices. It becomes essential to determine how practitioners can contribute to the literature on film editing to be aimed not only at film enthusiasts but also at film scholars so that whatever perspective is chosen, the post-production process is seen as a structure conforming to specific rules and individualism and creative decision-making. The principal motivation for this thesis's practical element is that editors or film enthusiasts usually create interview anthologies. However, there is a great scholarly need for both theoretical and academic discourse on editing, which will investigate the practical functions of editing. I aim to suggest some interventions in contemporary editing practices rarely described in academic literature to investigate unconventional approaches that are being used. It is also essential to observe if practitioners can identify the limitations of theorists writing on film editing, assuming that since so much practice and technical knowledge is involved in the process, theorists cannot fully embrace and precisely describe the stages of cutting the film, as well as how specific techniques are used to achieve various effects.

Part Four: Personal Interviews With Film Editors

Interviews with prominent film editors contribute to the literature review with their first-hand insights on the importance of formal education for practitioners, self-discovered methods and techniques, differences in workflow and editing styles, and the decision-making process. I interviewed five film editors from the UK, Ireland, Spain and Australia to internationalise our understanding of editing practices.

Marek Budzynski (UK) is my former editing tutor at Arts University Bournemouth and a filmmaker with over 40 years of experience. Hence, his insights are valuable from a perspective similar to mine – that of an academic and a practitioner.

Conversation with Peter Lambert (UK) allows for an in-depth understanding of what a theorist might call post-classical editing techniques – or even intensified continuity. His insights are also included in the following case study on *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (2009), so the interview demonstrates a still unusual exchange of perspectives on the same film between a scholar critically analysing and interpreting editing decisions and the filmmaker behind those decisions.

Nick Emerson (Ireland) is an editor with extensive experience in editing feature films and TV productions, so including his interview in the discussion of film editing is essential for a comprehensive understanding of approaches across various visual mediums.

While I mainly focus on editing feature films in my case studies, some of them include elements of documentary filmmaking, such as the inclusion of newsreel footage in Tarkovsky's *Mirror (1975)* or interviews with witnesses in *Reds* (1981). Therefore, I found it important to interview a practitioner with experience editing documentary films to look at different principles in film construction. Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas (Spain) is a documentary and feature film editor, and her work includes the Oscar-nominated and BAFTA-winning film *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer 2012). She also taught editing for the Ethnographic & Documentary Film MA at UCL.

Matt Villa (Australia) is a big-budget film editor known for his frequent collaborations with Baz Luhrmann and The Spierig Brothers. The interview with the Academy Award nominee further demystifies editing and greatly contributes to the discourse on the relationship between editor and director and intuition in film editing.

One of the key questions for each interviewee was to invite them to explain and present their definitions of what editing comprises and attempt to explain their understanding of intuition in editing. Most practitioners acknowledge that they got involved with the job not

because of their passion for editing but because of various factors and personal circumstances. For Budzynski and Emerson, editing was seen as the most accessible occupation to get a job and build experience quickly (personal interviews, Budzynski 2021 and Emerson 2022). Lambert chose an editing specialism when applying for the MA course as he saw more chance of getting into a film school as an editor rather than a fiction director (personal interview, Lambert 2020). Villa initially aspired to be a writer-director and saw editing as a 'stepping stone to get into that' (personal interview, Villa 2022). However, when commenting on the editor's contribution to the final film, practitioners see it as integral to the result: editors 'fulfil the film's potential in the best possible shape' (personal interview, Lambert 2020) and Matt Villa even refers to editors as 'arbiters' of the story (personal interview, Villa 2022).

According to interviewees, obtaining an academic degree in film studies is not essential to becoming an editor. Practitioners emphasise that many 'really great editors haven't been to film school' (personal interview, Lambert 2020). Marek Budzynski, a senior lecturer in a film school and a practitioner, completed an MA course without obtaining his BA as it was 'pointless'. Budzynski and Emerson emphasise the importance of watching films, even bad ones (personal interview, Emerson 2022), to understand how films are 'put together without knowing the specific grammar'(personal interview, Budzynski 2021). Both editors also suggest an analogy of editing with language skills: 'Films are a language, and watching them is the best way you learn it' (personal interview, Emerson 2022) and 'you don't have to know the strength of a language to speak it' (personal interview, Budzynski 2021).

Moreover, Budzynski challenges the relevance of film editing conventions in modern practices due to the growing awareness of the audience of the cinema form and, therefore, more opportunities for editors to break the rules for the sake of stronger emotional engagement (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). Nevertheless, the interviewees agree that formal film education greatly benefits their critical awareness of cinema. Lambert suggests attending a film course taught him to think about films from an academic perspective (personal interview, Lambert 2020).

Only a few editors articulate their views without hesitation when defining the notion of editing. Villa comprehensively explains editing as 'manipulating all the material produced into a coherent narrative' (personal interview, Villa 2022). For Lambert, the meaning of editing remains 'a very big question' (personal interview, Lambert 2020). He attempts to explain it by giving examples of the relationship between cutting to different camera angles and the audience's perception and how juxtaposing shots can create a whole new meaning.

The way that editors often attempt to describe specific editing techniques and methods by explaining how they would assemble certain shots is one of the factors that I address in this thesis through my videographic work. I argue that some aspects of decision-making in editing can be more effectively communicated and explained in video essays than in writing. This peculiar aspect of sharing knowledge on editing can be primarily attributed to editing being seen as mysterious and less tangible than filmmaking forms such as cinematography (personal interview, Emerson 2022).

Practitioners often compare editing to other processes demonstrating similar principles, such as assembling puzzles or playing chess. Peter Lambert compares editing with cooking:

> You're given a bunch of good ingredients and bad ingredients, and you have to make a great stew out of them. You get the opportunity to choose how much you use of each and how you put them together to create new films. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

Matt Villa offers three peculiar analogies to editing:

> Editing is like stitching something together roughly, then going back to do the fine needlework, the really fine embroidery […] There are other times where if something isn't working, you've got to smash the bone open, and recast it differently. The way a surgeon might take a bone that has healed incorrectly. Sometimes you can't just adjust it slightly, you have to break the bone and recast it entirely. Another surgical consideration I often ponder is that you have to cut to heal. To improve a scene, cuts sometimes need to be made. (personal interview, Villa 2022).

Editors essentially acknowledge the practice-led nature of developing and enhancing editing skills and claim that they learned the craft through assisting on small-budget projects and doing small editing tasks to understand the technical aspects of the process (personal interview, Lambert 2020). Budzynski believes that 'the only way you can learn to cut is by cutting', and editing cannot be learnt from a book (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). Villa takes a similar point of view and claims he does not even understand how books about editing can be written if 'the craft involved depends on the material produced for each project'. While acknowledging the existence of rules that sometimes help with editing choices, Villa emphasizes how they cannot be fully applicable to any editing workflow as the effectiveness of rules can vary, depending on the film's material (personal interview, Villa 2022).

The task of *deconstructing* the film is seen as fundamental by Marek Budzynski, as it is the critical tool to explore how shots create meaning and how an editor can affect storytelling,

the relationship between characters and the audience's engagement at the same time (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). As I will demonstrate in this thesis, the deconstruction method is the most significant element of my methodology when performing a videographic analysis of the film.

A key observation on the nature of editing is expressed by Peter Lambert, who addresses the never-ending process of 'constantly keeping your mind open to the possibility that something can be improved or re-invented' (personal interview, Lambert 2020). The fully finished film's version is hard (if not entirely impossible) to achieve as decision-making in editing is dynamic and evolving, significantly influenced by creative choices, feedback, developing technology and the growing availability of software tools. Villa recalls an insider joke that often makes editors laugh: the endless number of sequences with '.copy' at the end of the name. Duplicating sequences is standard practice for editors, as whenever the film's timeline is revisited, a backup of the previous edit must be retained for record in case one needs to revisit the earlier versions. However, another reason for duplicating sequences that end up having long names, including 'this one definitely'(personal interview, Villa 2022) that almost sounds like a statement that the final film's cut is achieved, is the editor's continuous fiddling with the cut for more adjustments and improvements. I explore this aspect of editing in more detail in my case study on *All I Desire*. I will apply the modern practitioner's perspective to explore the consequences of employing different transitions from the original film.

Similar to findings from published interview compilations, the editors who I interviewed struggle with explaining the concept of intuition and instinct in their practice. When addressing the meaning of instinct, Emerson says it is similar to an inner rhythm or clock that dictates what feels *right,* which is then 'hard to explain' and 'hard to put your finger on' (personal interview, Emerson 2022). Lambert notes that he is sometimes driven by the awareness of editing theories (personal interview, Lambert 2020), which is also reflected in Karen Pearlman's observations on intuition supported by acquired knowledge (Pearlman 2015: 10).

On the contrary, Matt Villa argues that editing skills cannot be taught or learned over time:

> I think the editing process starts from an innate rhythm inside. If you don't have that sense of rhythm, it's like some people can't ride a skateboard or some can't play the piano. There are some elements of cutting that you've either got or you don't. (personal interview, Villa 2022)

Marek Budzynski calls editing 'a natural thing' and claims he does not have to make conscious decisions during the process as he *knows* how to put shots together (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). He also refers to intuition as 'behaviour' and 'autonomic response'. He attributes the sense of instinctively cutting and making informed decisions about editing as being primarily influenced by existing knowledge of other film and TV examples. This results in a higher awareness of storytelling principles and a basic understanding of film editing logic (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). Matt Villa agrees that the increasing speed with which the viewers can absorb information on the screen has significantly changed how filmmakers approach editing. Therefore, his understanding of intuition in editing is largely controlled by the audience's expectations - Villa believes that instinct is 'internal tracking' inherent in editors that suggests an awareness of what the viewer requires at a particular point in the story (personal interview, Villa 2022).

Across the skills that an editor should demonstrate, practitioners mention patience (personal interview, Fatjó-Vilas 2021) and openness to critical feedback (personal interview, Lambert 2020), as well as the ability to let go of personal preferences in favour of requests by the director or producer (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). While the latter can be seen as a creative limitation by some, Emerson explains that it does not mean that editors are egoless and rather signifies their excellent collaboration and problem-solving skills (personal interview, Emerson 2022). Emerson also adds that editors should deal well with solitude to 'enjoy the meticulous process of examining things'. He argues that if an editor does not manage to work alone, the job choice may not be suitable as one often needs to be in his head and with material for extended periods (personal interview, Emerson 2022).

The practical insights of editors present a diverse range of concepts and new terminology that can be effectively introduced to scholarly discourse, enriching the vocabulary. Peter Lambert introduces a concept of muscle memory in editing, which he explains as remembering the rhythm of the edits so that when the scene is rewatched, the cuts are expected. If changes are made, they become immediately evident (personal interview, Lambert 2020). Similarly, Budzynski mentions 'visually retentive memory' - the function of editing that controls the visual sense of memory in a way that practitioners are trained to remember every single frame of a film and can assemble sequences in their minds (personal interview, Budzynski 2021). As an editor, I find these insights particularly relevant to my practice, which I again largely attribute to the accumulation of experience rather than an in-built ability. As I will explain in my reflections on assembling video essays, the skill that has significantly

contributed to efficient videographic work was the ability to envision the structure and the visual form of the audio-visual assembly before I began the cut.

Another new term, 'chataway', was introduced by Lambert and has expanded to be used in the industry. It refers to a cut between a shot, in which a character walks out of the frame in one shot and the following shot, in which this character walks into the frame (personal interview, Lambert 2020). Nick Emerson shares his selection of insider terms frequently used in the editing room: 'too much air' (the need for a scene to be tightened), 'American cut' (cutting to the close-up shot from a wide shot), 'shonky' (bad looking shots/ cuts), 'on the nose' (explicit), 'carrying the thought' (continuing the idea throughout assembling the scene), and a few others (personal interview, Emerson 2022).

The adaptability to the source material in dictating the editing style comes across in several interviews, as practitioners claim that the footage highly influences their approach, and the editing style has to be appropriate. Even though the possibility of a distinctive editor's style is recognised, it is generally not seen as being beneficial when seeking opportunities on different film projects. However, Fatjó-Vilas rightly observes that even though editors often have to adjust their style based on the film and the story, there are also 'editorial choices that go beyond the style of the film and can vary between professionals' and that editors can have their 'unique way of thinking' that will inevitably come across in the films they work on (personal interview, Fatjó-Vilas 2021).

Finally, the importance of the editor-director relationship is another frequently discussed theme. Matt Villa suggests that the collaboration between editor and director is extremely rewarding and that the editing suite is a 'safe space' for a director (personal interview, Villa 2022). In all interviews, filmmakers also acknowledge the challenges that may occur when the editor faces a director who wants to control the edit. While some directors may wish to be present in all stages of post-production and are actively involved in the edit, a skilful editor learns to adapt to different directors' approaches, listen to feedback, and implement the changes as requested. Villa argues that 'good editors have to listen; they have to be open to ideas but have to protect the story'. Therefore, the ability to 'mould to the film and the director' (personal interview, Villa 2022) becomes highly desirable and essential to ensure efficient collaboration.

So far, I have examined varied scholarly and practice-based approaches to film editing, recognising similarities and differences in how academics and professionals bring highly knowledgeable insights into the nature of filmmaking. Editors are generally less concerned with academia, which can be noticed through the lack of references to scholarly sources or making

meaningful connections between those and the creative processes. This observation, however, does not signify the lack of awareness or importance of theory in filmmaking practice but instead calls for finding ways to bring those two types of knowledge into meaningful contact. While editors are unique sources of internal views on creative decision-making, it is crucial to acknowledge that their reflections are often biased and primarily guided by the experience of creating a film rather than critically analysing the process. However, editors have a more nuanced understanding of the inside technical and creative processes – something that academics often lack – which makes getting into the heads of editors more fundamentally essential to introduce new practical notions of contemporary filmmaking practice. Moreover, the vocabulary used by practitioners, while not substantially different from terms seen in textbooks on editing, can also be substantially refreshed by introducing new notions and further explanations with particular references to their application in the editing process.

One of the key distinctions is the frequent mention of 'intuition' in practitioner discourse, which is predominantly seen as learnt through experience. Intuition also became essential in my editing practice in the case study chapters for two reasons. Firstly, as I employed videographic practice as methodology later on during research, I learned to *feel* which mode of audiovisual criticism would support my analysis most efficiently. This strategy is especially evident in the first case study on *Battleship Potemkin*. As I explained earlier in the introduction, the case studies are not sequenced in the order of creating accompanying practical elements. Having struggled to advance my written analysis of the visual rhythms of the film (and despite the well-developed knowledge of the field of videographic criticism, it was only towards the very end of my journey that I finally found an approach that felt right when breaking down *Battleship Potemkin* in the editing timeline. I can compare this experience to experimenting with dozens of alternative takes, cut-aways or insert shots and suddenly hearing the inner voice telling you another trick can work. Secondly, intuition was crucial when assembling the body of a video essay, whether having a pre-visualisation of all elements on a timeline in mind or building up the sequence and discovering whether certain decisions would lead to engaging structures. For instance, I knew immediately that cuts in *Battleship Potemkin* PechaKuchas would look jarring and confusing to a viewer. So, even though I found an appropriate form to extend my written observations in video essays, my gut feeling about the need to find editing transitions to separate film fragments was correct. I experienced intuitive editing during the creation of the 'Fades of Desire' supercut, too, when, responding to the assembly of dissolves I identified in *All I Desire*, I felt the need to tweak the speed and the cuts connecting spoken lines and the soundtrack. In videographic work, regardless of the complexity of the argument

at stake, intuition is integral to the video essayist's ability to respond to the film's footage and to reflect on the research, analysis and editing processes. Therefore, I argue that it becomes extremely important for video essayists to trust and listen to their intuition like professional film editors do, as it significantly advances the emotional response to the work process and enhances technical rationality.

Part Five: Afterword: Audiovisual Film Criticism

As discussed in the introduction, as this project developed, I presented an additional methodology: videographic criticism. Therefore, this literature review concludes with a few selected references to reflect on this work, often written by academics who are also practitioners in the developing field.

At its most straightforward, videographic criticism expresses scholarly ideas via moving images and sound (Mittell 2019: 225). Video essays have become an empowering pedagogical tool, a method of scholarly research, and an opportunity for publication in such notable academic journals as *Necsus, [in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film and Moving Image Studies*, and *Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism* (Grant and Kooijman 2019:293). The 'knowledge effect' in videographic work is most often achieved through a combination of sound and image analysis: approaches include scene breakdowns accompanied by the critic's commentary, supercuts, side-by-side comparison, re-imagining original footage, and the interplay between text, film shots, and sounds, amongst many others (Keathley and Mittell 2019).

The special Fall 2020 issue of *The Cine-Files*, a journal of cinema studies presents helpful insight on scholarly video essays. The issue suggests that much significant writing has been devoted to arguing for the academic value of video essays, while few sources have attempted to research their scholarly attributes. In the introduction part of the issue, editors Tracy Cox-Stanton and Allison de Fren (2020) suggest a list of binary pairings that are deployed to distinguish videographic from scholarly writing:

- Creative vs. Scholarly
- Poetic vs. Explanatory
- Subjective/ Personal vs. Objective/ Impartial
- Feelings/ Affect vs. Ideas/ Arguments
- Process vs. Outcome
- Practice vs. Theory

These binaries relate to the founding formulation about the potential of overlapping some areas of audiovisual modes of criticism to gain more insights through the creative approach of film analysis and develop stronger videographic methodologies, which I attempt to do in my film case studies by finding the appropriate forms of video essays for editing-related inquiries and also presenting them as alternatives or extensions to the written analysis.

Notable is also Christopher Keathley's early essay 'La Camera-stylo: Notes on Video Criticism and Cinephilia' (2011) and his formulation of poetic vs. explanatory modes as two different registers in which video essays can operate. Explanatory video essays frequently introduce arguments by employing voiceover narration. The author notes, 'It is language (spoken and written) that guides it. Images and sound – even when carefully and creatively manipulated in support of an argument – are subordinated to explanatory language' (2011: 181). Unlike the explanatory mode, poetic essays employ language sparingly, 'and even then, as only one, unprivileged component' (Keathley 2011:181). Poetic essays are far more abstract; the resulting conclusions and scholarly analyses are more open to interpretation. Keathley also cautions that even though poetic essays still effectively engage with images and sound and comply with the experience that viewers usually associate with the essay form, such works 'risk…an opacity that means potentially going unrecognized as criticism' (2011: 183).

The issue here, as Keathley and Mittel have discussed in 'Scholarship in Sound & Image: A Pedagogical Essay', is:

> At its least sophisticated, a videographic essay functions as an 'illustrated lecture', with a critic reading a manuscript over a series of clips, but such an approach misses both the poetic possibilities of videos and the engaged dynamic of a live lecture. (Keathley and Mittell 2019)

As I sought alternative media works to explore the editing decision analyses for each of my case studies, supercuts were also of great interest. Supercuts are assemblies of brief clip fragments from films, music videos, TV shows, etc., that feature patterns, repeated themes and motifs, and other visual elements. The clips are edited together to create an experimental video demonstrating similarities across selected artworks. The relevance of supercuts in videographic film criticism lies in their potential to highlight the stylistic choices and patterns that might not be immediately obvious and noticeable when watching individual films. Moreover, supercuts allow the enthusiasts to get more creative and experimental with editing the existing material, which can turn into thought-provoking interpretations and further enrich the discourse around film criticism.

The Cine-Files Fall 2020 journal issue also features an interesting article by Allison de Fren. She introduces 'the critical supercut': a video montage of every phrase/ action/ cliché from a film, game, or show that is more of a fan-based production rather than an example of videographic criticism. She argues that the interpretive openness of supercuts can be viewed as either critical or celebratory, and *narrative framing* becomes key in attracting scholarly attention to such works (de Fren 2020). Fren mentions Kogonada, one of the best-known modern practitioners of the supercut, and how he views work as informed by his academic experience and imagines it as the accompaniment to more extensive auteur studies. Allison de Fren calls such works 'an important part of the audiovisual landscape not only for the insights they offer into particular film/ media, but also for the dialogues they help generate, in this case, between practitioners with different investments, one industry-based, and the other critical/ scholarly' (de Fren 2020). Special attention should also be paid to O'Leary's critique of de Fren's position in the Spring 2021 issues of *NECSUS*. He points out that:

> De Fren's approach is essentially to deploy supercut procedures as the evidence collection stage in the analysis of a media text or critical theme, while also using them as a means of material thinking as the work proceeds; however, for de Fren, a final video essay must shape this evidence in a rhetorical structure of voiceover framing, audiovisual illustration, and argument. (O'Leary 2021)

While video essays have made a significant contribution to academia, it is also evident that exploring videographic criticism to research editing strategies and editing techniques, in particular, has received less attention in film studies. There is a remarkable variety of approaches to making video essays, but there is not a great variety of scholars who have researched editing by creating audiovisual essays concerning cutting strategies, methods, or montages in individual films. Several videos curated in [*in]Transition's* April 2019 special issue 'Montage Reloaded' demonstrate principles in investigating editing and montage, including Martin and Álvarez López's 'The Idea of a Series: Energy Vectors in Montage' that demonstrates the graphic and disintegrative montage in *Les Amants de Pont-Neuf* (Leos Carax 1991), *Winter* (Marcel Hanoun 1969) and *Don Giovanni* (Carmelo Bene 1970). One of the most recent issues in January 2021 includes Jiří Žák's 'Distant Journey Through the Desktop' (2021), which brings trick montages in *Distant Journey* (Alfréd Radok 1948) into a digital medium and desktop interfaces. My study proposes plenty of further scope for audiovisual essays to explore editing decisions and their consequences.

It becomes crucial to situate this project within a field of videographic criticism that tries to bridge the worlds of practice and theory, as my work extends into a form of critical

production studies that aims to contribute to a production-informed approach within videographic criticism. A similar approach is demonstrated by Katie Bird, whose exploration of the historical discourse of technicalities of Hollywood's filmmaking (including focus on editing) overlaps with notable scholarship in audiovisual criticism. A range of her videographic work includes different modes of audiovisual essays, such as desktop documentaries and PechaKucha video ('An Atlas of Clouds in Rene Clair's "And Then There Were None" (1945)', 2018), in which Bird assembles shots of clouds projected, painted and created on the rear screen. Notably, Bird is also studying a film editing continuity exercise, Gunsmoke,[8] examining the history and the impact of this hands-on training on education and industry. In 'Gunsmoke Rhythms – An Epigraphic Exploration' (2018), she looks at the exercise through Pearlman's definition of decoupage, and the video essay demonstrates the use of informative on-screen text cards and a variety of multi-screen collages with film shots for guiding the explanation. In the more recent 'Editing Editors Editing Gunsmoke: a (videographic trailer) (2022), Bird guides her narration with a voiceover and also presents screenshots and video screen captures of *Gunsmoke* (Macdonnell 1955-1975) footage imported into Adobe Premiere Pro and organised in a timeline, briefly demonstrating various assembly options (with 1000s of cuts possible).

Another important figure in the field of bridging the gap between theory and practice is John Gibbs, whose internationally renowned video essays (most recently, 'Choosing Death Row Songs' (2024) was listed as winner in Audiovisual Essay Selection at Marienbad Film Festival) are designed to both stand-alone or accompany hybrid articles. With varying approaches to videographic work modes and a particular focus on style-based criticism, Gibbs demonstrates how these can complement and amplify each other. Gibbs argues that by comparing the written scholarship with another film screening, 'the audiovisual essay can provide particularly rich ways of moving between evidence and argument' (Gibbs 2016). In a series of video essays I assembled for this research, I demonstrate how, through the experience of combining two research strategies, written and practice-driven, new opportunities allow a more detailed investigation of editing strategies central to the complexities of the films' narratives.

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[8] In this editing exercise, a scene from television series *Gunsmoke* (Norman Macdonnell 1955-1975) is given to different editors to recut.

Cormac Donnelly, whose PhD project focuses on film sound and the still image, also largely incorporates videographic practice. In reflecting on a pedagogical encounter with video essay students, Donnely notes that he responds differently to videographic work than written research. He explains:

> As I seek to explore and experiment with the form of the video essay, I am finding my work incorporates more artistic elements, and perhaps a greater personal investment, with the result being that any negative feedback on the work immediately feels more personal, even if it is not intended as such. (Donnelly 2024).

Apart from critically engaging with selected film case studies via a conventional scholarship approach, each chapter in this work will also provide my reflections on the process of creative practice, including further thoughts on how videographic work supports written criticism or instead functions as a stand-alone scholarly work that can also engage with audience outside academia.

The most recent scholarship on video essays suggests some advances in the videographic field. In the latest issue of *The Cine-Files*, Chiara Grizzaffi's paper 'Poeticizing the Academy: Poetic Approaches to the Scholarly Audiovisual Essay' argues that more playful and less straightforwardly argumentative works are also of high academic value (2020). When referring to the works of Catherine Grant, whom I will introduce later in Chapter 4 as the key academic figure for my case study on Sirk's *All I Desire* (1953), she highlights a critical term, *material thinking,* which relates to the video essayist's editing process (Grant 2014). Material thinking is of pivotal significance for me as an editor, as one of the aims of this research project is to gain and communicate new knowledge through my combination of practitioner and scholar expertise.

As may have become clear from the above definitions and examples, different modes of audiovisual analysis exploit various methodologies, which I find particularly interesting for research on film editing practices. One of the primary goals of introducing audiovisual criticism to this project will be to explore what I, as an editor-scholar, can do videographically and how videographic works can intervene in conversations about editing practices. Most importantly, I will explore the opportunity for scholars to demonstrate the potential of videographic analysis in academic discussions about film editing.

Chapter 2: Exploring Visual Rhythms and Eisenstein's Montage Techniques Through a Videographic Approach

Introduction

The arrangement of the case study on Eisenstein at the beginning of this thesis is an intentional move, and not simply because this revolutionary Russian filmmaker is a preeminent figure in the history of editing. Awareness of Eisenstein's methods has always been a significant part of thinking about cinema and editing from both the researcher's and editor's perspective. Even though the modern filmmakers' understanding of Eisenstein's school of montage has been reshaped by changing media trends, the introduction of new editing techniques and extended access to his unpublished work and the director's relevance to contemporary cinema remain. Almost any editing assembly, whether in fiction, documentary, commercial content or music videos, inevitably employs one (or more) of Eisenstein's five methods of montage, which I will set out later in this chapter.

In this chapter, I will introduce the reader to Sergei Eisenstein to the perspective of an early filmmaker-scholar, opening up a broader discussion on the complex relationship between his film works and theories. I will also provide an overview of one of Eisenstein's most significant contributions to the Soviet Montage School, five methods of montage, which form the basis of my videographic exploration of visual rhythms and editing in *Battleship Potemkin*. The chapter will propose the PechaKucha form of the audiovisual essay as the parametered approach to the practice element of this case study, alongside an extensive explanation of how this method of videographic deformation can guide a video essayist to discovering more nuanced aspects of the film. As the final practical outputs, I will present five stand-alone PechaKucha videos, each demonstrating examples of one of the five montage methods. I will extend my critical analysis into further written reflections on the intricacies of intellectual editing. Therefore, this chapter's videographic work can provide a basis for more engagement with the five montage methods, resulting in alternative versions of PechaKucha assemblies. Finally, the chapter will discuss the creative and technical challenges encountered when editing PechaKuchas, and it will reflect on the selection of Pet Shop Boys' *Battleship Potemkin* music as the soundtrack.

The scholarship on Eisenstein is vast, including countless books and articles in the original Russian-speaking academia, in which the director is an indispensable figure who holds an unavoidable patriotic and cultural value. Eisenstein's popularity evolved in significance to

the extent that some prominent Soviet scholars and film critics, including film critic Rostislav Yurenev and the Eisenstein-Centre director Naum Kleiman adopted a specialized term called *эйзенштейноведы* ['eisensteinovedy', specialists in Eisenstein].

Battleship Potemkin (1925), edited by the director himself, was filmed for the 20th anniversary of the First Russian Revolution and tells the story of a naval mutiny of Russian sailors against czarist troops in the port of Odessa. The film continues to influence worldwide cinematic practices and has become one of the leading film examples associated with the montage theory, often considered the canonical starting point in studying editing. For instance, Marilyn Fabe conducts an in-depth sequence analysis of "The Odessa Steps" through an investigation of how Eisenstein's revolutionary editing approaches 'heighten the emotional and visual impact of an event' (2014: 34) by developing Griffith's cinematic ideas further and breaking conventional filmmaking rules. This understanding emphasizes the importance of building on the past historical and industry context to see how Eisenstein's style evolved and innovated upon existing approaches. Cardullo further suggests that all five types of montage may be found in *Battleship Potemkin's* famous Odessa Steps sequence (2020:86), allowing to observe how these different categorised levels of montage establish relationship, meaning and emotional resonance through juxtaposition of film fragments. Before turning to my own critical analysis of the film's editing, in the next section I will first explore Eisenstein's position in academia, which is complex due to his dual role as an academic and practitioner.

Sergei Eisenstein and the Academia

Guidelines on film editing can be written from different points of view, including strictly technical and mechanical step-by-step instructions or practice-orientated ones that also consider the theoretical knowledge and creative thinking process (Dancyger 2018). Eisenstein's idiosyncratic original essay in *Film Form* (1949) outlines formal montage categories by providing useful technical context to grasp each method's complex nature. His work also suggests a variety of useful multidisciplinary references that consider broader possibilities of implementing edits in different situations. However, Eisenstein is frequently called 'a complex writer' (Rees 2020: 160), not only due to his abstract and highly personal style but also because of the complex history of translating his original texts.

A filmmaker and composer, Robert Robertson, who conducted extensive research on Eisenstein's ideas about the audiovisual element of cinema, has provided, perhaps, the most insightful summary of how scholars perceive the director's original texts:

> The characteristics of an extensive range of Eisenstein's writings – their chaotic, multi-lingual and magma-like quality – make them exciting and full of creative and associative possibilities for the artist. However the same characteristics are also what make his writings bristle with difficulties for the film historian, who is correctly anxious to make the presentation of Eisenstein's own thinking as close as possible to what is known of the director's original intentions. (2011: 25)

One of the primary aims of this doctoral thesis is to explore ways scholars and practitioners share and advance knowledge of film editing. Eisenstein is a prime example of how complex a relationship between theoretical work and filmmaking practice can become. Luka Arsenjuk acknowledges the foundational importance of Eisenstein and rightly notices that it significantly affects the way the audience perceives his work. Arsenjuk explains that 'most people revere them [Eisenstein's films] without encountering them, refer to them without assuming the need to read them closely' (2018: 6). Dana Polan argues that Eisenstein's writing – which in many cases was done after the films were created – was intended to explain and justify his filmmaking choices, while his texts served as a theory for his practice (1977: 14). Polan states the following:

> It would of course be necessary to relate Eisenstein's film practice to his film theories for a complete understanding of his accomplishments, but a more immediate need is that of rescuing him from the extremely one-sided emphasis on his *directorial* ability which has dominated most investigation of Eisenstein down to the present. (1977: 15)

Most importantly, the author observes that the issue with writers on Eisenstein is that they were often separating his practice from his theory, or seeing the theory as no more than supplementary material to his film productions. Therefore, the analysis of Eisenstein's scholarly writing should not preclude the analysis of his films, as understanding the filmmaker's perception of cinema forms the basis of comprehending his practice (ibid).

Despite the extensive articles and books that explore the production of *Battleship Potemkin*, many studies have typically excluded detailed discussion, and careful investigation solely focused on editing techniques and the variable nature of Eisenstein's methods of montage. This may be partly because Eisenstein's own writing on the film is so influential;

Gillespie notes that 'one could feel entitled to ask if there is anything left to discover within this magnificent and hugely influential film' (2003: 260). One notable text from the English-speaking community is Richard Taylor's *The Battleship Potemkin: The Film Companion* (2000), which explores the film's production, context and detailed analysis. It is essential to consider that Taylor was one of the lead contributors and editors for the book series *KINO Russian Cinema*, released by a British publishing house, I.B. Tauris, that focused on Soviet and Russian cinema from its beginning to modern times. Taylor extensively analyses the plot and cinematic devices in each of the film's parts, exploring various themes and patterns and their interpretations. While only briefly explaining the concept of montage, Taylor pays more attention to the use of symbolism and hidden sexual connotations, camera movement and light contrasts. Other scholars attempted to visually demonstrate each montage technique with corresponding text explanations and references to Eisenstein's original writing. Morante presents an overview of the five categories accompanied by selected scene breakdowns from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1927) (2017: 28-34).

This chapter extends Morante's inquiry by suggesting sourcing a variety of parametered montage samples with *Battleship Potemkin* as the starting point. To continue the tradition of close examination of Eisenstein's characterisation of five montage methods and to link his theoretical activity to the film practice, I have created a series of PechaKucha exercises with examples from *Battleship Potemkin* that exemplify the five forms of montage described by Eisenstein in *Film Form* (Eisenstein, translated by Jay Leyda 1949: 72-84). This project's methodological framework selects a montage method, explains its simplified concept (in a way that a modern film editor could easily understand), and expands it into a compilation of representative examples from a film.

Videographic criticism relies on editing and montage as indispensable tools for creating, shaping and conveying its analysis. In an opening statement to a special issue of *in[Transition]*, 'Introduction: Montage Reloaded', examining the legacy of the Russian avant-garde, Julia Vassilieva notes that 'another factor in the recent reinvigoration of interest in the Russian montage school has been the emergence of audio-visual criticism itself, which has placed montage back in the spotlight of film scholarship' (Vassilieva 2019).

Various experimental videos use *Battleship Potemkin's* source footage to re-imagine the narrative, providing a substantial theoretical underpinning for this case study. One of the notable examples is a dance edit created by Michael Bell-Smith (2012), which uses a particular rhythm, denoted as 120BPM, with sped-up film clips. Another example is Fleur Yahto's 'Sexy Version' from 2014. This provocative edit features selected shots from *Battleship Potemkin*,

including naked sailors' torsos and sailors sleeping together. The juxtaposition of these shots with selected title cards from the original film and pop music, including a part from Britney Spears's song 'Toxic,' creates a strong homosexual meaning. While conceptually different from exploring the montage methods conventionally, these audiovisual experiments demonstrate a radical expression of the power of editing and its mainstream transformative function when dealing with the original film footage.

In audiovisual scholarship, excerpts from *Battleship Potemkin* are frequently included in educational videos exploring cinema's history. Important is a 1984 example of an early video essay, 'Storming the Winter Palace', the last video in *Visual Essays: Origins of Film* (1973-1984) by Al Razutis. The author's critical contextualization explores the notion of montage with Eisenstein's dialectics as the primary focus and reintroduces the political stature of the director's work. In an overview of Al Razutis's work, Michael Hoolbloom argues that his work 'has less to do with an academic understanding than a poetic rendering of homages and influences' (Hoolbloom 2009: 38), while Paci calls Al Razutis's way of reviewing cinema a 'part of the modernist and nowadays somewhat compulsive found footage tradition' (2015: 73), which 'teaches us something about how it is possible to transmit and reactivate the past' (2015:74).

Intrinsic to this discussion are also video essays available on YouTube and, despite the grand array of educational materials available to learners, 'academic content-creators are notable by their lack of presence on the platform' (Maynard 2021). Nevertheless, the concept of circulating video essays on this internet platform remains highly approachable to the viewers. The affordance of interactivity and comment section under each video enables the users to ask questions, often sparking various highly valid and useful critical discussions. Ryan Charles's Eisenstein's *Methods of Montage Explained* (2012) and Ines S's compilation of *Eisenstein's 5 methods of montage* (2013) are two notable examples of videographic works available on YouTube platform. Both authors attempt to explain Eisenstein's theory with on-screen text cards, which expand on montage applications and interpretations in the selected contemporary film scenes. Charles (a filmmaker and an editor himself) offers a more complex audiovisual assembly by guiding the viewer through his exploration of Eisenstein's methods of montage with a voiceover. Highly praised by the grateful online audience, videos were found helpful in teaching ('This is used in a Russian Cinema class by the professor', user @cannisterkid) and understanding Eisenstein's original texts ('reading the original work was just confusing', user @Exterminism). Charles's video also sparked a series of questions and discussion, bringing up the visual relevance of the selected clips for in-class use ('I can't expect

my students to watch the slaughter of the ox in Apocalypse Now (completely devoid of context here) and can be desensitized enough to grasp the concepts you're explaining', user @maliabruker5647) and repeatedly mentioned confusion about the difference between tonal (based on the general tone of the film's piece) and overtonal (distinguished by collective metric, rhythmic and tonal montage types) approaches.

The authors' choice to employ contemporary films to demonstrate the practical application of Eisenstein's editing can be explained by their familiarity and relevance to modern audiences, while they also clarify how pioneering editing methods were adapted and integrated into contemporary filmmaking practices. Authors include Eisenstein's films as reference, too: *Ines S* uses fragments from *October – Ten Days that Shook the World* (1927) to show the concept of metric montage and refers to the intellectual montage cut to Bull's slaughter in *Strike* (1925) as a 'metaphor for the treatment of workers' (2012). Ryan Charles refers to several shots from *Battleship Potemkin:* the Odessa steps sequence and the baby pram to demonstrate the application of rhythmic montage. It is peculiar to see how little the authors make mention of Eisenstein's original work while they claim to be 'illustrating' (*ines s*) and 'exploring' (Charles) five montage methods. More substantial visual references to Eisenstein would have been essential in providing the historical context of his pioneering work, thus allowing tracing of its development and evolution over time.

Kevin B. Lee's desktop-based presentation delivered as a part of the Moscow International Experimental Film Festival in 2018 further sparked my interest in exploring video assemblies that demonstrate Eisenstein's methods of montage. Lee began with Google and YouTube to formally introduce Eisenstein, and the list of suggested videos displayed as a result of his name search frequently contained the word 'montage'. Next, Lee opened a notepad document on screen, titled 'Eisenstein's 5 Methods of Montage' and a list of empty bullet points. When addressing the audience, B. Lee asked if anyone in the room was aware of these five montage methods, and, considering the theme of the festival and the workshop itself, the absence of responses was quite unusual. After a brief silence, Lee proceeded to screen Ryan Charles's video I had discussed above. Toward the end of the workshop, Lee presented a brief yet concise and easy-to-understand explanation of each of Eisenstein's methods of montage.

Lee summarised the classification as follows:

1. Metric Montage (mechanical)
2. Rhythmic Montage (rhythm of life and story)
3. Tonal Montage (emotions)
4. Overtonal (combinations of different emotions)
5. Intellectual (two different images create an idea)

Kevin B. Lee's live desktop documentary presentation of Eisenstein's montage types suggested ways of 'dealing with the limited media environment in an inventive, self-reflexive fashion' (Anger and Lee 2023). However, upon further exploring available audiovisual scholarship on Eisenstein's editing theory amongst different experimental assemblies, I could not find an example of a more focused investigation into each montage method.

Eisenstein's Five Methods of Montage

Responding to Eisenstein's ordering of montage categories (see fig. 2.1) was important to the design of the PechaKucha project. The first metric method is considered the least complex and 'characterized by a rude motive force', with the following 'primitive-emotive' rhythmic category (Eisenstein, translated by Jay Leyda 1949: 80). Next is the third tonal montage technique, which features a more distinct emotional vibration of a higher order, succeeded by a more intense and purely physiological overtonal method. Finally, the categorization is concluded with an intellectual montage that dominates the higher nerve centres (ibid).
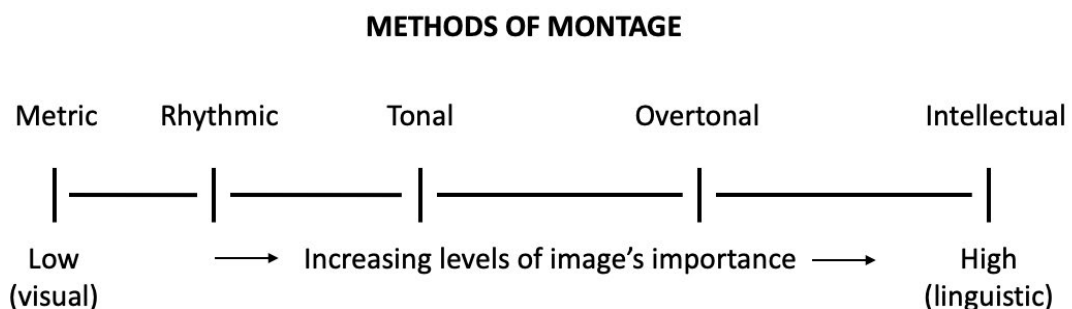
Fig. 2.1: A graphic representation of ascending importance of the visual quality of the shot across Eisenstein's methods of montage (adapted from Michael Betancourt's 2014 article 'Motion Pictures – An Expanded Framework')

My main aim when creating the representative videos for each of Eisenstein's montage methods was to ensure that the compilation of fragments from *Battleship Potemkin* adheres to the technical and aesthetic considerations outlined by the author in *Film Form* (1949). Below, I will summarize the main principles of each of the montage methods in the order that Eisenstein lists the categorizations in his theory:

1. **Metric montage:** uses absolute shot lengths and their repetition to achieve tension. For instance, a metric beat can be similar to a waltz (3/4, 2/4, etc.), or the edit can alternate shots of different lengths according to visual content within these images. In this montage technique, the frame content is less important than the shot's duration.

2. **Rhythmic montage:** Unlike metric montage, the content within the frame is as important as the shot length. The pace of the editing is not dictated by a metric beat but rather by the intensity of the action and movement on the screen. The juxtaposition of shots with different internal rhythms or directions of movement can create complex and intense visual conflict.

3. **Tonal montage**: uses the emotional tone and mood of the shot as the dominant parameter for montage assembly, which includes different degrees of light, arrangement of visual elements in the frame, focus, and in-frame movement.

4. **Overtonal montage:** combines metric, rhythmic and tonal methods to achieve the interplay of pace, emotional resonance and visual conflict.

5. **Intellectual montage:** juxtaposes shots that give rise to a new abstract concept that was not fully contained in either of the images.

Jacques Aumont claims that grouping different kinds of montage into typologies is an old practice. He writes that montage tables 'become more of a collection of recipes designed to nourish the techniques of film production than a theoretical classification of editing effects' (Aumont 1999: 52). Aumont rightly notices that such careful investigation of editing should be a beneficial tool in deepening the viewer's understanding of how different cutting approaches create meaning, but I wanted to create a videographic artefact that would be a non-conventional scholarly approach to a theory formulated by Eisenstein. When identifying film fragments to fill each of the six-second parts, I aimed to select at least one (or more) consecutive cuts and shots that would be efficiently perceived and understood by the audience. The six-by-ten-second guideline efficiently allowed for various examples for each editing method. Many

videos attempting to explain Eisenstein's montage theory review the methods briefly, demonstrating the most basic editing structures that reflect the effect described. Authors frequently introduce short sequences from Eisenstein's films (predominantly *October* or *Battleship Potemkin*) and then provide corresponding examples from recent movies. While Eisenstein's editing theory is, unarguably, employed in contemporary filmmaking practices, I strived to maintain the direct relevance and only employ *Battleship Potemkin*'s film material that provides an authentic representation of Eisenstein's ideas in the context for which they were formulated.

In his writing, Eisenstein occasionally refers to specific sequences in *Battleship Potemkin* that were representative of the montage methods, which supports the film being one of the primary works in which the filmmaker-theorist applied those principles. Therefore, the intentional application of methodology and the decision to use only the original footage align more with the source montage theory. It is important to note that Eisenstein provided direct references from *Battleship Potemkin* for selected montage methods. He briefly discussed the Odessa steps sequence as an example of rhythmic montage and the fog sequence preceding the mourning of Vakulinchuk to qualify as tonal montage as it 'was based exclusively on the emotional sound of the pieces' (Eisenstein, translated by Jay Leyda 1949: 76). Various notable authors, including Ken Dancyger and David Bordwell, have attempted to revisit Eisenstein's montage theory in their books and expanded upon the original ideas, critically evaluating and examining the methods alongside film examples. English-speaking academia is well aware of the shifting ways in which Eisenstein theorised montage, prompted by personal, critical, political and technological contexts, such as the influence of the Cultural Revolution (1928-1932) and the charges of petit-bourgeois formalism. Moreover, frequent travels abroad, and the varying pace of filmmaking, allowed Eisenstein ample opportunity to write (Bordwell 2020: 20). Eisenstein's unpublished works and archive still remains the biggest in Russian archives, even compared to that of the archives of the Vyazemsky princes (my translation from Yakovich 2018: 107). While I attempt to reference most of Eisenstein's texts from translations by recognised authors, I was frequently turning to original sources in Russian in parallel. Cappellini claims that 'even for advanced speakers and fluent readers of English, higher-level thinking may come easier in the primary language' (Cappellini 2005: 226). Considering Eisenstein's complex and sophisticated writing style in Russian and his epistemological shifts as a theorist, it was important to be aware of different phases in his theorizing and language irregularities that could have occurred through translation. With this valuable knowledge in mind, the privilege to experience Eisenstein's authentic voice in the Russian language allowed

me to have a more direct connection to the methods' intended meaning. I selected film fragments from *Battleship Potemkin* dictated by my combined expertise as a scholar and editor, and argue that Eisenstein's montage methods prove to be a much more flexible and evolving system than its received understanding would suggest.

PechaKucha as the Format of Videographic Criticism

Rather than employing the traditional shot-by-shot breakdown to investigate the effect of shot collisions, this work was arranged as a videographic exercise called PechaKucha. A concept was effectively introduced to the audiovisual researchers' community by Christian Keathley and Jason Mittel in 2015 during a series of workshops on videographic criticism and pedagogical essays. The concept of videographic PechaKucha aims to transform a film into a one-minute derivation or deformance that allows the researcher to 'discover aspects of the film that were otherwise obscured by narrative, motion, sound, and the thousands of other still images' (Mittell 2019). A series of PechaKucha videos offer helpful insight into different approaches to parameterized montage techniques embedded into a visual presentation of *Battleship Potemkin*. As the primary objective of this work also considers my investigation into the effectiveness of practical applications of filmmakers' theories, the chosen creative approach allows us to see each of the five editing methods in a more systematized way that is more challenging to communicate evocatively through text. Moreover, from the perspective of an editor-scholar, I have a special interest in this form of film criticism. This approach grounded in montage calls for a montage way of working, which presents the opportunity to engage with the more experiential practice of editing.

Jason Mittel's 'Videographic Criticism as a Digital Humanities Method' is a foundational study for this work, as it outlines the integral methodological concept and a strict parametered approach to editing PechaKucha video essays. The Japanese term PechaKucha, which stands for the sound of conversation or chit-chat, was introduced as a presentation style in 2003 by two architects (Warren 2016: 149). This simple presentation format displays twenty slides, each lasting twenty seconds. PechaKucha uses a similar approach to the elevator pitch: a technique where one must explain the essence of the business idea to the next person. The growing popularity of this method in academia, Mittell argues, is attributed to its unorthodox concept that 'allows ourselves to be surprised by what emerges when we process datasets of sounds and images using seemingly arbitrary parameters' (2019: 231). In this way, artists can

employ certain guidelines and constraints to unlock the creative potential of the approach by following unforeseen discoveries rather than intentional aesthetic decisions.

The videographic PechaKucha exercise was among the tasks participants in workshops on videographic criticism responded to at Middlebury College in June 2015, 2017 and 2018. The participants were not given any additional parameters to follow apart from the basic rules of videographic PechaKucha – ten clips, six seconds each, paired with one continuous sequence of dialogue, music or sound from the same source, with no cuts. Forced away from traditional forms of analysis, the video makers often discovered and selected structural elements to guide their parameter-guided edits. However, the organization of the chosen clips had to follow certain relevant logical and limiting concepts. For instance, Evelyn Kreutzer's thematic motif focused on a gesture of raising arms in *Fantasia* (Samuel Armstrong et al. 1940), first demonstrated by the orchestra conductor and then repeated by other characters throughout the film. Another interesting PechaKucha was designed by Jaap Kooijman, who used clips from *Mahogany* (Berry Gordy 1975) that showed various instances of women's gazes. The juxtaposition of film shots created a variation on the Kuleshov experiment, attributing different emotional resonance to each shot of a woman *looking,* radically changing the original narrative's intentions in a playful and experimental way.

While many videographic PechaKucha assemblies are concerned with visual elements of the shot composition, patterns, gestures or production design, less attention has been paid to incorporating the editing-based parameter that would dictate the choice of shots and sounds to play with. PechaKucha experiments can force scholars to engage with the film object in new, unexpected ways; I argue that this creates interesting analogies with the editing workflow and establishes an important relationship between videographic practice and the concept of montage. Moreover, I propose that the relevance of the PechaKucha format is especially evident when considering the ambitions of Soviet montage and the attempts of Soviet filmmakers to reflect on reality through film form and different ways to transform the narrative continuity.

This lack of PechaKuchas that demonstrate different editing techniques, and Eisenstein's five montage methods in particular, was a departure point for my own experiment with *Battleship Potemkin*. I used the form to analyse editing in *Battleship Potemkin* to *select* and *clarify* film moments for the viewer's consideration as examples of five montage types.

The videographic PechaKucha as primary methodological choice allowed me to engage with *Battleship Potemkin* in a way particularly interesting for film editors, as it highly relies on the duration of shots, rhythm and maintaining visual continuity. Moreover, this format of

videographic criticism deals with all three points of focus in this case study: montage theory, videographic practice, and editing scholarship. The audiovisual design of PechaKucha has striking similarities with the notion of montage itself, and the resulting assemblies of shots also reflect the film's overall editing pace.

Battleship Potemkin videographic work can be viewed online at:

- **Metric PechaKucha** https://vimeo.com/910390801/13a8541712
- **Rhythmic PechaKucha** https://vimeo.com/910394202/b49aeb21bb
- **Tonal PechaKucha** https://vimeo.com/910394059/b80b8f3413
- **Overtonal PechaKucha** https://vimeo.com/910392604/cddc471880
- **Intellectual PechaKucha** https://vimeo.com/910391382/fc4ca164fd

The videographic work performed as a part of this case study explores the application and variability of Sergei Eisenstein's theory in the context of Soviet Montage in his 1925 film *Battleship Potemkin*. The practice-as-research element of the chapter is five short compilations of ten film fragments, six seconds each, accompanied by a 2005 re-imagination of the film's soundtrack by British band Pet Shop Boys. To demonstrate as closely as possible the examples of five montage methods explained and characterized in the primary text source, I selected *Battleship Potemkin* as it is internationally considered to be the most associated with Eisenstein's theory of editing. In an easy-to-follow way, one-minute sample assemblies that are representative of rhythmic, metric, tonal, overtonal and intellectual montage techniques can be used by students, researchers and film enthusiasts to see Eisenstein's theory in action.

Variations of ASL in *Battleship Potemkin* PechaKucha Videos

When outlining the principles of videographic PechaKucha, Keathley and Mittell noted that 'this assignment specifies segment, not shot' (2019), which enables the analysis of editing and even the editing pace as this crucial consideration allows for the demonstration of sequential cuts within the selected sequence. In editing-focused PechaKucha assemblies, the main observation emphasis shifts to noting the instances of cuts, their varying effects and the patterns established; hence, including one continuous shot would not have served the purpose of the montage analysis. Each of the video's ten segments, apart from simple cuts to separate the selected parts, incorporate the edits already inherent in the film, which can significantly

quicken the pace of the resulting videographic assembly. As a change to the established form of videographic PechaKucha, I introduced wipe transitions to separate the examples of selected film fragments by moving them from one side to another. Due to the fast-paced change of images in video assemblies, wipes were more effective in creating clear and noticeable transitions between different film scenes compared to simple cuts.

The data gathered by Mohsen Nasrin for the Cinemetrics Database (2012), in which he counted the average shot length (ASL) in *Battleship Potemkin*, suggests the cutting speed of the film is three seconds, on average. In turn, the concept of PechaKucha calls for ASL of six seconds, which also allows for more time to observe the shot, in-frame movement, lighting, mise-en-scène and other essential visual elements on the screen.

In Table 2.1 below, I calculated and summarized the variations of ASL in each of the resulting PechaKucha videos (in descending order of duration), which helps to compare five of Eisenstein's editing methods in *Battleship Potemkin*.

Montage method	PechaKucha ASL, seconds
Tonal	2.3
Overtonal	2
Intellectual	1.54
Metric	1.46
Rhythmic	1.07

Table 2.1: ASL in PechaKucha videos that demonstrate Eisenstein's methods of montage in Battleship Potemkin

The results show that tonal montage yielded the longest ASL in the *Battleship Potemkin* PechaKucha series, followed by the overtonal technique. Tonal montage is less concerned with the rhythmic juxtaposition of shots. It is primarily perceived by varying degrees of lighting, colour, focus, graphic tonality and movement in the frame. In contrast, overtonal montage is the collective assembly of all four techniques. The overtonal montage approach also includes metric and rhythmic considerations, inevitably leading to a quickened editing pace. Metric and rhythmic editing methods are based on the rapid succession of shots that gain dynamic energy or can attain a sense of urgency, suspense or action by synchronizing cuts with a specific duration of shots and their pattern. While the metric montage method is more structured due to

the precise duration of shots, rhythmic montage can align edits with the rhythm of the sound or movement within the frame, contributing to the fastest cutting pace.

The ASL in the intellectual montage-based PechaKucha is significantly lower, which can be explained at least partly by the video essayist's editing decisions rather than the filmmakers. This editing method's effectiveness relies on the spectator's ability to make logical connections and derive meaning from them. Therefore, interpreting visuals and their combinations can be biased and variable due to subjective perception. When attempting to demonstrate instances of conflict-juxtaposition of shots and their accompanying intellectual effects, I was seeking shot collisions that can seem logically appealing even to those viewers who may not be aware of the narrative in *Battleship Potemkin*.

For instance, when intercutting between shots of the destruction and the sleeping lions, Eisenstein intended to communicate a connection between the statues' emotional response and the mutiny. Eisenstein claimed that 'in the thunder of the *Potemkin*'s guns, a marble lion leaps up, in protest against the bloodshed on the Odessa steps' (Eisenstein, translated by Jay Leyda 1949: 56). Having included this famous instance of intellectual montage in my PechaKucha, I was also concerned with examining less discussed instances of the effect, among other meaningful juxtapositions. From the perspective of not only a modern-day editor but also a spectator, the speed of my perception and establishing logical connections is significantly heightened compared to audience almost a hundred years ago, who were not exposed to fast-paced media the same way I am.

Intellectual Montage PechaKucha: Examples and Interpretation

For this case study, it is important to consider that montage samples in each of the five videos are a subject for in-depth analysis and interpretation, as the visual language employed by Eisenstein in his cinema is exceptionally rich. However, this critical examination of the videographic work will specifically concentrate on the most challenging (according to Eisenstein) montage method. The Intellectual PechaKucha features ten short samples of shot juxtapositions that suggest associative linkage and the emergence of a new meaning. In the opening fragment, we see a sequence of shots similar to Kuleshov's effect with Mosjoukin – one of the commanders arrogantly looks down. The film cuts to a high-angle view of furious sailors crowing over hanging meat carcasses. When the camera returns to the same shot of the commander, the higher angle eyeline match, along with his mocking smirk and the evident visual difference in the lighting patterns between the higher and the lower decks, emphasize

the imbalance of power dynamic between sailors and officers and evokes a feeling of control and oppression. The following example, which features sailors tirelessly polishing the metal battleship parts and hammering the chain, cuts to a close-up shot of bubbling soup stirred with a ladle. The visuals of cleaning activities that emphasize the sailors' discipline are juxtaposed with the image of the boiling soup, which symbolizes the increase in tension and the approaching trouble. Another example of intellectual montage is the rhythmic interplay between a shot of the priest's cross tapping against his hand, the squinting officer and a close-up of fingers fiddling with the sword, which suggests the notion of established order and different mighty powers that these tools hold. Lara Feigel writes that Eisenstein's use of close-ups forms their narrative (2010: 42): the crucifix in the priest's hands typically represents faith and mercy, but the patting gesture signals the threat of violence, which is further emphasized by the following close-up of stroking the sword that communicates the church's hypocrisy and it promoting the injustice. Another interesting example of intellectual juxtapositions includes the conflicting images of mourning women kneeling and the frame in which a posh-looking man wearing a straw hat enjoys the cigarette puff and grins at the sight of public grief, as well as the power imbalance on the Odessa steps, where Eisenstein creates visual antonyms through cuts between a young legless beggar and cheering rich ladies wearing fancy garments. The PechaKucha also includes other notable details-symbols that convey abstract ideas through intellectual montage, such as the juxtaposition of chaotic shots of the sailors stomping over tarpaulin, fighting with officers and the battleship's flag flowing in the wind, adding to the feel of rebellion and outburst of freedom. Another instance of seeing a flag, this time red, is demonstrated when it is juxtaposed with a shot of lowering the guns, which evokes a sense of triumph and victory. Meaningful is also the sequence, in which the shots of marines are intercut with a big close-up of meat infested with maggots. This sends a message of masses being uniform and actively and freely moving, having escaped the oppression. Finally, the intellectual montage PechaKucha video includes the famous sequence with stone lions, representing Eisenstein's attempts to revive inanimate objects through montage. V.F. Perkins's critique of *Battleship Potemkin* and the stone lions' scene (1993: 103-105) is meaningful in this regard, as it articulates the imprecision in the handling of the concrete, material basis for the metaphor that makes adducing its precise meaning impossible. The author critically discusses this scene as an example of a montage device lacking dramatic connection in terms of story, action and location, which 'entailed an extreme imprecision of effect' (1993: 104). Perkins was disturbed by the vagueness of the image, which raised confusion in the lions' involvement in the narrative context. The PechaKucha design focuses our attention on the technical editing-based element

of constructing the meaning without the need to follow the story and characters or listen carefully to the soundtrack. In understanding individual editing methods, as well as the effects of juxtaposing shots that form the basis of a given montage technique, isolating the short sequence of stone lions from the film's thematic context had no discernible impact on the perception of its intended meaning. The intellectual montage PechaKucha demonstrates the effectiveness of stone lions being important components of an editing effect, and the notion of lions' awakening and response to explosions certainly emerges in this individual example of how editing establishes logical connections.

Pet Shop Boys and 'Battleship Potemkin' (2005)

One of the primary methodological considerations was the choice of soundtrack to be used in each of PechaKucha's videos, as the brief required the inclusion of original and continuous film sound. Silent films in cinemas of that time were scored by musicians who accompanied the film performance on the piano. In 1926, composer Edmund Meisel wrote music for the film, especially for the German release. Eisenstein praised his score for its ability to unify the soundtrack with mechanical visuals (Richardson 2012: 128). Meisel incorporated themes of Russian songs and used rhythmically organized noises for a greater sense of realism. To Soviet and Russian audiences, *Battleship Potemkin* is best known for Nikolay Kryukov's score composed in 1950 for the film's 25th anniversary and a range of Dmitry Shostakovich's symphonies widely used in commercial format. Even in the sound era, *Battleship Potemkin* did not have one unified soundtrack because Eisenstein hoped that somebody would compose new music every ten years to retain its continued significance for every succeeding generation (Tennant 2008).

In 2005, the British music band Pet Shop Boys released an album, *Battleship Potemkin*. The release sparked critical discussions about using modern music to accompany silent cinema. John Richardson argues that there is great potential for sound reworking for canonical avant-garde and art-house films and those that demonstrate revolutionary filmmaking approaches as they 'converge uncannily with present-day artistic sensibilities' (Richardson 2012: 171). In contrast, Donnelly and Wallengren argue that 'the audiovisual relationship between the soundtrack and Eisenstein's film is not of interest' (2016: 127), and Sarah McDonnell also questions the issue of the soundtrack's authenticity and how well it complements the film (2016: 127). While the issue of the Pet Shop Boys soundtrack's inauthenticity could itself be explored through stand-alone research, I saw a potential for practical rhythmic harmony

between the beat of the music and the various degrees of pace already inherent in *Battleship Potemkin*, depending on the selected segments to demonstrate a montage method. The lack of spoken dialogue in the film and the introduction of Pet Shop Boys's score to PechaKucha videos facilitated a peculiar audiovisual experience, as I intentionally selected the music pieces to follow the pace of editing in each assembly. Such complex interaction between electronic music and the fast-paced film sequences contributed to a more physical, even sensory engagement with each of Eisenstein's montage methods.

Technical Challenges

The technical challenge I faced when assembling PechaKucha videos that incorporated film samples representative of different editing techniques was to separate each segment visually. While, in some instances, a viewer would be able to identify cuts that separate different film parts, one of my main intentions from a professional point of view was to let the edit flow as seamlessly as possible. While it was not entirely possible to demonstrate the full range of cuts in each of the six-second fragments, priority was given to those combinations of shots that would not create significant visual ruptures when intercut with segments to follow (such as cuts on abrupt movement appearance of title cards or long fades to black). Moreover, the experience of matching the in-frame pace of the shots with Pet Shop Boys's soundtrack allowed for the comfortable experience of editing to a consistent and more pronounced rhythmic structure, which would have been more challenging when layering the film's fragments over Meisel or Shostakovich's compositions with more varied and complex musical textures. As a result, the compilation of ten different edited sequences in each PechaKucha video played as a series of shots. Introducing black flash frames to separate montage methods would have disrupted the notion of PechaKucha to fill all sixty seconds with the film's material, so visual markers had to be added to the existing footage, which would not affect the duration of the original clips. A push video transition slides the clip out of the frame from left to right while simultaneously sliding the following clip into the frame. Apart from serving the purpose of visually labelling the changing film fragments and separating the montage samples, the transition is also similar to that in a slide projector between stills, adding to the creative shape of the PechaKucha video. To aid the visual continuity, a freeze frame of the selected clip's ending was inserted at the point of the push transition to ensure a momentary pause. The addition of a still image facilitated the transition so that the spectator could process the last frame of the video before it would smoothly move to the next shot, contributing to a more

seamless viewing experience. To provide clarity for the audience and facilitate the viewers' comprehension of the demonstrated editing structures, each *Battleship Potemkin* PechaKucha video began with an explanatory title card, which outlined the basic working principle and main features of individual Eisenstein's montage methods.

Conclusion

The PechaKucha's highly parametric concept employs methods outlined in Eisenstein's original *Film Form* (1949), such as metric, intellectual, rhythmic, tonal, and overtonal montage. This approach enabled me to closely examine the juxtaposition of shots in *Battleship Potemkin* and identify a range of examples characteristic of a given montage approach that might be difficult to notice through conventional viewing experience.

This qualitative methodology considered a combination of textual and visual analysis. Adding the sonic element that is a requirement of the PechaKucha concept enabled a form of critical engagement that would be more challenging to achieve using traditional academic methods. Scholars can learn from this research that the analysis of editing techniques and strategies, and the creative transformation and even *deformation* of a film can unpredictably convey a powerful aesthetic dimension.

This creative videographic exercise suggests that while the fast-paced cutting style of *Battleship Potemkin* has a very distinct and powerful in-frame rhythm, each of the five montage techniques demonstrates highly variable forms of expression and assembly methods. As seen in all five PechaKucha videos, the selection of film sequences is not uniform. It presents different shot durations, acceleration patterns, combinations of shot sizes and movement complexities. At the same time, the film segments included in each of the ten six-second cells abide by the rules outlined by Eisenstein as per their classification. For instance, the examples of intellectual montage demonstrated in intellectual montage PechaKucha include different sets of shots juxtaposition. However, all communicate a chain of higher logical connections that would not be possible in the individual presentation of independent images.

Unlike more experimental PechaKucha videos that attempt to play with the original film and reimagine the source material in a radically new light, this case study also considered the important relationship between the video essays, *Battleship Potemkin* and Eisenstein's principal montage theory that dictated the selection of film clips for assemblies. While each of my audiovisual essays is a self-sufficient exercise, the addition of successive numbers that recommends the sequential order of viewing (as per Eisenstein's original classification) and

acknowledges montage methods as a part of the broader theory further advances the possibilities of PechaKucha. It suggests that the PechaKucha series can become a novel model for exploring multiple complex editing structures in one film. Each PechaKucha compilation can be driven by a specific film editing technique that highlights the key examples from the source material without the need to pay extra attention to the narrative and shift the attention to cuts only. Individual PechaKucha videos can allow us to focus more on functions of edits, their effects, the variations in rhythm and tempo and also technical considerations, which encourages a comprehensive perspective but also invites the viewer to examine the broader context of the overarching theme of the PechaKucha series and investigate the distinctiveness of each technique and compare their similarities and divergences.

The principal challenge of the experiment was the equalization of the shot length, as rather than aiming to engage the viewers emotionally with the transformation of the film, my focus was on providing more attention to different instances of cuts and their effects. Despite the higher tempo and fast cutting, certain examples played out seamlessly without escaping notice. However, more complex passages would have been more effectively presented at a greater length. Even though the equalized pulse of PechaKucha fragments made it easier for the audience to anticipate the change in montage methods demonstrated, I still had to find a different strategy to a typical PechaKucha as it was frequently difficult to distinguish my edits and the original film's cutting pattern.

The ease of selecting and presenting quick cuts from *Battleship Potemkin* to fit in six-second slots can be attributed to the film's extremely fast ASL of 2.8 seconds, which would allow for at least one cut to be demonstrated in the given segment. In the Metric PechaKucha video, one of the parts in which the upset sailor breaks a plate features nine cuts in six seconds. On the contrary, each of the examples in the intellectual montage PechaKucha features between two and four cuts, on average, as establishing intellectual connections due to shot juxtaposition requires more time. Therefore, it can be concluded that the PechaKucha exercise could serve as an excellent analysis tool to review editing strategies in fast-paced films, as six-second slots can accommodate fragments with quick cuts, creating affective engagement with their internal dynamics.

The selection of music tracks from Pet Shop Boys' album added another layer of experimenting with the editing assembly, as the film clips used were extracted from different points in the timeline. The resulting pace and tempo mainly dictated the choice of music. My primary concern was the technical counterpart of the edit and its relevance to the montage method. I would not adjust the timing of the cuts to avoid violating the rules of PechaKucha.

It was essential to match the selected music track with the dominant mood and visual beat of images so that the videos remained engaging for the spectator. For instance, the track 'To the Shore' accompanies the film's sequence that features Vakulinchuk's death; the relatively slow pace of the funereal melody with a subtle trumpet effectively conveys a distinct melancholic tone, which complements the notion of tonal montage that emphasizes the emotional qualities of shots. A much faster techno-beat, 'After All (The Odessa Staircase)', was composed to reimagine the Odessa steps segment. I chose to layer the soundtrack over my selection of examples of rhythmic montage, as the mix of percussion with synth bass lines and vocals enhances the dynamic nature of auditory rhythm inherent in this type of Eisenstein's montage method. Even though the cuts do not always coincide with the musical beat, the interplay between image and sound enriches the sonic potential of this audiovisual experiment and offers a further way to appreciate the artistic interpretation of the reimagined soundtrack of *Battleship Potemkin* and its compatibility with the variable film's speed. Observing instances and narrative situations from *Battleship Potemkin* that feature the techniques outlined in Eisenstein's original writing can thus unlock the endless possibilities of their potential application in the edit.

This case study's particular mixture of practice and theoretical background allowed for the most technically straightforward compilation of selected film fragments. The research on Eisenstein's understanding of the craft and art of editing, alongside the more critically focused examination of his montage theory from my perspective as a contemporary practitioner, has significantly facilitated the assembly of PechaKucha videos and examples representative of each of the five methods. As demonstrated by selected examples of video essays available on different digital platforms, there is a continuing need for a more structured formal videographic approach to systematise Eisenstein's methods of montage. The resulting PechaKuchas can be used as educational material for students and practitioners to understand different editing techniques and their effects, either as stand-alone resources or with supporting explanatory written research.

Chapter 3: Revisiting the Challenge of Multinarrative Strands and Witnesses to Truth Through Film Editing Strategies in Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981)

Introduction

Soviet Montage techniques, demonstrated in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), emphasise the 'honoring of the Russian Revolution conceived as the development of crowds and their transformations' (Brill 2006: 24). This affinity between film and masses was frequently seen as the creation of propaganda, political spectacle or justification of the Russian Revolution. From the editor's perspective, I was more concerned with the historical dimension of the film incorporated into the medium of editing and establishing the rhythm. The analysis of *Battleship Potemkin* distanced itself from storytelling and characters, solely focussing on montage and visual rhythms. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between varying pace, tension, and shot juxtaposition, resulting in emotional resonance and dialectical meaning.

As a related counterpoint to *Battleship Potemkin*, this chapter looks at an American film about the Russian Revolution. Where *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* (Sergei Eisenstein 1927) employs a heroic collectivist style to interpret the Bolshevik revolution, and *Doctor Zhivago* (David Lean 1965) attempts to tell the story of the Russian Revolution through the perspective of human values and experiences, Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981) sits somewhere between, as it is interested in historical perspectives while also paying significant attention to personal stories.

Arthur Penn, the director of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), described Warren Beatty as someone who 'stays with a picture through editing, mixing and scoring' (Penn quoted in Sellers 2010: 44). Beatty's considerable input in *Reds* involved producing, collaborating on the screenplay, directing and playing the lead role of John Reed. However, unlike Eisenstein who directed and edited *Battleship Potemkin*, Beatty appointed Dede Allen as a lead editor and an executive producer. Craig McKay was Allen's co-editor, and the post-production team comprised 64 people (McKay quoted in LoBrutto 1991: 2001). Besides being frequently called an epic historical drama, *Reds* has also been described as a biopic (Rosenstein and Parvulescu 2015: 78) or docudrama (Tim Pelan 2017), signalling the film's multi dimensionality and complex narrative structure.

This chapter will critically examine multi-narrative editing strategies in *Reds* in relation to selected aspects of the narrative, supported by the preceding film's breakdowns in Adobe

Premiere Pro. I will also refer to aspects of Eisenstein's aesthetics and their influence, as occasionally seen in some scenes, and I will discuss those within the contrasting system of classical Hollywood continuity style. One of the central parts of the written reflections will be centred around including interviews with Witnesses and how they complicate the layered film's narrative and the question of memory versus history. In the written discussion and the accompanying explanatory video essay, Witnesses will be presented as the guiding elements for structuring the parametered film's breakdown in different timelines to gain more insights about the complex *Reds'* structure, supported by editing choices. Unlike PechaKucha videos in the previous chapter, the videographic research carried out in Adobe Premiere Pro alongside written analysis not only allowed for the inclusion of representative visual samples from my editing software when working with *Reds* but also contributed to the major part of assembling the resulting audiovisual essay. Moreover, the video essay will delve more into technical insights of using Adobe Premiere Pro interface to analyse film editing, presenting tools such as markers and different video tracks and noting the placement of film fragments of interest in the entire film's timeline. While the video essay will mirror some findings presented in the written part of this case study, this videographic exercise is particularly important in the project's journey as it marks my first substantial attempt to visually integrate the practical research process into a piece of audiovisual work.

Restructuring History

Based on Reed's 1919 novel *Ten Days that Shook the World*, which also shares its title with *October* (1927)*, Reds* reconnects with Eisenstein's practice through specific recontextualised effects. Carolyn Porter proposes that 'Eisenstein would have hated it' (Porter 1982: 43) because of the way Beatty presents the relationship between romance and revolution and neutralises the political importance of John Reed to sell *Reds* as a love story. As seen in many of Eisenstein's films, the political conflict is always at the centre of the action, while *Reds* heavily romanticizes the characters' social and political lives. I will not address assumptions about Eisenstein's hypothetical views regarding the film. However, I will argue that the comprehensive timeline breakdown of *Reds* is a key tool to investigate the balance between the film's treatment of love affairs and analysis of historical events.

In *Reds* and *Battleship Potemkin*, we examine different moments of revolution from different political contexts, partly influenced by directorial aims that significantly differed due to the time of making the films, creative motivation and target audience. *Potemkin* was ordered

by the commemorative Commission of the Central Executive Committee to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the First Russian Revolution (Radunovic 2017: 5). Sergei Eisenstein, who was not yet well-known by the public, was chosen to direct it. On the contrary, *Reds* was Beatty's long-awaited passion project, which he started working on in the early 1960s after being complimented on his resemblance with Reed (Quart and Auster 2018: 143). When making the film, Beatty was a well-established professional in Hollywood, and his star power was a considerable advantage when securing the funding. The film was eventually released in the middle of geopolitical tension and heightened anti-Soviet rhetoric in the US.

Unlike *Battleship Potemkin* or *October*, *Reds* is not a politically revolutionary film in the direct sense. The film celebrates revolutions already made in cinema, and one can witness the influence of Eisenstein's visual style and impact in certain instances. These include frequent scenes with epic masses (fig. 3.1), such as in the political rallies in America, ten days in Petrograd or the battle on the Baku line, and moments with Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, which contribute to the epic feel of *Reds* and form a convincing image of people actively engaging in the historical process.

Fig. 3.1: Masses of people on Petrograd streets

John Reed and Louise Bryant attend Bolshevik demonstrations in a series of shots and listen to Lenin's speeches to the workers (fig. 3.2). The visual elements, setting, and rhythm of these scenes in *Reds* are similar to those in *October*, with the public and party members sitting at the table framed in establishing shots and the speaker behind the tribune addressing them, as well as massive chandeliers and signs with Bolshevik slogans in the background (fig. 3.3). Following Lenin's speech, the film cuts back to the public to see their reaction. Forbes and Street argue that depicting the masses as 'supportive of their leaders and agitators is an important feature in Soviet films of the 1920s' (2017: 57). In *October*, mass movements and collective action embody the spirit of revolution and even if some expressive faces are seen, Eisenstein emphasises juxtaposing shot movements rather than psychological motivation

behind the chosen characters. On the contrary, in *Reds*, the importance of characters is emphasised by frequent cuts to Bryant and Reed amongst the listeners in a medium framing.
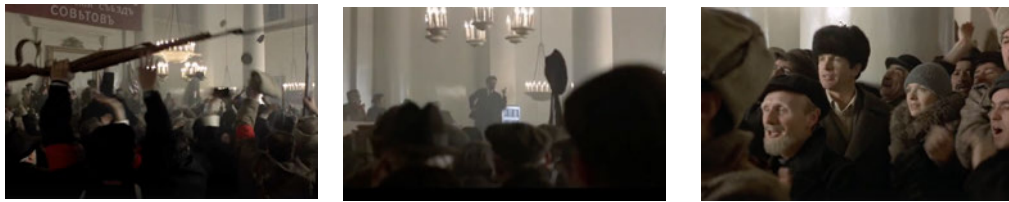
Fig. 3.2: Reed and Bryant attending the demonstrations and listening to Bolsheviks' speeches

Fig. 3.3: A mass scene in October, which depicts the Mensheviks' session of Congress

An essential reference to Eisenstein's rhythmic montage can be observed in the train station scene set in Russia. The area is covered with the bodies of dying soldiers. The camera pushes towards the crowd as anxious Bryant looks for Reed. Then, the film cuts between Bryant's point of view and dynamic shots of the camera following her. The tension is emphasised by people constantly bumping into Bryant while Reed is not emerging from the train. The editing rhythm matches the action of frantic Bryant's movement and its screen direction. Bryant notices a broken window and sees a covered dead body, assuming it is Reed. The pacing in this scene creates emotional density around Bryant's character. It makes the unexpected moment of reunion more significant and climactic, proving that Bryant's struggle with her relationship with Reed is genuine and sincere.

Reds' connection with Eisenstein is apparent to viewers familiar with film history. However, it also demonstrates a unique approach to Hollywood style that remains within the stable and identified dramatic space between scenes while offering *montage condensation*[9] that dominates its editing design (Grindon 1994: 206). *Reds* uses thematic variations, flexible temporal and spatial shot linkage and principal attention to characters and their development

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[9] According to Grindon, montage condensation is characterized by deploying an unrestricted dramatic field that condenses time and links spaces in elastic parallels and juxtapositions (1994: 205).

by introducing a provocative historical device – the Witnesses – which undermines the cluster effect of memory reflected in the editing approach.

Witnesses to Truth

Compared to other major Hollywood releases of 1981, such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg) and *On Golden Pond* (Mark Rydell), *Reds* takes an unfamiliar and challenging approach to its narrative design. *Reds* opens with unnamed Witnesses, elderly men and women who were Reed's contemporaries, speaking in close up against a black background; they reappear at different points across the film sharing their recollections of events, or commenting on the challenges of remembering accurately. Witnesses appear as talking heads: we see their brightly lit faces against the black background (one can imagine how enormous those faces would be on the big screen). They are so close to us that we can see dandruff on one of the witnesses' jackets. The on-screen presentation of Witnesses is not the most flattering; they do not always seem to look at the person off-screen and are not given on-screen questions to answer, establishing a particular rhetoric about truth-telling. The spontaneous nature of Witnesses creates the contradiction between personal histories and the real past, as 'whereas the historian can weigh the quality of data, the lack of identification keeps film viewers from doing so' (Grindon 1994: 219).

There is still much debate on the credibility of the Witnesses' comments and their inclusion in the film as a documentary-style counterpart, as *Reds* even begins with one of the participants talking about the unreliability of memory and its mistakes and tricks. On the one hand, including Witnesses can be seen a provocative element of the production, especially regarding historical authenticity. Witnesses comment on a variety of topics, including politics, sex and relationships. However, their participation in the story can be questioned because not all of them knew Bryant and Reed in person, and they are often quite vague and forgetful, which troubles the implication of their comments. This can be slightly concerning when using the interviews as the *Reds'* historical framework. On the other hand, as memories are irregular, the viewer can understand from the interviews that nobody knows the truth about Reed and Bryant's relationship. They can only perform as individuals of that era to enlighten and entertain the audience, and as a juxtaposition to dramatised film's material, they give the spectators information regarding the time, place and circumstances of the events presented in the story.

The first witness starts her testimonial after the opening credits. Hugo Gellert, a Hungarian-American illustrator and muralist, is the last witness on-screen. Throughout *Reds*, I counted 25 different Witnesses (out of 32 cast members listed in the opening credits) who make 66 comments. Each witness usually appears one to three times during the film; Scoot Nearing, Roger Baldwin Weinstone, and Henry Miller are the participants seen most frequently.

The choice to omit certain Witnesses listed in the credits makes us question the filmmakers' rationale when including testimonies in the film. Grindon suggests that 'some of those omitted are striking because of their familiarity with the events portrayed' (1993: 86). For instance, Andrew Dasburg was a former lover of Bryant introduced to her by Reed and, in the context of the romance storyline in *Reds,* he could offer important insights into the Reed-Bryant relationship. Grindon argues, therefore, that such intentional omission of Dasburg from *Reds* 'provokes speculation as to what he reported to the filmmakers' (1993: 86). The insights Dasburg shared could have been conflicting with the script and the development of the love storyline, but he also could have revealed some scandalous and provocative information. This observation signals that Witnesses' testimonials in the film are not necessarily truthful, direct and complete, and rather than guiding the development of the film, it was the filmmakers determining what testimonials to include and when. The Witnesses are deployed in three different ways:

1. As a counterpoint to the story (e.g. by creating a strong contrast with the mise-en-scène and emphasizing the chaos of mass groups)
2. To comment on the story (e.g. when giving their comments on love affairs, including those that never happened)
3. As a justification for artistic choices (e.g. the black abstract surrounding of Witnesses is presented as a stark contrast to highly detailed settings of the period drama)

Because of their age and rich experiences, witnesses evoke questions of mortality and memory. Robert Rosenstone, a historian and an author of a book about John Reed, writes that:

> On the surface the Witnesses are an impressive bunch – winning, humorous, informative, and often forceful as they present alternate versions of the same events. But often they are vague, forgetful, and self-contradictory. (Rosenstone 1982: 300)

The witnesses raise questions about how well we can remember history, as they often cannot recall whether certain things happened. Therefore, one of the main characteristics of Witnesses

and their interaction with the drama is creating a juxtaposition between memory and history. There is no link between Witnesses' names in the credits and the order they appear in the film – they are neither organized chronologically nor in order of their popularity and star-quality. Despite omitting their names on-screen, Witnesses introduce film's dramatised material, therefore, having a certain degree of authority over the narrative. The absence of Witnesses' names allows for their equality, transforming them into one Greek choir/ collective voice representing popular wisdom (Grindon 1994: 214). In *Movies as Politics*, Jonathan Rosenbaum agrees that identifying the Witnesses could have positively affected the viewers and their film experience. However, Rosenbaum also suggests that important strategic and aesthetic factors led to leaving their names off the screen:

> Surely the fact that some participants are well known (Rebecca West, Will Durant) while others are not (acquaintances of Reed and Bryant in Portland) is less important than the democratic equality their anonymity grants them: they are here dialectically, as real contemporaries of the fictionalized characters, not as stars. (Rosenbaum 2023: 111)

One of Rosenstone's main critiques considers the ambivalence of *Reds* in restructuring history, and he especially challenges Reed's love life put at the central film's stage:

> In Reed's case this is particularly problematic, for in his single autobiographical effort, written only for himself, he devotes only a couple of sentences in thirty pages to all his lovers, including Louise […] The underlying conflict of the real John Reed – which was not the struggle between love and revolution, but between the demands of an ambitious self and those of a market economy – still very much exists today. (Rosenstone 1982: 309)

One has to admit, however, that the film's attention to Witnesses and Louise Bryant outside of what Reed might have written in this book, presents *Reds* as the story about revolution in which many people were a part. The exploration of thematic balance in Reds, as well as the appearance of Witnesses in the fiction world, can suggest the range of creative options and decisions in how multi-narrative film material was structured in *Reds,* as well as analysing how these techniques were used in different narrative layers of the film. The following section, therefore, seeks to determine informational and aesthetic possibilities of intercutting between documentary-style inclusions of *Witnesses* and fictional scenes. How does this Hollywood recreation dramatise the words of the Witnesses, and how do they complicate the Hollywood story?

Multi-narrative Strands & Timeline Breakdowns

The initial inquiry into the editing of this film would be incomplete without identifying its underlying structures. Considering various related events, locations, and characters, my primary methodological approach is based on the film's disassembly in the non-linear editing programme Adobe Premiere Pro. In this, I am inspired by Kevin B. Lee who recorded his desktop and used Final Cut Pro as an analytical tool to break down Hong Sang-soo's *The Day He Arrives* (2011) into tracks, before arranging them in ways which group different patterns in the film's structure. (fig. 3.4). This approach foregrounded Hong Sang-soo's distinctive method of parallelism that utilises various forms of repetition, and found an appropriately reflexive form in which to do so.
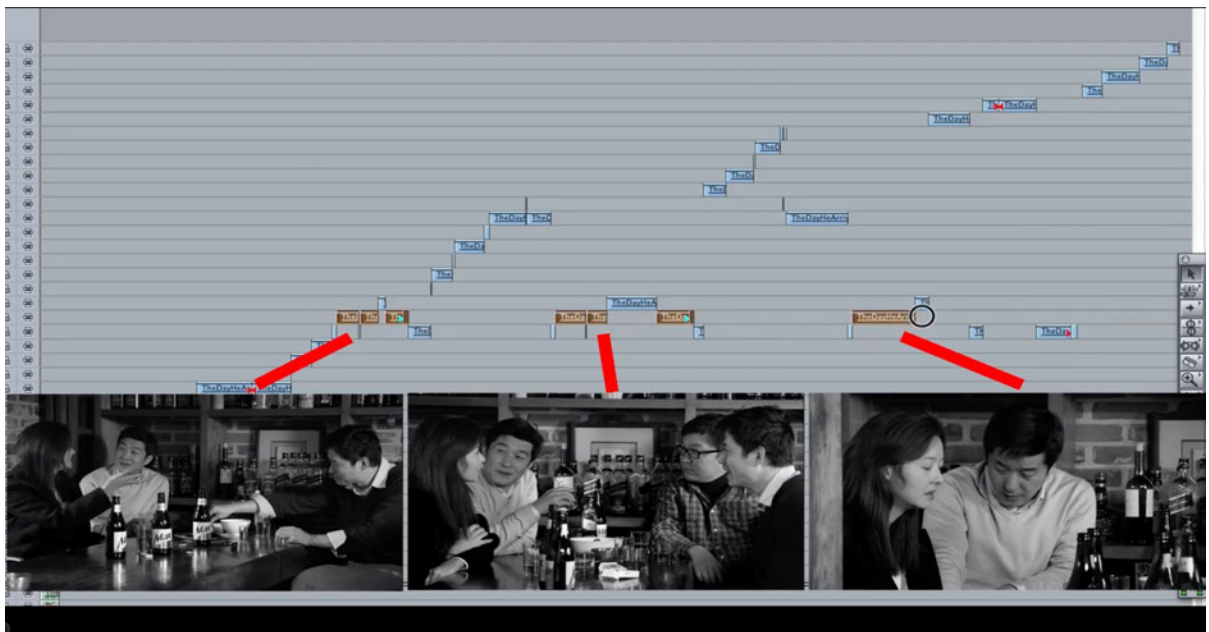
Fig. 3.4: Screenshot of 'Viewing Between the Lines: Hong Sang-Soo's The Day He Arrives', by Kevin B Lee (2012)

Another of Lee's work, 'Who Deserves the 2014 Oscar for Best Lead Actress' (2014), presents a more meticulous breakdown of the film (fig. 3.5) to analyse the proportions of screen time that the actress's breathing and disembodied voice occupy in *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón 2013).

Fig. 3.5: Screen capture of Lee's video-editing interface, which demonstrates the parameter-based breakdown of Gravity into separate fragments

Lee's analysis is a notable example of exploiting the digital features of editing software for academic research, reaching beyond a straightforward explanatory mode. In this way, a scholar can combine both exploratory and argumentative criticism to demonstrate the analytical findings taken from films (Kiss and van Den Berg 2016).

Peter F. Parshall examines multi-layered film narratives in his *Altman and After: Multiple Narratives in Film* (2012), in which he focuses on the potential of complex storytelling and what he terms the narrative revolution of the 90s. Parshall makes various references to editing throughout the book, predominantly to emphasise its expressive, disjunctive and frenetic characteristics in the chosen film case studies. For instance, in his analysis of the 2000 South Korean erotic comedy-drama *Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (Hong Sang-soo), Parshall notes that the sense of dislocation is increased by the disjunctive editing, which also disjoins unified space and time (Parshall 2012: 166). Within the framework of nested narratives, Parshall often finds that not only is editing more noticeable when compared to the continuity system but it helps characters develop, shift between old and new realities, and intensify the audience's experience of action. This observation becomes another crucial entry point in my exploration of how editing strategies facilitate the flow between layers of political and personal domains.

As a film editor, I analysed *Reds* to investigate how its vast and complex combination of material was edited. To closely explore editing techniques and patterns in the film, I imported the entire film into Adobe Premiere Pro. I created timelines to foreground different categories such as thematic, geographical, characters, and narrative form. With the entire film imported into the software, I separated shots and sequences based on these criteria and moved the segments up and down video layers. For instance, Figure 3.6 shows the first timeline disassembly I performed, which aimed to examine the ratio between the dramatised scenes (video track V1) and the appearances of the Witnesses (video track V2).
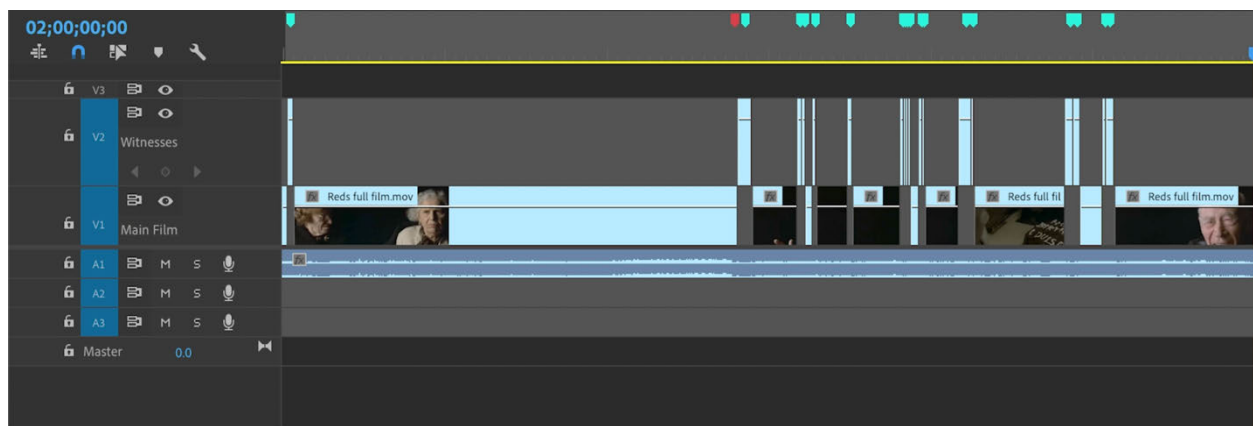
Fig. 3.6: A sample of disassembling the timeline of Reds

Some Witnesses' testimonials appear in clusters, so I also made cuts between each individual (or pair, in the case of Russell and West). The longest testimonies are at the film's beginning, with the largest member grouping with 13 people. Generally, one to four Witnesses make up a cluster. Out of all the participants, only Dora Russell (British feminist and social campaigner) and Rebecca West (British author and journalist) are filmed together; all other Witnesses are presented individually. One of the film's segments with the highest concentration of Witnesses is after the intermission, following Reed and Bryant's return to America from Russia. Before the intermission, the film cuts to individual or clusters of Witnesses 20 times. In contrast, *Reds* cuts to their testimonials 16 times in the film's second part.

The way Witnesses' appearances are distributed is somewhat asymmetric across the film's 195 minutes running time. For instance, we can see from the timeline (fig. 3.7) that in the first hour and a half, more extended clusters of testimonies are shown on average 20 minutes apart.
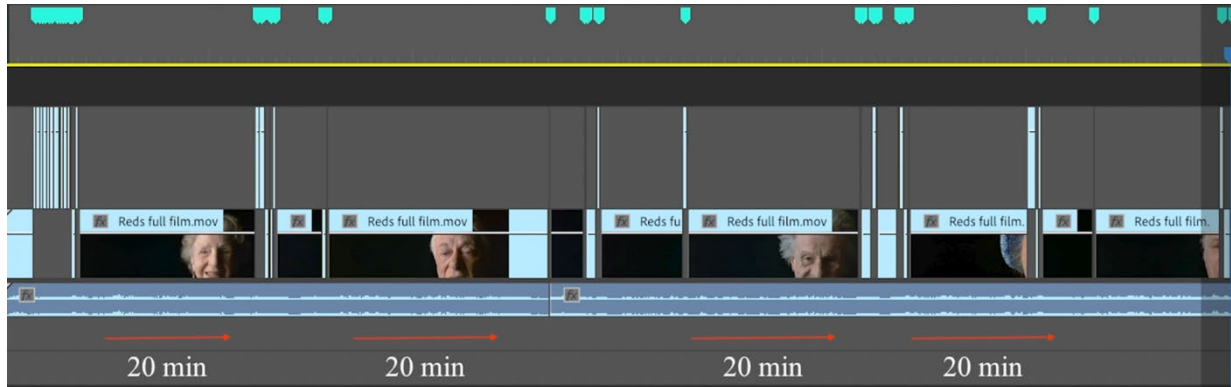
Fig. 3.7: The distribution of Witnesses in the first part of Reds

After the intermission, the first shot features Dora Russell, and within the next 11 minutes, *Reds* cuts back to talking heads eight times. Witnesses' testimonials are being used as the historical framework of *Reds*, and, as Grindon rightly notes:

> In addition the documentary authority of the device implies that although elements of the drama may be fabricated the essential truth has been retained. (Grindon 1993: 90)

In *Reds*, the dramatic sections are counterpointed by the witness testimonies (suggesting a form of dialectic), and because of the fallibility of the witnesses, and their conflicting recollections, their presence also invites us to critically question the dramatic material.

The tension between political action and personal life is a central issue of *Reds*. My second *Reds* disassembly (fig. 3.8), therefore, concerns the characters and their relationship to the major historical events pictured in the film. I moved all shots and scenes with John Reed to the V2 layer, moments with Louise Bryant to the V3 layer, film fragments that feature both lovers to the V4 track, and Witnesses testimonials remained on track V5.
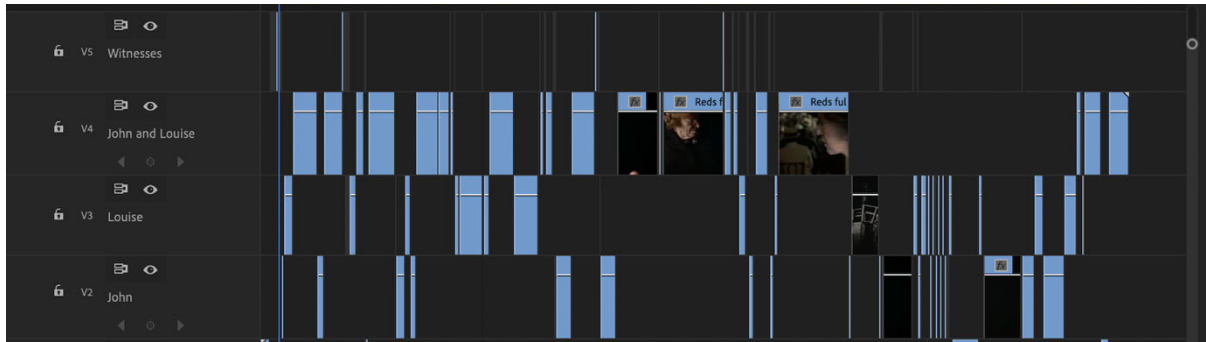
Fig. 3.8: Character-based timeline disassembly in Reds.

The love storyline between Bryant and Reed starts around 15 minutes into the film and continues to be a dominant narrative element until the end. Witnesses frame the beginning and end of the characters' first encounter – we see new faces suggesting new beginnings in the narrative. Moreover, the inclusion of Witnesses later becomes a transition in location and time, for example, as Bryant moves to New York (fig. 3.9)

Fig. 3.9: Witnesses often serve as a transition tool between different geographical locations

The film frequently switches from shots of Bryant to Witnesses' testimonials, especially from her medium reaction shots. This is not to say we are supposed to endorse Bryant's thoughts in some of these moments – even though we are ending the scene on her reaction, this can be countered by what the witnesses say. For instance, the shots in Figure 3.9 above are a part of the scene in which Bryant asks Reed about her status with him once she is in New York. She says, "I don't want to get in some kind of emotional possessive involvement, where I'm not able to…I wanna know, what as?" to which Reed responds "It's nearly Thanksgiving. Why don't you come as a turkey?", and the film cuts back to Bryant's medium close-up. In the next shot with Russell and West, West says, "I would have thought she was a very honest girl, who went away with probably the dentist [who] knew nothing except about the teeth…And then she had this wonderful journalist who could talk about all sorts of things". The comment sounds somewhat ironic in the light of Reed's lines in the previous scene. However, this juxtaposition between the gossip-like testimonial and the dramatised scene

between the two lovers offers a significant dynamic in Bryant's character development, who was already burnt by her failed marriage and scared to lose her independence but whose notion of freedom within a relationship gradually matures.

The film's breakdown findings suggest that Bryant is no less important than Reed (Table 3.1). Before the intermission, most of the screen time is occupied by scenes with both characters. However, scenes that feature Bryant are only slightly longer than those with Reed, and the film cuts to her more often.

Throughout *Reds*, Witnesses comment and gossip about Reed and Bryant, and their testimonies are generally shown around scenes where both lovers appear. After the intermission, a few segments feature the couple such as them at the U.S. customs in New York in 1918 or at the Socialist Convention in Chicago in 1919, but Reed appears on screen more often and for a longer time than Bryant.

Characters	Before Intermission			After Intermission		
	Cut to	Cut from	Total cuts	Cut to	Cut from	Total cuts
Louise Bryant	7	7	14	4	4	8
John Reed	4	6	10	5	5	10
Louise Bryant and John Reed	3	4	7	2	5	7

Table 3.1: The overview of instances when Reds cuts to and from shots of Bryant and Reed

The visual emphasis on Bryant and Reed's love story also becomes a framing device in marking the intermission and the film's end. The first part of *Reds*, which concludes with an 'Internationale' montage sequence, ends with silhouettes of Bryant and Reed kissing before the title 'Intermission' appears on screen. The film ends with a medium shot of Bryant crying next to the dead Reed through the door frame, which aligns with the film's concept of looking at the narrative beyond politics and placing the relationship between the two protagonists at the story's heart. The repeating pattern of seeing Bryant and Reed together gives the film its dramatic shape and human scale.

Although the personal romance is a prominent storyline, it is often framed within the context of political and social events. From time to time, Bryant and Reed fill the screen with their presence, but the film almost immediately cuts to a witness or one of the political scenes. Witnesses become critical in representing public opinion on the conflict and visually and aurally enrich the drama. Witnesses comment on the personal qualities of the characters, such as Rebecca West calling Bryant a "very honest girl" or Will Weinstone saying that Reed was a "nice, quiet fella", and they also provide essential information on time, locations, and circumstances of the events. For example, after the scene when government agents notify Bryant of a warrant for Reed's arrest on sedition charges, Isaac Don Levine explains that "In 1919, there were no more than four or five Americans who got into Russia because the country was surrounded on all sides" and Dora Russell adds "We were actually forbidden to go, you could only go illegally. It was very dangerous to go through Finland, because the Finns were white government, and they were bitterly opposed to the Reds".

The third timeline breakdown of the film illustrates the division between witnesses and personal and political events (fig. 3.10), which helps to understand how the film achieves poignant intimacy on a character level within a bigger cinematic scope. The image below shows a screenshot from Adobe Premiere Pro with a timeline of *Reds* divided into three video layers (V2, V3 and V4), with film manually cut into segments. To find out the ratio between love and political context in the film, I moved all scenes and sequences that have a personal insight into the lives of Reed, Bryant, and other characters to a 'personal' video track (V2), while segments that seek to recreate the historical period and feature political topics were added to 'political' layer (V3). The top layer (V4) features all appearances of Witnesses. Even though this is quite a rough division, it is helpful for the current discussion as it emphasises the most common criteria for comparing film narratives and assists in understanding which perspective witnesses comment on most frequently.
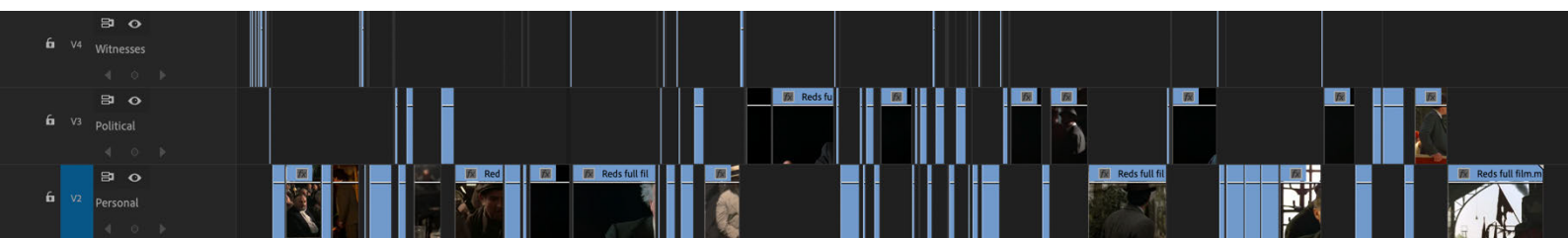
Fig. 3.10: The thematical breakdown of Reds

The strength of *Reds'* historical treatment is its understanding that personal affairs are not necessarily private and that individuals create political forces. No matter where we stop in

the story, personal and political accounts belong to the same realms. Political scenes are spread throughout the narrative to serve as the story's historical basis and allow parallel storylines to develop conflicts without dominating the script. With regards to the personal development of characters, political scenes are crucial, as Reed used wars and revolutions as his raw material to commit to political and social changes.

Even though some debates on *Reds* claim that political scenes in the film are too heavy for the audience to 'chew' (Variety 1980) and involve much unnecessary noise (Hatch 2008), my timeline breakdown proves that the film is, in fact, not overloaded with political sequences. They are sometimes longer than romantic scenes and feature long takes with slow-paced editing. However, their primary function remains to determine different historical events one from the other and provide critical narrative information about them.

The film's action takes Reed to Russia, Portland, Greenwich Village, missions to Moscow, and debates in New York. However, scenes that include and are not limited to love affairs, friendships, relationships, or personal issues are longer and more frequent than their political counterparts. Noteworthy is the asymmetric relationship between these two types of scenes at the beginning and the end of *Reds*. The film's opening immediately introduces the viewers to the characters. At the same time, it establishes the historical and political background through the dynamics of their relationships. Here, the prevalence of the personal element in the film over political scenes is the most obvious. The ratio between narrative types towards the end slightly changes, and during the last hour of *Reds*, the political scenes become longer and intercut with the personal segments more frequently.

The most frequent intercutting between two layers occurs in the middle of the film, on both sides of the intermission, and especially in the 'Internationale*'* montage fragment. As the film reaches its climax, and the viewers become well acquainted with the characters and more aware of the historical events, *Reds* comes closest to integrating two dimensions in the story, making it almost impossible to separate personal from political. The Witness pattern is also quite similar – most comments are concentrated around personal scenes, while fewer testimonies visually accompany political fragments.

After the intermission, Witnesses often appear in sequences after moments of personal relationships, followed by political fragments. Examples include the scene of Reed visiting Emma Goldman in prison, which is commented upon by Hamilton Fish III and his remarks on deporting 'alien communists' and Hugo Gellert saying, "It was a very healthy atmosphere". We then see Reed in the kitchen cooking a romantic dinner while the voiceover testimonials continue and discuss Reed's involvement with communist history. Another example is the shot

of Bryant in Finland after she is told Bryant had left, followed by West's comment that Bryant was hated because of her extravagance in clothes ("Women whose lives have been in danger over a long period are always the most extravagant" and the following cut to Reed addressing comrades in Russia in front of Zinoviev.

Visual ellipses (fig. 3.11) with motifs and symbolic suggestions are found to be frequently repeated in romance scenes. A memorable example of visual repetition is wide shots at the beach. Bryant walks down the beach, embraced by Reed first and then by O'Neill, seeming to feel perfectly happy and confident with both of them. The images that portray happy couples dressed in beige and white radiate elegance and sexual and private freedom and peace. Another example is the repetition of high-angle shots of Bryant and Reed arriving at home. Bryant does not find him when she moves to New York and enters Reed's flat. Later, we see Reed returning home with a huge bunch of white lilies, and when entering the house, he is framed from the same angle. The framing invites the viewer to connect this shot with the negative emotion contained in the earlier sequence. Reed and Bryant fight in the following fragment.

Fig. 3.11: Visual repetitions in romance scenes

Even though the affair between Bryant and O'Neill takes only several minutes of cinematic time, montage sequences and quick cuts contribute to establishing it as a completely independent storyline. Regarding the characters' relationships, it attributes Bryant's infidelity to Reed's mixed-up priorities, which is also communicated by including a cross-cut with Reed in St. Louis at the Democratic Convention and then back to Bryant and O'Neill in Greenwich Village. Bryant's on-screen romance with O'Neill starts with a short kissing scene, and 'Goodbye for Now' begins to play, sung by a Witness. The sequence cuts back to the couple walking on the beach in the early morning while Reed is working away. O'Neill and Bryant hug in the dunes in bright sunshine, and then we see them naked in the sea at night. Finally, Bryant and O'Neill hug each other in bed, which is the final shot in this montage sequence, as

well as the climax of their relationship. The use of fast-paced editing facilitates the quick progression of this secret romance. The visual assembly is constructed in a way that only reveals what is essential for the audience to comprehend, that Bryant is unfaithful to Reed (fig. 3.12).
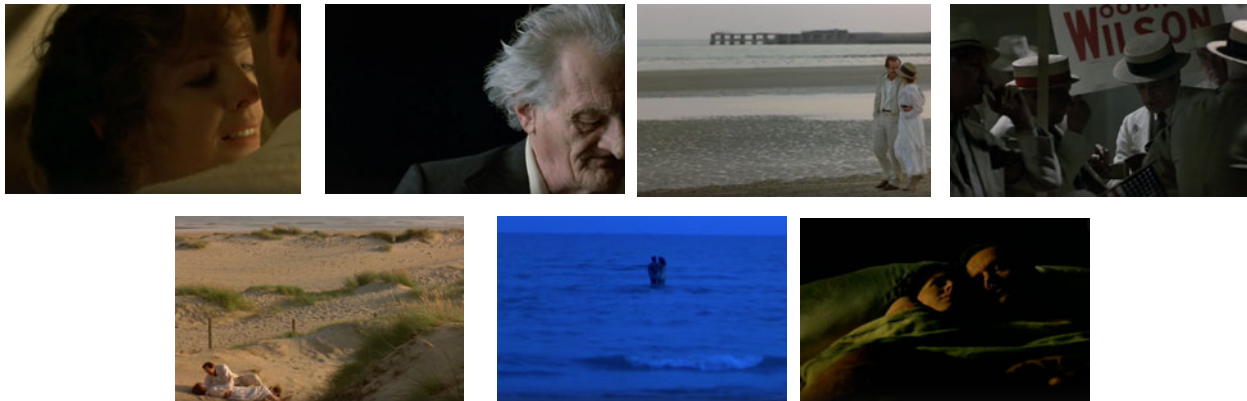
Fig. 3.12: The visual timeline of Bryant and O'Neill's short affair

Grindon notes that 'Reds is a montage film aspiring towards Eisenstein but anchored in the Griffith tradition' (Grindon 1994: 180). Hollywood continuity style in *Reds* is recontextualised and occasionally disrupted by expressive montage techniques, particularly in scenes that displace politics into romantic affairs. For instance, when Reed visits Bryant for the first time and stays overnight to express his political views, the film presents a montage of endless talking and endless cups of coffee (fig. 3.13).

Fig. 3.13: Montage-based coffee sequence

When commenting on the traditional pattern of *Reds* displacing politics into romantic melodrama, Robert B. Ray argues that the action was 'reduced to a few seconds of screen time and punctuated not by the elided political opinions, but by the erotic/ romantic glances' between the aroused and teasing characters (2020: 16). The first sexual encounter is implied,

but we do not see it on screen. Instead, the montage in the scene is more efficient in establishing Reed's passion and persistence through his fast speech – so quick that even Bryant struggles to follow him.

Lastly, I investigated the geographical breakdown of *Reds,* as film events take place in America, Russia, the Middle East, and Europe (France and Finland). In filmmaking, this often poses an additional dimension to the complexity of editing, especially with various locations that can confuse the narrative flow and coherence. Editors frequently employ visual or thematic parallels and use establishing shots to orient viewers in new spaces during geographical shifts in the story. Therefore, the last stage of the film timeline's investigation was its disassembly based on locations, namely, the geographical breakdown of sequences.

The first part of the film before the intermission features events that occurred in America and Russia; it also includes one shot with a ship, which is presumably taking Bryant from America to Europe, and two scenes set in France: one, which has a caption "Paris, 1917" and where we can see Bryant in a café, and another critical fragment, where Reed arrives in France to ask Bryant follow him in Russia. After the intermission, the overseas scenes become more frequent and predominantly developed in Russia. As we can see from the project disassembly, (fig.3.14) most narrative film events are concentrated in America. This directly influences the spread of Witness testimonials, as they appear in American episodes most frequently. Out of all overseas scenes, the film most frequently cuts back to talking heads in Russian scenes, and while American episodes are usually intercut with inclusions of one to four testimonies, events in Russia, the Middle East, and Europe are generally accompanied by one Witness only. For instance, four Witnesses comment on fears of the American Radical movement following Bryant testifying to a Senate subcommittee, while Rebecca West only comments on the scene where Bryant finally arrives in Finland and does not find Reed.
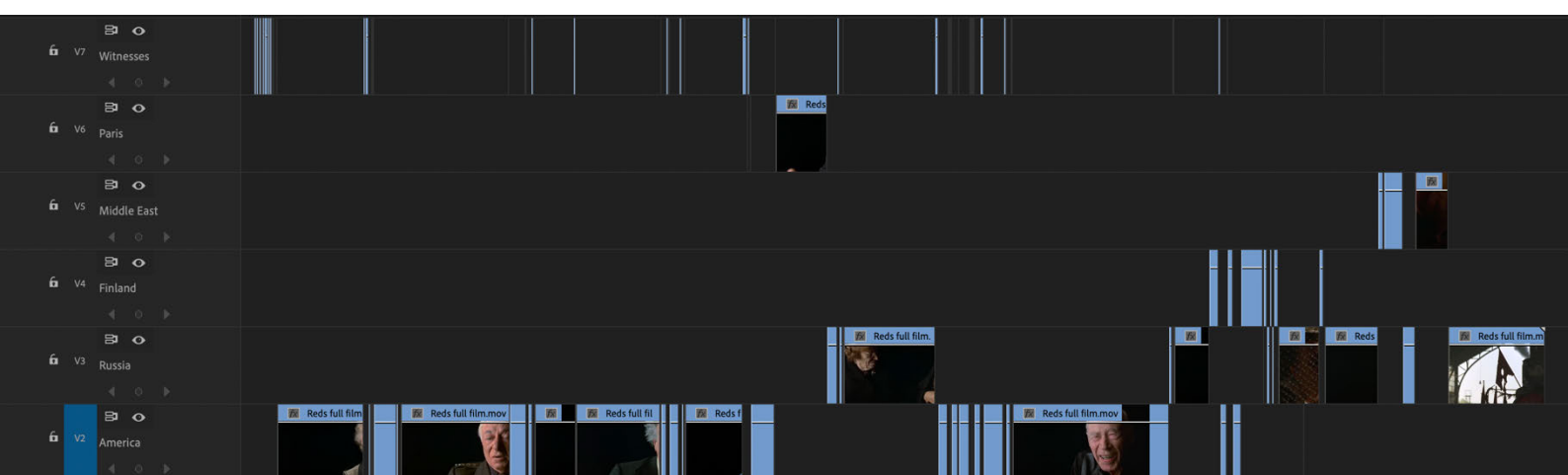
Fig. 3.14: Timeline of geographical breakdown of Reds

Witnesses serve as a key transition tool between different geographical locations. After Bryant leaves Reed, we see two female Witnesses gossiping about love affairs. We then see a wide shot of the ship, followed by Tess Davis remembering her aunt's comment on Bryant's appeal. We finally move to 1917 in France with Bryant, who decided to work as a journalist on the Western Front. When Reed learns from one of his editors that Bryant got fired, Will Weinstone describes the circumstances of the war and gives the numbers of people who became orphans or were wounded. Then *Reds* cuts to France again, where Reed offers Bryant a ticket to St. Petersburg.

Reflections on Videographic Work & Conclusion

The audio-visual analysis of timelines offer a fresh and engaging perspective to evaluate cinematic strategies and essential patterns in a film's structure. In the context of *Reds* and its use of Witnesses as a dialectical counterpoint to representing a particular historical period, it is evident that despite their fallibility, they keep the characters and events alive for the viewer. Technically, including talking heads creates a dispersed texture of meanings, intentions, and cinematic effects that few Hollywood epic films have achieved. The Witnesses make a significant contribution to the dramatised elements of *Reds* and expand the genre range with a complicated pattern of functions in the multi-layered film's narrative, such as: spatiotemporal linkage, collective commentary, personal observations, complication of perspectives, resolving or adding uncertainty. *Reds* is aware of its different narrative conventions and modes, and they productively stand against each other through implementation of editing strategies.

Witnesses become key elements in the montage condensation of *Reds*, namely serving as linking tools to connect disparate events, locations and time periods. The authority of fallible voices of these particular people, which is not a part of the diegetic story world but remains embedded in the construction of the fiction, refreshes the traditional conventions of period drama films (Grindon 1994: 218).

Due to considerations of the film's complexities from the editor's perspective, not limited to the tension between political vision and personal relations, the analysis of *Reds'* construction benefitted from a new research methodology to study of the interactions its elements. The film's breakdown in editing software is a videographic approach that allows for a clear visual representation of its assembly, facilitating a detailed examination of elements of its construction, highlighting shots and scenes of choice and illustrating their interactions.

The shift from written scholarship to the digital space of Adobe Premiere Pro, the most convenient platform for me as a practitioner, opened up opportunities for simultaneously studying multiple film layers but with different areas of emphasis.

Since the central part of positioning videographic analysis of *Reds* was focused on four different three-hour film disassemblies with the following written analysis, the explanatory video essay created as a part of the practical element of this case study was a secondary element of audiovisual research. The main body of the video essay was assembled using selected fragments from *Reds*, on-screen quotes, image collages, GIFs used as attention grabbers and, most notably, screenshots and recordings of my desktop with Adobe Premiere Pro interface. I guided the viewer through different approaches to breaking down the film into elements that I then examined and analysed, which offered an alternative to a written explanation of the workflow itself and the results achieved.

The breakdown of timelines into shots and scenes allowed me to capture the on-screen interactions, patterns, and symmetries while also providing space for instant playback in the same workspace. Rather than attempting to explain the ratio between thematic layers of *Reds* in text through calculations of total minutes or amounts of scenes, I could make cuts in the film's timeline and shift the relevant fragments up and down, creating a visual breakdown that viewers could easily engage with. The computational possibilities of the editing software allowed me to implement data-driven insights into the literary analysis, and the resulting video essay (within the framework of this research) significantly contributed to my exploration of how videographic criticism can creatively reflect upon the source material and present another platform for a digital approach to scholarship. Finally, this case study showed that such a mixture of written analytical and practical approaches could demonstrate how editing tasks and approaches in the film could vary depending on the narrative function, characters and geographic locations, encompassing the opportunity to perform parallel analysis on the same film within one project.

The video essay can be viewed online at https://vimeo.com/910944847/ba0f1938c3

Chapter 4: *All I Desire*: the Affordances of Videographic Approaches to Deal Analytically with Functions of Editing Transitions

In the previous chapter on Warren Beatty's *Reds*, the audiovisual criticism demonstrated the script-based, voiceover-led approach, which resulted in a complex assembly of selected film scenes, Adobe Premiere Pro workspace recordings, timeline screenshots, animated GIFs, collages, and data collection tables. This method proved especially effective when analysing multi-narrative editing structures and disassembling the film into thematic layers. I will continue the investigation with the critical exploration of editing practices, emphasising coherent and continuous narrative flow, which uses more expressive techniques than simple cuts. This case study on Douglas Sirk's domestic melodrama *All I Desire* (1953) will deal with the affordances of videographic approaches to examine functions and effects of editing transitions - in particular, dissolves and fades to and from black.

This hybrid chapter will present different written research components, including a primary background study of film editing transitions and their application within the tradition of Hollywood studio editing, a more extensive exploration of forms of videographic criticism (poetic mode, in particular), table-based analysis of fades and dissolves used in the film, as well as additional observations on selected editing strategies related to establishing narrative connections between the characters that I had not discussed in video essays. As a practice-as-research element of this case study, I will present three videographic works arguing about editing strategies in *All I Desire* in different ways: a supercut, an explanatory video essay and a videographic work that demonstrates editing experiments. The major section of this written case study will be dedicated to reflections on the supercut, as it is a videographic form I have not previously explored for editing analysis. In terms of the research process, the assembly of supercut formed the basis of further critical analysis of editing, developed in both written and practical parts of the study, even though it can also be viewed as the final output of my attempts to engage with a poetic form of videographic essays. The explanatory video essay uses a structure similar to that demonstrated in the previous discussion of *Reds*, in which the film's deformation in the editing software is presented on-screen when reflecting on the critical engagement with the film. The chapter will also include a written analysis of observations presented in the extended explanatory video essay and my reflections on the videographic process. The third audiovisual essay demonstrates three editing experiments with the original film's material to observe the effects of replacing fades with dissolves with simple cuts and reassembling a scene using dissolves instead of simple cuts. While I refer to the experience of

re-cutting some parts of the film in the chapter, the video can be enjoyed as a stand-alone extension to the written scholarly analysis.

All I Desire was edited by Milton Carruth, a member of the American Cinema Editors,[10] whose editing filmography features around 129 films. His notable editing credits include Alfred Hitchcock's 1943 *Shadow of Doubt*, *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon 1959), and the popular Douglas Sirk's drama *Imitation of Life* (1959). As my research concerns the question of editing being perceived as hidden art, it is worth mentioning that Milton Carruth is an important but neglected figure in the scholarly research, especially considering his contribution to the cinematic world and his entire career at Universal Pictures.

All I Desire tells the story of Vaudeville actress Naomi (Barbara Stanwyck), who returns to Riverdale to her husband (Richard Carlson) and children she abandoned years before. Naomi was having an affair with Dutch (Lyle Bettger) and left the family to avoid the scandal. However, she decided to attend her daughter Lily's (Lori Nelson) High School play, which made people gossip again.

All I Desire, similar to *Reds*, incorporates a love triangle into its narrative but in a different context: the film's mise-en-scène is more stage-like than naturalistic, consistently conveying a sense of theatre throughout the dramatic action and character portrayal. The narrative triangles in the film also consider complex choices that the protagonist has to make between love, career and family life, in which the mother is positioned against two daughters and one son, all with conflicting motivations. Sirk suggested that his film 'underscored the transition from theatre to cinema' (Sirk quoted in Evans 2017: 15), and Rabourdin remarked that 'the house [in *All I Desire*] is filmed [just] like a theatre' (Rabourdin quoted in Evans 2017:15). While various forms of performance are a part of the broader narrative world of *All I Desire*, editing – through transitions, rhythms, sound design and juxtaposition of shots emphatically dramatises the relationships of characters and also shapes our attitudes to the characters and events they go through.

Editing techniques, particularly dissolves and fades to and from black, are less frequently reviewed by critics and scholars when discussing the cinematic choices in *All I Desire*. Available literature on *All I Desire* predominantly discusses various elements of the drama, including studies on Douglas Sirk's aesthetics (Evans 2017), analysis of Barbara Stanwyck's acting (Fischer 1999), and the issues of love, class, and social criticism (Perkins 1993, Walker 1999). While not editing-related, these topics are essential in guiding my

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[10] An honorary society of motion picture editors founded in 1950.

arguments as I explore how transitions take the viewer from one place to another and establish meaningful narrative connections. In this chapter, I will explore the creative and technical reasons for choosing dissolves and fades rather than simple cuts. I will also apply a critically focused thinking about what editors can achieve by going for editing transitions at specific points.

Editing Transitions in *All I Desire*

To begin the detailed analysis of editing transitions in *All I* Desire, it is first essential to situate the primary functions of dissolves and fades. The dissolve is one of the earliest editing techniques, during which the first image begins to disappear as the second image begins to appear. The time the two images are blended in superimposition can influence the effect of the dissolve. Traditionally, the function of the dissolve is to facilitate the transition from one place to another or from one time to another. In Edward Dmytryk's view, the Hollywood editing style utilized dissolves as the 'time machine', but it could also serve as a more sophisticated method to manipulate pace and mood (1984: 83-84). David Bordwell notes that 'the dissolve, the most common indication of duration, affords us an instructive example of how classical narration does its temporal work ' (1985: 47). Other references to scholarship in the field, such as Barry Salt, suggest that the meaning of editing transitions can be ambiguous. He argues that dissolves have also often been used for indicating transitions into dreams, flashbacks, as alternative cuts going in a parallel action, as bridge transitions (such as joining exterior with interior) (Salt 2009: 92), for smoothing visual mismatches (2009: 183), or to construct a classical montage sequence (2009: 195).

Another frequently used editing technique in *All I Desire* is the fade to and fade from black (traditionally also called fade-out and fade-in, or dip to black). Fade is an effective transition for ending scenes and is most frequently used to close out narrative acts. On an emotional level, a fade can also provide a moment of relief after a climax in a scene (Fourie 2001: 39). The effect achieved by a fade compared to a dissolve is more dramatic as it indicates the visual interruption, so it is the film language equivalent of a comma or period (Wohl 2002: 65). A fade signifies that cinematic time continues within the narrative world, even if the audience can not see it on screen.

It is not surprising that a Hollywood film from the 1950s studio era would have such a feature like editing transitions. The data gathered by Carey (table 4.1) shows that in this period, approximately 66% of all single-element transitions in the sample employed a dissolve, with

occasional use of the fade (13%). Even though Carey's sample was relatively small and only analysed 36 Hollywood films, the study signifies the importance of dissolves across the decades in supporting the continuous narrative flow of cinema at that time.

	Fade *% (N)	Dissolve	Wipe	Cut	Focus
1930s	46	44	9	1	0
1940s	27	64	5	3	0
1950s	13	66	0	21	0
1960s	3	38	0	58	1

Table 4.1: Single-element transitions used by filmmakers in American films (adapted from Carey 1974: 46)

In the editors' community, dissolves and fades are frequently seen as lazy filmmaking tools to overcome tricky editing problems. There is an old saying that goes, 'If you can't solve it, dissolve it' (I heard it for the first time during the first week of my film studies degree in an editing suite), which suggests that transitions can be helpful in cases when there is no other way to deal with continuity errors (Shaner 2011: 8-17). From the perspective of a VFX compositor, the use of dissolves and the related changes in opacity or exposure of elements help to blend scene objects (Gress 2014: 494). When reflecting on working practices, Bowen and Thompson warn the editors to beware of fades to black:

> A cut to black is a very serious statement in narrative film production. Since it is an abrupt change over from visible picture to full black it carries with it a very dramatic weight, especially when you cut straight out of that black to a new, full picture. In the days of actual emulsion film editing, a cut to black, followed by a cut to picture, was often understood to mean that a shot was "missing" from the current work print. (2012: 143)

On the other hand, Wohl rightly observes that on the most basic level, a fade to black is organic and familiar as it is a natural transition that occurs to all of us every day when we close our eyes to sleep (2002: 66). With the wide range of affordances, reasons, and functions of dissolves and fades, my note on their frequency in *All I Desire* expanded to identifying all transitions and their context and evaluating the degree of their technical or expressive applications.

Practice-as-research Part of the Case Study

Christian Keathley notes that although most video essays are still language-based, voiceovers should be viewed cautiously. Keathley argues that while explanatory voiceover accompanied by illustrative clips supports the clarity of the argument, it can also result in 'visually deadened work' (2019). Moreover, voiceover can lead to associations with the typical academic lecture and, if not used efficiently, make the viewers question if they want to keep listening to the speaker. Ian Garwood claims that 'words can never substitute for the experience of seeing and hearing the material being described'(2021). My previous analysis of *Reds* was accompanied by extensive voiceover commentary as it explored editing techniques and patterns on a larger scope, and the narration yet again felt to be the most organic approach to articulate my arguments in the clearest possible way. The case study on *All I Desire* demonstrated a narrow focus on analysing individual editing transitions and their effects rather than investigating the whole film's structure. Therefore, my exploration of modes of videographic criticism called for experimenting with other forms of audiovisual work. From the editor position, I was more drawn to poetic mode as it allowed for more creative freedom and unexpected discoveries when disassembling, transforming or deforming the film. On the other hand, the researcher's side favoured the explanatory mode because it allowed me to address the viewer directly and use my voice or text titles to advance the argument.

One of the reasons for seeking alternative modes of explanation that would not depend on the voiceover was purely technical. The short duration of fades and dissolves in the film, which generally last between two to four seconds, could not accommodate the length of the spoken argument. By conforming to a poetic mode in the supercut and then continuing the investigation of editing techniques in a narrative-based, more analytical and reflexive piece of videographic criticism, I aimed to demonstrate how video essays find suitable forms to explore particular topics they are engaging with.

When reflecting on the interchangeable use of the terms 'videographic criticism' and 'video essays', Drew Morton acknowledges the essential link between the two but pushes for a broader definition of videographic criticism as 'rumination on moving images through the repurposing of moving image text(s) – with or without voiceover (2017: 131). The practical experiment that reflects my videographic exploration of *All I Desire* is inspired by the poetic video essay technique developed by Catherine Grant.

She writes of her work as follows:

> Through its transformative re-workings, I was able to make some discoveries about the material at the same time as framing a particular audio-visual experience of it. (Grant 2019)

In the 2012 video essay 'Skipping Rope' (2012), Grant demonstrates a videographic assemblage of all the edits in Hitchcock's 1948 *Rope* and adjacent dialogue. The study is driven by D.A.Miller's essay 'Anal Rope' (1990), in which the author claims that 'the technical originality of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* has been so little neglected by serious-minded criticism due to the single-shot technique' (Miller 1990:114). Grant addresses the issue of misdescribing the film's editing and challenges the 'telling' rather than 'showing' in film analysis through her experiment with rituals of excision and transition. She is more concerned with her own 'technicist dream' to simply generate 'an accurate account in motion pictures of the minimalistic editing technique and related shooting practices' (Grant 2012). The videographic assembly consists of ten disguised (i.e., blackened action when changing the camera position) and undisguised cuts, which Grant presents and separates in her video essay.

In another work, 'Dissolves of Passion' (2016), Grant combines slowed-down versions of all dissolves in David Lean's *Brief Encounter* (1945). Grant does not utilize voiceover or on-screen text and relies on reworking and transforming the existing footage to 'make some discoveries about the material at the same time as framing a particular audiovisual experience of it' (Grant 2019).

My approach to sound editing was slightly different than Grant's edit. Even though we both used a non-diegetic soundtrack (I used the opening sequence music and did a five-minute-long remix in Adobe Audition), my main sound layer predominantly consisted of adjacent dialogue and the original soundtrack connected with various types of audio crossfades. While taking some aspects of Grant's video as the model, the supercut does not aim to replicate the process of material thinking that the author went through. While 'Dissolves of Passion' suggests how ambiguous the audiovisual experience of in-between-segments can be, I was more concerned with exploring the varying functions and effects of editing transitions and their relationship with the film characters. Moreover, unlike Grant's videographic research, which produced an individual, self-sufficient piece of work, my supercut was only aimed to be the primary research tool with a creative twist. It was then necessary to explore the patterns created by transitions in the whole film timeline, so I had to look at the initial breakdown with markers closely again. Returning to the entire film length and situating transitions within the complete

narrative has shifted my observation from the scholar's perspective to that of the practitioner's, which suggested more thoughts on editing strategies and resulted in editing experiments to re-imagine some scenes.

My five-minute-long supercut, 'The Fades of Desire,' combines 33 slowed-down editing transitions used in *All I Desire*. This model of videographic work considers digital transformations of moving images and sounds that reflect on their source materials (Mittell 2019:231). This editing experience deforms the original film and compresses the storytelling into the flow of transitions only, allowing the audience to notice elements of character development, shot composition, and pacing. Supercut form is used as a filter through which I explore and demonstrate the potential of this videographic method.

The supercut can be accessed online at https://vimeo.com/910571463/f494328d5c

The video assembly of editing transitions with its corresponding written explanation instead of the voice commentary is a research technique that can enable the critical focus that is harder to achieve in the audiovisual realm. This parameter-based videographic exploration is similar to the Pecha Kucha approach I demonstrated in the *Battleship Potemkin* chapter when creating collective assemblies of montage technique samples. However, the resultant supercut did not follow any strict duration, number of shots or use of music-related restrictions. At the same time, the sole focus on one formal aspect of editing and the chronological inclusion of all related instances of transitions and their repetitions allowed for an original and creative audio-visual experience and also facilitated making discoveries about the film's material that I was able to develop in the written analysis and the longer explanatory video essay.

'The Fades of Desire' Supercut

The first attempt at deforming *All I Desire* in the editing software resulted in a chronological video compilation of all dissolves and fades used in the film. In the initial assembly, all clips were framed thematically with their suggested function (dramatic, change of time, change of location) presented as text titles. Such thematic structuring provided a more critical and systematised point of view. However, the video remained largely observational, and placing labels on each instance of a transition proved to be a somewhat restrictive method that did not allow for any further interpretation of editing strategies.

The draft compilation served as helpful background material for assembling the final video, as I could have all examples of transitions in a clear, organised way. I thought the first assembly of transitions would be the visual illustration of the further written study prior to carrying out a more extensive critical analysis. In this sense, Ian Garwood's understanding of the supercut's role within the scholarly study is beneficial, as he claims that 'they provide compelling evidence of a thorough research process that has uncovered a phenomenon worthy of academic investigation' (2020).

The comprehensive investigation of editing transitions in *All I Desire* began with tracking all dissolves in the film, which then facilitated reviewing their function and *poetics* concerning the storyline and the film's visual style. While the analysis primarily focused on the narrative functions of dissolves and fades, I was further interested in identifying their repetitions and patterns in the film's editing structure. Moreover, I noted occasions where a simple cut would seem to fulfil the storytelling requirements more effectively, as the dissolve did not demonstrate a convincing transitional or narrative function (I present these examples in the video with my editing experiments with *All I Desire*).

Adobe Premiere Pro allows users to change the colour of visual markers to distinguish necessary actions or effects in sequences or clips. To examine the transitions within the broader film's editing strategies, I used visual markers to trace all fades and dissolves on the film's timeline, which proved to be a useful supplementary tool when analysing and describing functions of transitions based on their placement in the film and presented an overview of patterns and repetitions that I later used for more in-depth research. After marking transitions on the timeline, I extracted the selected sequences into a new assembly for organisational purposes. Such visual aids are especially significant in videographic criticism on editing, as, while being perceived as largely invisible, marked film timelines suggest to the viewers the result of tedious assembly with its rationale and specific strategies followed.

Mittell rightly notes that 'working with a video editor allows one to explore the cultural realm of images and sounds computationally, not just shot lengths, proportions, and colour temperatures' (2019:229). The second step of re-working the video essay was re-imagining its audio-visual style. I slowed down the clips of choice that were of much shorter duration than the draft compilation (for a stronger emphasis on transitions and rhythm purposes). I added surround reverb to the original sound for an echo-like theatrical audio effect. Unlike Grant, I decided not to use a tint colour layer over the footage and stick to the original monochrome space. While intuitively cutting shots around the transition, I noticed that most were of similar length, between 8-10 seconds on average. I attribute the sense of rhythm not only to one of the

Einsteinian methods that I often unconsciously use in my work (metric, to be precise) but also to the experience of working on promotional content and adverts – videos which require a high sense of attention and precision in editing to ensure the maintained engagement of audience; an efficient sense of rhythm, consistent sound and visual continuity best achieve this.

The following methodological step was the traditional breakdown of all transitions I noted while reviewing the film in Adobe Premiere Pro (table 4.2), including the transition type (dissolve of fade), characters visible on-screen at the moment of transition taking place, audible dialogue lines and the use of sound (diegetic or non-diegetic, with additional details on sound).

Transition	Characters on-screen	Dialogue	Sound
1. Fade from black	extras	none	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
2. Dissolve	extras	none	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
3. Dissolve	extras	*But I can't say that I'm making an impression on audiences these days*	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
4. Dissolve	Naomi	*What a burgh.. What a burgh!*	ND soundtrack crossfades into another ND soundtrack during the transition
5. Dissolve	Joyce+ Russ	*The lawns their husbands were so proud of.*	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
6. Dissolve	Lena	none	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
7. Dissolve	Sara	none	ND Soundtrack plays throughout transition
8. Dissolve	Dutch, Clem-> Naomi	*What you're gonna do…*	D sound fades into ND Soundtrack during the transition into second shot
9. Dissolve	Henry	none	ND Soundtrack during the transition fades into D sound
10. Dissolve	Naomi	*When she said she knew what she was doing there up on stage, she was right*	ND Soundtrack during the transition fades into D sound
11. Dissolve	Dutch	none	Diegetic sound, no effects
12. Dissolve	Dutch, Naomi, Ted	none	D sound fades into ND soundtrack starts after transition
13. Dissolve	Dutch	none	ND soundtrack crossfades into D soundtrack during the transition
14. Dissolve	Lily	none	D soundtrack fades into D sound during the transition
15. Dissolve	Henry, Dutch	none	D sound, no effects
16. Fade to black	Dutch	none	ND soundtrack plays during the transition
17. Dissolve	Naomi	none	ND soundtrack plays during the transition

18. Dissolve	Naomi	none	ND soundtrack fades into D sound during the transition
19. Dissolve	Lena, Russ	none	ND soundtrack fades into D sound during the transition
20. Dissolve	Lena, Hans, Russ and Joyce (shadows), Naomi	*No... Yes...*	D sound fades into ND soundtrack during the transition
21. Fade to black	Naomi, Henry	*I don't know...*	ND soundtrack plays during the transition
22. Fade from black	Lena, Ted	*Where is everybody?*	D sound, birds chirping
23. Dissolve	Naomi, Henry	none	ND soundtrack plays during the transition, gun shot sound before the dissolve
24. Dissolve	Lena, Naomi	none	ND soundtrack plays during the transition
25. Dissolve	Ted	none	ND soundtrack plays during the transition, intensifies towards the end of dissolve
26. Dissolve	Naomi, Dutch, Ted	none	Naomi's gasp fades into intense ND soundtrack after transition
27. Dissolve	Hans, Ted, Naomi	*Cancel my order*	D sound, no effects
28. Dissolve	Naomi, Russ	none	ND soundtrack fades to silence after transition
29. Dissolve	Russ	none	D sound, no effects
30. Dissolve	Lena, Naomi	*Here are some sandwiches and fruit*	ND soundtrack plays during the transition
31. Dissolve	Naomi, Ted, Dutch	*Of course you're not..*	ND soundtrack fades to D sound, no effects during the transition
32. Dissolve	Henry, Naomi	none	ND soundtrack fades into another ND soundtrack during the transition
33. Fade to black	Henry, Naomi	none	ND soundtrack

Table 4.2: analysis of dissolves and fades used in All I Desire
*ND – non-diegetic, D – diegetic

As seen in the above table, not all instances of an editing transition have adjacent dialogue lines, so when assembling the video, I experimented with the placement of lines playing a few seconds before the transition. Out of 33 transitions identified, only five are accompanied by diegetic sound and no music. Moreover, 11 transitions out of 33 were accompanied by dialogue, and most dissolves and fades were performed on silent character's actions or movements. This made the final audio mix slightly more challenging, as extracting only the spoken character lines was hard. Therefore, I was trying to crossfade the original sound between the clips in the most seamless way possible.

Reflections on Videographic Work & Additional Observations on Editing

One of the advantages of using videographic criticism in this case study is the opportunity to intervene in the film more decisively by replacing some dissolves and seeing what happens when I make my own editing decisions. The explanatory video essay I created for this case study presents an in-depth critical analysis of editing choices and transitions in *All I Desire*. I address a comprehensive overview of dissolves and fades in the broader context of the film's narrative and investigate how editing strategies establish meaningful narrative connections between the characters. The video essay can be viewed online at https://vimeo.com/910584006

The study also introduces an experiment in which I, as scholar-practitioner, take the role of editor in re-imagining a selection of scenes to investigate the effects achieved by replacing transitions with a simple cut. The editing experiment allowed me to think about videographic work and how I could make it playful, turn it into an imaginative game that transformed the original material in new ways, and take pleasure in re-cutting. There was also an opportunity to think of slightly different ways of representing the relationships from a critical point of view. The videographic work can be viewed online at https://vimeo.com/910610762/01a738893

The most exciting experiment from the editor's point of view was re-cutting the voiceover theatre scene with Naomi. My attempt to rearrange the sequence and timing of shots, along with re-structuring the transitions, was not just about having constructed a coherent sense of space and time but also about seeing a more modern perspective on editing, which can achieve a different perception of the scene. This was the instance in which I (both as a viewer and as an editor) expected to see the dissolve due to the theatricality of the dream-like intimate moment of Naomi's closeness with her daughter. The dissolves I introduced to my editing experiments become a more direct way of demonstrating Naomi's past, present, and possible future coexistence. My editing experiment suggests that if a dissolve is not used in the case of temporal work, the moment seems to be significantly drained of its effect. Therefore, I was able to argue and illustrate how effective such small editing techniques can be in various instances.

What also caught my attention about the character's placement during the transitions was the meaningful dissolves with Lena, the housekeeper. She appears during five dissolves and one fade (compared to Naomi's 15 occurrences in dissolves and two in fades) but editing establishes her as a rather important character in the narrative journey. In the following

example, Lena quietly listens to Lily's aspirations of becoming an actress and carries on with her kitchen duties (fig. 4.1),. Then, Lena is left alone in the room, puzzled, after Naomi and Joyce fall out (fig. 4.2). In the following example, Lena advises Hans to wait a little longer for the marriage (fig. 4.3).

Fig. 4.1: *Dissolve on Lena in kitchen*

Fig. 4.2: Dissolve on Lena after the fight

Fig. 4.3: Dissolve on Lena and Hans

In a fade from black that follows, Lena serves breakfast to Ted and wonders where the rest of the family is (fig. 4.4). Prior to the dissolve, we learn that Lena is aware of Naomi's affair with Dutch (which is previously indirectly indicated by her reaction to gunshots), and begs her not to go and meet him (fig. 4.5). At the same time, Naomi replies that she has to stop it once and for all and leaves Lena worried. Finally, the shot at Henry's cabinet with his name card on the

floor dissolves into a wide shot of Naomi carrying her suitcases and Lena running up the stairs with some food prepared for Naomi's travel – she knows that Naomi shot Dutch, yet still fully supports her and performs her duties, as usual (fig. 4.6).

Fig. 4.4: Lena serving breakfast

Fig. 4.5: Lena asking Naomi not to see Dutch

Fig. 4.6: Lena meeting Naomi

At the beginning of the 20th century, over a million women worked in domestic service, and their primary responsibilities included cooking, cleaning, and looking after the children. While some maids are perceived as almost invisible to the family they serve, Lena plays a crucial role in Murdoch's family. The way editing transitions are arranged around Lena's character suggests that Naomi trusts her and that Lena virtually replaces the maternal figure in

the house during Naomi's absence. As Fischer puts it, Lena 'nurtures the theatrical heroine' and occupies the position of 'Scandinavian Mammy' (1999: 140). It is often through Lena's pensive reactions, followed by a dissolve, that the emotional connection with the viewer is established. For example, when Lena sees Naomi leaving the house to meet Dutch, she says, "Naomi, don't go. You can't. Not now!" and Naomi replies, "I'm gonna stop it, once and for all" the camera cuts to disappointed Lena breathing out and leaving the room, helpless. The following dissolve brings a wide shot of a landscape with Naomi rushing in the frame in a horse carriage. The fact that the scene stays on the maid's shot before the transition and allows us to observe her reaction rather than see Naomi suggests that Lena has long been aware of the affair and deeply cares for her and the aftereffects it can have on the whole family. However, Lena is also not fully immersed in Murdoch's life. She has her storyline: the comic interactions with Peterson, whom she is unwilling to marry until the family no longer needs her, add another layer to personal connections.

The visual aspect of assembling shots joined by editing transitions is also enjoyable. It is a standard professional practice to use contrasting shot sizes when switching onto a new scene (closer framings to wide, and vice-versa), as this ensures the most natural and fluid edit perception. The addition of editing transitions also enables a smooth dissolve between shots. However, in the case of transitions analysed in the film, they all feature cutting between shots of contrasting sizes and compositions. Carson Lund's exploration of dissolves in Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* suggests the moment of transition holds a complex dimension and may carry certain subtext. He argues that the mental imprisonment of characters is visually communicated through mise-en-scene and repetitions of window frames, doors, and walls that block characters on either side of the dissolve (Lund 2014).

Sirk's expressionistic use of architecture in his films has also been previously praised by Roger D. McNiven, who suggested that it is

> …geared to conveying the disruption of family integrity. Essentially, it consists in showing family activities or groupings in the depth of the image while framing them by foreground architectural features such as window frames, doorways, mirror frames, screens, railings, etc. The background is this presented as (so as to speak), ontologically distinct from the more "real" foreground space. (1983: 40)

I was, indeed, able to locate several instances of overlays in which the characters were 'peeking through' various architectural structures (fig. 4.7) (besides the great variety of individual shots with stunning visual geometry and very concise use of setting).

Fig. 4.7: Dissolves that feature shots with architectural structures

Staircases also play a vital role in the visual composition of dissolves and fades. Some examples include the fade to black after Henry tells Naomi they had to pay a high price for the moments of fun they had together (fig. 4.8). Naomi storms off, not coping with Henry's cold attitude, and goes upstairs while he tries to stop her and eventually leaves. The ex-partners go in different directions, and the fading to black signifies closure following the long-awaited conversation, yet neither is willing to compromise. The following examples are also interesting: Naomi is going down the stairs (after the breakfast kiss scene), trying to sneak out unnoticed to meet Dutch and end things with him (fig. 4.9). Towards the end of the film, she walks down the stairs again in a long shot, but this time getting ready to leave the family for the second time (fig. 4.10).

Fig. 4.8: Fade to black on staircase after Naomi and Henry's fight

Fig. 4.9: Dissolve on Naomi going down the stairs after the kiss scene

Fig. 4.10: Dissolve on Naomi leaving the house

In both scenes (fig. 4.9 and fig. 4.10), the stairs shots are followed by Naomi's POV. In the first sequence (fig. 4.11), the camera is positioned in the middle of the frame, almost allowing Naomi to walk down the stairs as the influential, majestic figure. The wide, high-angle shot of the room is followed by a medium shot of Naomi looking down in front of the rails – almost like a prisoner behind bars. However, she feels brave and confident in her house, as she has decided to break all ties with Dutch and return to her safe enclosure, as demonstrated by the POV shot's static camera.

Fig. 4.11: Naomi leaving the house to meet with Dutch

In the second example (fig. 4.12), the camera moves much more freely to follow Naomi's interaction with the house. The sequence starts with a low-angle long shot, in which the camera pans from left to right as Naomi walks towards the exit. She then stops, and the panning POV shot traces her eyeline, which stops at the staircase. She may have remembered reading the poem during the party; maybe she recalled the moment Henry told her about the possibility of reconciling. Nevertheless, the brief camera hold on the stairs that appear in the film quite a few times during key scenes signifies Naomi's attachment to Murdoch's house. However, going down may relate to her always being forced out of the family for various reasons. She finally stops by the door, not obstructed by any frames, columns, or rails – could this mean freedom, which Naomi now finds so hard to accept?

Fig. 4.12: Naomi prepares to leave for good

It is also ambiguous to note how the trajectory of Naomi's movement on the stairs indoors (up and down throughout the film) signifies the ever-changing moods and situations within the Murdoch family. On different occasions, we see her, inspired and artistic, run up the stairs to read the poem to the audience, then go to her bedroom, slightly upset as Joyce interrupts the intimate conversation between her and Henry. The very last shot in the film lets the viewer peek through the windows, where Henry and Naomi are seen walking up the stairs, almost in celebration of their reconciliation and in hopes of a brighter future.

Moreover, most dissolve transitions are between indoors and outdoors and often feature wide nature shots. As Naomi sighs, "What a burgh," her medium shot dissolves into a bird's eye view shot of Riverdale, and the curved lane almost embraces her neck like a strap – the beautiful scenery emotionally contrasts with the suffocating effect the town has on Naomi (fig. 4.13a). In another shot, Henry publicly expresses his desire for Naomi to stay with the family longer. Then, the dissolve reveals the outdoor shot of Murdoch's house with Dutch spying on them (fig. 4.13b). Following the shooting, Ted helps his mother to carry Dutch to the horse cart, and in the next shot, they are seen rushing through the valley to get Dutch medical assistance (fig. 4.13c). Finally, as Naomi storms off and the agitated lady in the crowd exclaims, "She shot Dutch Heinemann!", the film dissolves into a cut on movement of Russ arriving at High School and getting off his cart (fig. 4.13d). These examples mark one of the most direct illustrations of society's influence on Murdoch's life, as the characters are constantly exposed to the outer world that follows them almost every step of the way.

Fig. 4.13: Dissolve transitions between indoors and outdoors, which feature wide nature shots

An essential aspect of analysing a film's editing is also considering sonic elements of the assembly and sound bridges, as an exploration of on- and off-screen sound allows us to investigate how it impacts characters and their interactions. In melodramas, there is a stronger emphasis on narrative compressions, intensities, and emotional juxtapositions (Elsaesser in Landy 1991: 76-82). The important juxtaposition between sound and image is best demonstrated in the audiovisual medium compared to written discussion. There are exciting moments in *All I Desire* where the emotional drama is powerfully evoked through picture editing. However, some moments utilise sound in a particularly engaging way. An example is the scene in the school office with Henry and Sara, where he says: "You'll make a wonderful wife to somebody". Before Henry might respond to Sara's evident interest in him in this intimate moment, the train whistle is heard, perhaps below the level of consciousness, reminding him of the broader world that Naomi has travelled into (and it transpires, heralding her return). The sound bridge here is an exciting way the two scenes are brought together dramatically. Another example of the relationship between sonic elements and editing is people resemblance and narrative structures, i.e., interlocking triangles. Some intense moments, such as Dutch firing his gun when Henry and Naomi were about to kiss, effectively bring these

contrasting social and emotional situations into impact. This signal from Dutch that he wishes to see Naomi becomes some sort of sound 'explosion' (Fischer 1999: 140) that reminds her about the past unregulated female desire (Thomas 2001: 46). It is not the signal itself that is scandalous, but rather the secret that it hides.

Conclusion

All I Desire, despite being the third film choice during the course of my PhD, was the point at when I started investigating the academic side of videographic criticism, as well as learning more about the different shapes that video essays can take. The videographic approach used for this case study differed from the one I applied to analysing films in the previous chapters, as I realised my analysis extended into three separate modes, with each requiring a suitable audiovisual form to communicate the findings (voiceover led video essay was not a sufficient tool anymore). I also experimented with other elements of assembling video essays: instead of introducing the elements of a desktop documentary in my visual analysis, I discussed the film timeline in text. I used no voiceover commentary in the supercut. As a result, I allowed my viewers to experience the carefully planned selection of images and sounds rather than let the spoken word manipulate them into understanding the arguments I was making. Keathley emphasises that 'in this way, these videos effectively borrow the power of those qualities that comprise their objects of study. Instead of explaining some critical insight about a film, these videos, at their most effective and inventive, perform it' (2011:182). The statement is very true for interpreting functions that the transitions hold, as their effect mainly depends on two shots only and does not require the analysis of the whole sequence from the beginning.

The 'Fades of Desire' supercut shared an editing discovery that was most effectively realised through the transformation of the film, as well as the juxtaposition of sequences and the accompanying soundtracks. Observing slowed-down versions of clips allows the viewer to better engage with the moment of images dissolving one into another, and effects (often different from the simple time-machine function of dissolves) are perceived on a higher emotional level. From the perspective of a scholar, I would not have noticed specific patterns and visual repetitions had I not worked with dissolves in a separate timeline rather than with the complete film.

The editing exercise allowed me to notice frequent transitions between the characters' medium shots and the following wide shots of Riverdale, reminding the audience of the tension between private affairs and the wider society. The compilation of dissolves also turned my

attention to the repetition of dissolves into window frames, staircases and doors, reinforcing visual confinement and the feeling of captivity. Having access to such a condensed structure of editing transitions in *All I Desire* helped to gain additional insights about the characters and their emotional journeys. It proved to be more useful than the conventional means of written criticism only, as to successfully convey the expressive functions of editing transitions, the accompanying visual film's material was essential for overall analysis.

In the explanatory video essay, the inclusion of the Adobe Premiere Pro interface with the editing timeline and the markers for corresponding transitions provided an opportunity to establish visual and narrative patterns shaped by editing choices. As the screen-captured film timeline of the editing program interface was also included in the video, it allowed the viewer (and myself, too!) to immerse ourselves differently in the process of videographic exploration. The combination of the written commentary and different modes of videographic work suggests that some more creative aspects of editing techniques are inseparable from the critical ones. However, different forms of handling the film material are a rich addition to the existing film editing scholarship.

One of this case study's main challenges was linking my scholar's analysis to what I would do as a filmmaker, thinking about how to approach things differently for different content and material in the given case study. Suitable methodology is critical, as my editing experiments aimed to find the optimal form for the activity and the idea I was trying to explore and articulate. By getting to know the film better following the timeline breakdown and the initial video compilation, I was invited to think more about the particulars of some of these editing decisions to see if any more dissolves were rich and worth more attention than they currently got in the form of the written essay. As such, it becomes necessary to perform newer works in the analysis of film editing to determine what kinds of achievements can be made in audio-visual criticism.

Chapter 5: Hybrid Approaches to Intensified Continuity in Film

Introduction

Historically, two prominent models of film editing have been established: montage and continuity editing, some examples of which I closely reviewed and analysed in previous case studies. While Eisenstein's cinema is a prime example of the Soviet montage model, *All I Desire* and *Reds* belong to continuity editing systems (Classical Hollywood and Post-Classical Hollywood, respectively). This chapter will continue to investigate the practice of editing by looking at different co-existing approaches with distinctive principles and functions. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the chapters were arranged in the order of my written critical reflections instead of following the practice-as-research process. It then becomes essential to note that the videographic work I created for the film presented in this case study was the stepping stone in audiovisual analysis. Therefore, the resulting video essay was the first attempt to translate my findings into a voice-over-led narration supported by film fragments. The video essay will thus demonstrate insights obtained following the primary literature review, personal interview with the film editor and written critical reflections. The video essay is available to view online at: https://vimeo.com/909638333/458b3fc752

While the reader will notice some overlap between certain parts of the writing and the practice, this chapter will extend the analysis of intensified continuity and its relevance to the film, suggesting other notable film examples of how techniques characterised by David Bordwell enhance contemporary continuity Hollywood editing. Most importantly, the chapter will include the film editor's remarks on aspects of creative and technical decision-making when editing New Moon, following our personal conversation before beginning the videographic work.

Various film scholars have challenged the idea that continuity editing cannot be expressive, including David Bordwell, who detailed the flexibility and variability of a system he called 'intensified continuity' (2002: 16). This chapter brings contemporary Hollywood film under consideration and argues that while *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (hereafter, *New Moon*) (Chris Weitz 2009) preserves some elements from the classical counterpart, it relies on a new set of audiovisual aesthetics, narrative purposes and cinematic devices, including more expressive editing.

Film editors frequently touch on a crucial aspect of understanding their decision-making process. Rather than attributing their editing approach to a film's material as guided by personal

style, creative and technical capacity, or personal preferences, editors argue that the footage and the properties of a given film's material guide the post-production process. Mark Goldblatt notes that editing style is determined by the kind of film being made and the raw material presented to the editor. He says:

> You can take the same material and cut it any number of styles, changing dramatically how you want the audience to respond […] The picture editor's job is to determine which style is appropriate to that particular scene in that particular film. (Goldblatt quoted in Yewdall 2012: 161)

Evan A. Lottman explains editing style as 'striving for excellence' (Lottman quoted in Oldham 2012: 226), in which the demands of form, pace and manner of expression can vary in different films. Moreover, while acknowledging the tremendous editor's contribution to the final result, Lottman states that 'I think the film dictates the style of the editing, not the other way around. The director, the writer, even the actors set the style of the film' (Lottman quoted in Oldham 2012: 225).

When I began background research on *New Moon*, I discovered that Peter Lambert, the editor, was represented by Lux Artists agency and I contacted the representatives to put us in touch. The opportunity to interview a Hollywood scope editor was incredibly valuable, not just from the perspective of expanding a part of my project but also to benefit for his point of view on editing practice. I was able to discuss my critical analysis of the film directly with its editor, seeking to address one of the research questions that aim to understand the differences and similarities in our perspectives, but also gaining insights from the practitioner involved in making *New Moon* and sharing his first-hand explanation of editing strategies I was concerned with. Incorporating Lambert's comments into this chapter supports and extends my observations on the range of the film's editing decisions that contribute to establishing its narrative expressiveness. The full interview transcript can be found in Appendix B at the end of this thesis.

Clayton and Harman argue that 'popularity is a reason to take a cultural phenomenon seriously, although it is still often used as an excuse for dismissal' (2014: x). Despite the impressive public reaction and a total box office of $3.346 billion, there is still a significant gap in scholarly critical analysis of editing strategies in *Twilight* film adaptations. *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* presents a compelling case study exploring the modern shifts in approaching continuity editing, producing quicker rhythm, and engaging action on-screen while preserving the established conventions of film editing. In light of broader developing filmmaking trends,

the film demonstrates a different visual style along with more stunts and extensive visual effects compared to the first film in the series, *Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke 2008).

Vampire films can be traced from the silent German Expressionist horror film *Nosferatu* (1922), in which F.W. Murnau established visual aesthetics of the vampire genre, such as darkness, fangs, glowing eyes, and innocent victims. The next significant wave of vampires in film was introduced by Terence Fisher's *Dracula* (1958), followed by the *Vampire Circus* (Robert Young 1972), and more sexually infused Harry Kümel's *Daughters of Darkness* (1971). While vampire films traditionally share certain characteristic features, including concepts of taboo, representation of immortality, and horror elements, vampires have been portrayed differently. Michelle Le Blanc and Colin Odell note that:

> Not, of course, that all vampires are evil – some are cursed, tragic, funny, or just different. It is their exaggeration and extension of human feelings and abilities that allow them to be reinterpreted. (2008:12)

Consequently, the varying use of lighting techniques, cinematography, editing, sound, and misè-en-scene have also been employed to visualize the vampire culture in different film genres, varying from horror to drama, action, science fiction, romance, comedy, and others. Following the post-classical period, dangerous bloodsuckers transformed into charming aristocrats (*Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola 1992), stylish party guys (*Blade*, Stephen Norrington 1998), and finally vegetarian vampires in *Twilight*.

Based on Stephenie Meyer's vampire-romance novel, *The Twilight Saga*[11] tells the story of a teenage girl, Bella Swan. In the first book, Bella moves to Forks, Washington, to spend time with her father after her mother remarries. Bella's life changes when she meets Edward Cullen and discovers he is a vampire. They fall in love, but the jeopardy starts as a villainous vampire, James, becomes mesmerized by her irresistible blood and starts to hunt Bella down. In the second part, *New Moon,* Edward breaks up with Bella after his brother Jasper attempts to attack her. The girl is left heartbroken and depressed for months until she becomes friends with Jacob Black. One day, Bella discovers that Jacob is a werewolf, and the two start to develop romantic feelings for each other. The story climaxes when Edward hears the false news of Bella's death and decides to take his life by provoking an ancient vampire clan, Volturi.

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[11] *The Twilight Saga* film series was released in five instalments: *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), *Eclipse* (David Slade 2010), *Breaking Dawn – Part 1* (Bill Condon 2011) and *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (Bill Condon 2012).

Since the novel's debut in 2005 and despite claims that *The Twilight Saga* is 'sometimes easily dismissed as irrelevant by "serious" people' (Bucciferro 2013: 4), scholarly discourse on the *Twilight Saga* has primarily concerned the literary criticism and inter-disciplinary approach to the story from aspects like women's studies (Rocha 2014), fan culture (Erzen 2012), gender and sexuality (Silver 2010), as well as ethnic and racial identities (Reimer 2015).

Some of the most notable scholarship includes *Theorizing Twilight* (Parke and Wilson 2014) and *The Twilight Saga: Exploring the Global Phenomenon* (Bucciferro 2013). Clayton and Sarah Harman's *Screening Twilight: Critical Approaches to a Cinematic Phenomenon* (2014) presents a collection of analytic and critical texts with a resolute focus on cinematic versions. Another key text in the field is *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Twilight: Studies in Fiction, Media and a Contemporary Cultural Experience* (2011), edited by Mariah Larsson and Ann Steiner. The book by Larsson and Steiner expands on *Twilight*'s cinematic iterations and includes another notable work by Wickham Clayton (2014) '"Where Have All the Monsters Gone? Long Time Passing": The Aesthetics of Absence and Generic Subversion in New Moon'. Clayton reviews the unique visual identity of *Twilight*'s sequel, the use of colours, technological methods, aurality, and the narrativity of absence. When exploring editing, the author claims that it 'plays a heavy role in the pace and experience of Bella's time without monsters' (2014: 90).

The adaptation of *New Moon* reflects a noticeable shift from Catherine Hardwick's sympathetic adolescent story to Chris Weitz's innovative approach while maintaining fidelity to the novels. The narrative is based on internal emotional experiences, but the film is also expressive in its visual form. It demonstrates the prevalence of warm colours and golden tones, visualizing empty pages in the original novel through the montage sequence of Bella's depressed state, the change of seasons, and the introduction of a 90 frames-per-second speed ramp, which enhanced the vampire agility (Desowitz 2009). The combination of *absence* as one of the main narrative themes and the extensive use of computer-generated imagery expanded *New Moon*'s stylistic possibilities and allowed for more advanced editing techniques. For instance, the over-composite image effect[12] was employed for werewolf transformations, Bella's lovesick hallucinations, and the glitter effect applied to Edward's skin (Packard 2012).

The investigation of post-classical developments in editing practice, the complexification of classical narrative principles, and the apparent expressiveness of editing in *New Moon* drew me towards examining its relationship with David Bordwell's concept of intensified continuity.

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[12] A combination of layering of two or more digital and film shots.

The co-existence of characteristics arising from intensified and conventional continuity in *New Moon* suggests important insights into further research on the current discourse on contemporary editing practices and Hollywood filmmaking.

While it is evident that modern filmmaking has transformed into a post-classical style since the 1960s, some classical cinema conventions remain unchanged: representation of space and time, coherence in editing constructions, and the narrative set-up. Therefore, rather than referring to enhanced continuity as a novel style, Bordwell calls it the 'intensification of established techniques' (2002: 16). He suggests four distinctive characteristics of intensified continuity: fast-paced editing, use of wide-angle lenses, more close-ups in dialogue scenes, and a free-ranging camera. The order in which I will investigate the elements of intensified continuity in *New Moon* differs from the sequence David Bordwell discussed in his classification. While features of intensified continuity are common elements continuity-wise, I will first explore the cinematography-related functions, such as the choice of shot sizes, lens length and camera movement, before moving onto a more detailed discussion of rapid editing and pace considerations in expressive contemporary editing, which sheds more light on the properties of film's material that inform the editor's choices when establishing specific cutting strategies and coming up with *style* based on the footage they are provided. By analysing different scenes and editing decisions employed, I argue that the distinct editing style of *New Moon* is guided by differentiating between characters (vampires, werewolves and humans) and narrative events, especially action scenes, moments of high emotional resonance and portrayal of the dramatic love triangle.

Close-ups Shots

Generally, close framings result in improved shot legibility and heightened mode of spectatorship and directly affect the editing pace and intensity. Switching between personal close-ups and wider establishing shots advances spatial continuity. The audience remains immersed in the present action, while the rhythmic structure of editing moves the narrative forward. Discussing the director Chris Weitz's contribution to *New Moon*, Mark D. Cunningham explains that Weitz's experience with character and dramatic situations allowed us to interpret Bella's heartbreak as a result of Edward's hasty and poorly explained departure. Cunningham compliments the close framings of certain scenes in *New Moon* to suggest private, meaningful moments (2012: 205).

Bordwell suggests that 'if a scene relies on rapidly cut singles, the filmmaker must find a way to underscore certain lines or facial reactions' (2002: 133). As one of the potential tactics, he suggests intercutting between wide shots, medium or medium close-up shots, single-face close-ups and extreme close-ups for a stronger visual emphasis on action.

When Bella first meets the Volturi, the tension and the sense of danger are suggested by intercutting between closer views of Aro's face (fig. 5.1) and wide and medium shots of vampires and Bella in the empty hall. Another example from the same sequence is the close-up of Aro taking Edward's hand to see his past and the following rack focus in a medium-close-up to portray him losing interest in Bella after he could not read her mind.
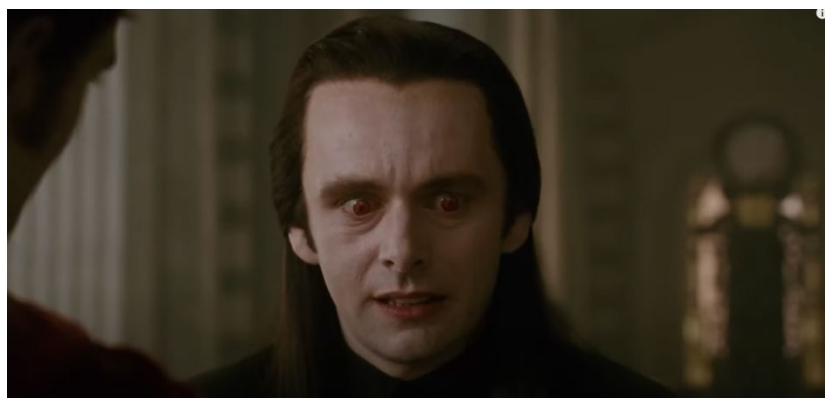
Fig. 5.1: Close-ups of Aro signify his leadership and danger, but also draw attention to his bright red eyes, which suggests he drinks human blood

Unlike the previous *Twilight* story arc, the narrative in *New Moon* mainly develops around Bella's perspectives and experiences. In this regard, Bella's close-ups often visually represent her thought process and decisions. Similar to Naomi's internal monologue during her daughter's play in *All I Desire* (1953)*, in *New Moon,* the viewer becomes physically and emotionally connected to the protagonist when seeing her close-up shots and hearing the voiceover simultaneously, which makes us empathize with her experiences on a deeper level. As Katie Kapurch notes, the function of Bella's subjective internal voiceover differs between *Twilight* and *New Moon* (2012: 187). The author discusses opening scene choices in *Twilight*, where Bella's voiceover narrates: 'I'd never given much thought to how I would die', which signifies her interiority. The viewer is addressed in complete darkness, but no visual references inform the audience's perspective. In *New Moon,* Bella's voiceover is always accompanied by explanatory cinematic images, which position the viewer differently in their sound associations with the image (Kapurch 2012: 185-188).

Smith claims that different sound strategies are demonstrated to heighten modern films' affective, sensory, and phenomenological dimensions (Smith 2013: 335), which aligns with the visual style changes described by David Bordwell. An interaction between visual and aural perception enhanced by editing can be observed in Bella and Edward's break-up scene. When reflecting on the sequence, Peter Lambert explains:

> The actors are shot from different angles – a wide shot, a two-shot, close-ups – with a number of different takes from all those angles. The particular angles chosen have an enormous impact on how the audience will read that moment. If you see an extreme wide shot, perhaps it means they're being watched. If you hear Edward's voice, but are looking at Bella's face, you're focusing on her reaction. So, I'm not 'cutting' things out, I'm making choices of which moments to show. (Lambert quoted in Cotta Vaz 2009: 147)

To further explore the importance of close-up shots in the editing choices of *New Moon*, we must also consider how these shots are relevant to the narrative and characterization of the film. Bella's life in *New Moon* revolves around Jacob and Edward, which is one reason for shot variability, as the two males represent different supernatural worlds and mutually exclusive forms of existence. Throughout the story, Bella is often placed in male-dominated setups. This is occasionally reflected in positioning Bella lower than male characters, which presents them as visually dominant (fig. 5.2).
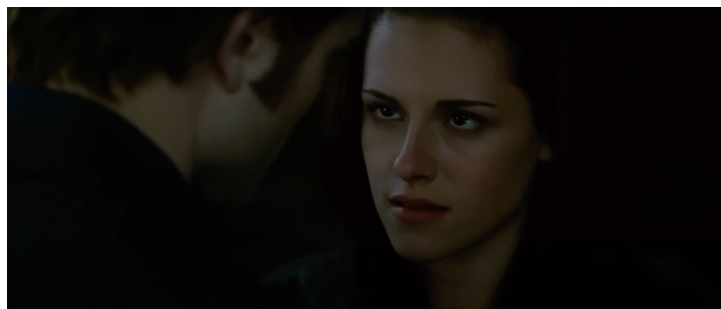
Fig. 5.2: In dialogue scenes, Bella is often positioned lower in relation to male characters, which also results in unambiguous eye-lines

Similar setups can be seen in the break-up scene, in the sequence where Bella asks Carlisle about vampire souls (fig. 5.3), or when Bella confesses her love to Jacob but chooses Edward as her partner. Lower angles help establish Bella's psychological position as a fragile female and her unconscious need for protection. She views Carlisle as an unquestionable leader; Bella's relationship with Jacob offers trust and security, while her deep love and obsession with the vampire are also accompanied by physical incompatibility and Edward's total control.

Fig. 5.3: Bella's first one-to-one conversation with Carlisle is mostly composed of closer framings

Closer framings throughout the film are also often used to represent Bella's inner conflict (fig. 5.4)

Fig. 5.4: A color-graded close-up of Bella inserted in the flashback sequence is indicative of her inner conflict

The interplay between visuals offers the viewer an insight into Bella's anxiety. Bella's eyelines in high-angle close framings frequently correspond with her being emotionally vulnerable and lacking confidence and self-esteem in the presence of vampires. To shape observations around Bella's attraction to vampires, Dudek argues that the way immortals draw gaze, the way they move and look, display Bella's fears about her own body and her age (2017: 49). Even though most dialogue scenes are naturally composed of brief single shots and less focus on establishing shots, Lambert's editing on the film stays true to classical continuity conventions by inserting various sustained two-shots. Such a method emphasizes character placement to compensate for the lack of various wide-establishing shots. On the contrary, when the dialogue is mainly composed of single close-ups, eye-lines become more unambiguous to join the narrative space and to follow the action axis.

Wide Angles

The use of close-up shots in *New Moon* incorporates classical stylistic traits, such as its importance in establishing emotional resonance in dialogue scenes. However, the film also intensifies the meaning of closer shots when juxtaposed with medium and wide shots, simultaneous voiceover, or when considered within the context of gender relationships. With the choice of camera framings in mind, I shall move to the next feature of Bordwell's intensified continuity, which is the increased reliance on extremely long and/ or extremely wide lenses.

The choice of lenses can greatly support the film's visual aesthetics: for instance, using a 35-50 mm lens is more suited for a natural and realistic approach to storytelling, as it almost resembles the focal length of the human eye. By contrast, wide-angle anamorphic lenses provide a look that captures great detail; however, they have more distortion than spherical lenses. Bordwell suggests that a wide-angle lens provides 'looming close-ups, expansive establishing shots, views inside cramped quarters […] and medium shots with strong foreground-background interplay' (Bordwell 2006: 169).

The choice of lenses in *New Moon* helps to express the nature of the characters' perspectives and how they drive the narrative. When we see close-ups of the actors, the shallow depth of field makes their faces appear more dramatic while compressing the visual perspective and enabling them to isolate themselves from a busy background. For example, in a wide shot of pupils in the canteen, a wide shot encourages rack focusing to create the shifting composition between Bella's friends chatting and having a meal in the foreground and depressed Bella sitting by herself in the distance. The rack focus, which Bordwell suggests is a stylistic by-product of employing long lenses, adds a dramatic flourish to the shot and communicates Bella's disconnect from the happy everyday life in school.

In sequences with Bella and Jacob, introducing wide shots creates a sense of comforting and confined space. They are used to communicate the growing connection and privacy between Bella and Jacob and emphasize the physical closeness of the two. For instance, a film fragment in which Jacob saves Bella from drowning starts with close over-the-shoulder framings (fig. 5.5), which are then followed by a wide-angle of Jacob performing CPR on her by the waterline (fig. 5.6). *New Moon* uses this wide shot to emphasize the emptiness of the space, conveying the potential consequences for Bella had Jake not intervened. The film then again bounces back and forth between face close-ups, and extremely wide shots of the dark

beach embraced by restless waves (fig. 5.7). The scene concludes with Victoria furiously observing Bella and Jacob submerged in the middle of the ocean.

Fig. 5.5: Bella coming to her senses in a close-up, and Jacob trying to revive her

Fig. 5.6: In a wide angle shot by the water, Jacob performs CPR on Bella

Fig. 5.7: The scene includes extreme wide shots of the two on the beach, which captures inclement weather in La Push

In continuity editing, the usual technique for handling dialogues is to use shot/reverse shot and over-the-shoulder shots. However, what stands out in *New Moon* is that close-ups in dialogue scenes are also sometimes exchanged for wide shots. A good example of this approach is seen in the cinema hall scene, in which Bella and Jacob reconsider their feelings for each other. Jacob attempts to hold her hand, but Bella awkwardly lets go of it. When the camera switches to over-the-shoulder medium shots of their conversation, we can see Jacob's reflection in the mirror. Bella explains that holding hands might mean more than just being friends, and the film cuts to a wide shot as she sits on the stairs right by the mirror, a footstep from Jacob. The distance that Bella tries to place between her and Jacob is visually established here, while only seeing Bella's reflection in the mirror also signifies the uncertainty

and ambiguous feelings she is going through. The scene then continues with single close-ups of Jacob and medium shots of Bella – Jacob's presence in the shot-reverse-shots signifies that he sees them together as a potential couple. On the contrary, Jacob only exists for Bella as a friend.

Let us look at how wide-angle lenses and three different types of shots were assembled for one of the film's final scenes, in which Bella is forced to decide between Jacob or Edward as her partner. As Jacob stops Edward's car, the camera focuses on him running towards the forest, and the film cuts back to the couple. The camera switches to a wide-angle shot of them in the woods (fig. 5.8).

Fig. 5.8: A wide establishing shot of Bella, Jacob and Black in the woods visually establishes the love triangle

The familiar, gloomy setting immediately evokes Edward and Bella's break-up scene at the film's beginning. Shots that place Edward and Jacob slightly higher in relation to Bella indicate their power over her. At the same time, single close-ups intensify the emotional impact of these scenes. In this sequence, 15 shots are framed in contrasting lengths, including wide over-the-shoulder shots, medium shots, and close-ups. The audience sees shots of Bella and Edward together. At the same time, in the dialogue exchange, the camera favours Edward over Jacob in its positioning. Peter Lambert argues that:

> Bella is constantly moving into Jake's personal space, because she's drawn to him, but also in a way which absolutely seduces him. That's obviously important overall in *Twilight* because the central idea is that Bella wants to get close to Edward, but there's such an inherent danger to her life if she does so. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

The shots of Edward on the diagonal are all close-ups. In contrast, Jacob is distinctly smaller in the frame, which makes us align spatially with Edward. The emotional dynamic in this scene

suggests that Bella wants to stay with Edward. Even though the scene establishes the love triangle, the wide shot still aligns us spatially with Edward and Bella rather than Jacob and Bella (fig. 5.9).

Fig. 5.9: Wide over the shoulder shot places Jacob higher in relation to Bella and Edward

While this framing of Bella and Edward in focus suggests one dimension of intimacy, the eyelines and the editing also suggest her attachment to Jacob. This strategy creates a sense of shared space and dual intimacy, which helps to dramatize the tension between two of Bella's potential relationships.

As can be noticed in wide-angle shots of Bella, Jacob and Edward in the forest, the use of the blocking technique is essential. In these shots, the characters are almost perfectly still in one place in the location. At the same time, the camera freely moves around them. In effect, the energy in these sequences is made by the interplay between editing and camera dynamics, while the content is largely passive. This insight leads me to explore more examples of free-ranging camera in *New Moon* and investigate the context of its introduction to selected scenes and effects of shot juxtapositions.

Free Camera

The following characteristic of Bordwell's concept of intensified continuity is the prowling-free camera, often found in longer takes and wide framings. Bordwell writes that 'a mobile framing, like quick cutting, boosts the scene's energy' and that free moving camera 'separates the planes of the image and creates a more voluminous pictorial space' (2006: 184). In *New Moon*, this approach is demonstrated on various occasions, including the 360-degree panoramic shot moving around depressed Bella in front of the window or similar rotating camera shots of Bella's flashbacks with Edward in the meadow. Bordwell notes that the arcing camera can also become a 'clichéd means of showing lovers embracing' (2002: 20), true for Bella's memories and longing for Edward. On the other hand, the circling camera becomes a

recurring motif, which we begin to associate with Bella's depression, fear, sense of abandonment, and heartbreak.

Compared to *Twilight*, where Catherine Hardwicke makes extensive use of a shaky handheld camera and Dutch tilts, many free-ranging camera scenes in the sequel are shot on Steadicam, which provides a more fluid feel.[13] The free-ranging camera in *New Moon* also contributes to communicating differences between the characters. The use of Steadicam when Bella arrives at the meadow and meets vampire Laurent is especially effective. As the camera follows Bella reaching the destination, the scene is intercut with rotating flashbacks of her time spent together with Edward and then full panoramic shots of observing Bella again in a free-spinning manner. The deployment of 360-degree space embraces Bella's heartache from returning to where she used to be happy. The change of the dynamic camera to almost static and a cut to Laurent signal danger. As Laurent starts the conversation, he walks around Bella to confuse her. Here, the free camera follows the vampire's choreographic motion trajectory and tightens spatial limitations between him and Bella. Unlike most other scenes with vampires, which utilize special effects to visualise their supernatural abilities, Laurent feels equal during his encounter with Bella. Traditional continuity editing with straight cuts, a 180-degree axis, and consistent timelines are consistent with Bella's slow, human point-of-view on what is happening.

Moreover, in shots where we see Bella in this scene, the free camera and the extent of its shakiness or stability also correspond to the protagonist's emotions. When Laurent asks if the Cullens often visit, the camera moves towards Bella, emphasizing that she did not expect the question. The critical moment of Bella and Laurent's encounter - when he suddenly approaches her in preparation to kill - also utilizes free camera efficiently, as the proximity of death and danger is intensified by unexpected camera movement shifting from Bella's close-up to suddenly embracing Laurent within the same shot. Rather than capturing Laurent's movement in slow motion (as often demonstrated in other scenes with vampires), the invisible cut emphasizes his speed. In contrast, as werewolves enter the frame and Bella is still fully immersed in the interaction between fantasy and reality, the expressive editing elements become more apparent, including the shift to slow motion effect to show Laurent's super-speed and even more rapid cutting.

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[13] The exception is the scene of Bella in the school canteen, as it employs a shaky, naturalistic handheld camera feel and draws on the conventions of documentary realism to imply a sense of normality.

Another scene example that conforms with the free-ranging camera characteristic of intensified continuity is the break-up sequence. After Edward concludes that he and his family are dangerous to Bella, he decides to take her out for a walk in the forest and vows never to see her again. Lambert notes that:

> …It was 'a very challenging sequence to cut […] Finding a way through the scene which felt coherent and sure-handed in terms of the editing and its relationship to the camera was very, very tricky. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

The scene starts with Edward and Bella walking through the woods in the wide establishing shot. The scene equally favours both actors, having both in the frame or single shots, often in tight framings, accentuating Bella's concerns and Edward's attempts to lie. The scene almost entirely features Steadicam close-ups and medium shots. However, the camera holds almost still on Edward while it is slanting and unsteady when capturing Bella's vulnerability and confusion. The angles at which the audience looks at Bella create a different balance, as they change how we experience the moment from her point of view. Lambert suggests that:

> We wanted Bella to look very small in the frame towards the end, and we were definitely trying to control the emotional temperature […] It is an incredibly powerful way of controlling how *hot* or *cold* a scene is emotionally. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

High angles establish her vulnerability, but some shots constantly move towards and away from the characters to create the sense of push and pull that Bella is going through. The camera allows for stronger emphasis on the actors' faces – Bella's darting eyes show signs of genuine concern, but her eye-line is directed towards Edward, while he often avoids eye contact. Including the wide shot between close-ups reinforces the inequality between Bella and Edward. Bordwell notes that 'dropping back to the master shot or even an establishing shot in the middle of a scene can let it breathe, or can give it a beat that will then invest your close-ups with even greater force and intensity.' (2006: 134) The combination of the final Dutch angle accompanied by a constantly moving camera creates the effect of vertigo to represent Bella's world falling apart, but it also leads to an important close-up of Edward when he gives her the farewell kiss.

One of the main arguments towards the importance of discussing the use of camera sizes, lens lengths and camera movements in the context of editing and intensified continuity is the editors' focus on the technical properties of the footage that is always considered during

the post-production. For instance, Lambert acknowledges that rapid editing emphasizes the supernatural abilities of the characters, but other filmmaking elements are equally relevant:

> When analysing *New Moon* as an academic, you will be absolutely right in saying that rapid cutting reflects the impulsivity of the werewolves. But when you're the editor, you're also thinking about acting, *textures* and *colours* that you're getting from the shots, as well as the technical concerns of the process. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

Following Lambert's insights, the film's assembly includes various camera movements in scenes with different characters. The use of the free-ranging camera can be attributed to the presence of supernatural powers in the story. Like their fantastic abilities, free-ranging cameras can also produce movements and trajectories, which a static camera would never be able to achieve. While Edward is static and often compared to marble, Jacob frequently changes his form between man and wolf. Edward's body is cold and has stopped its natural life cycle, while warm blood runs in Jacob's veins. Edward is patient and controlling, but Jacob is impulsive and hot-headed. Static camera and dolly shots often frame Edward on screen to represent the stability he offers, while Steadicam embraces Jacob's vividness. As *New Moon* significantly relies on CGI, especially in the werewolf sequences, the free-ranging camera becomes an essential element in action scenes to make the event more engaging and to smoothe the mix of special effects and live footage.

Vampires are idealised in *New Moon*, as Stephenie Meyer offered a rather idiosyncratic image of bloodsuckers compared to the traditional vampires associated with evil, monstrous forms, and death. Vampires in *Twilight*, especially the Cullens, are fashionable, well-educated, and wealthy immortals who attract Bella with their inhuman beauty and dignity. Edward is one of the most hypersexualised characters – the story presents him as the idealised notion of a partner and a man. In *New Moon*, when we see Edward for the first time, he appears in Bella's nightmare about her ageing. He is first seen in the background, slowly coming out of the forest, which then switches to a wide establishing shot to represent Bella's attention to him, and finally, a medium shot that fully embraces the CGI effect of the glowing vampire's skin under the sunlight. Another approach to idealising Edward's image is demonstrated as the story develops. Bella's school friends notice Edward in the background. She turns around, and the camera moves towards her to capture excitement and adoration. When Edward appears in a wide shot, rhythmic beats kick in to follow the slow-motion of Edward's model-like sexy walk and his grin while seductively looking away. When reflecting on his editing process, Lambert explains:

> …The mise-en-scène in the car park was quite important, that's when Edward walks towards Bella for the first time, and we give him that kind of sexy, slow motion. Then we use the same angle for Jake's arrival in the scene, but not played in slow motion, because he is introduced as the alternative to Edward. This scene was carefully composed, especially when we have Bella and Jake in the foreground with Edward in the background, and Jacob lifts up a dreamcatcher to block out Edward. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

In contrast, Bella is not sexualised – the static medium shot of her wearing dark clothes that almost blends with the background suggests Bella's simplicity and contrasts Edward's emphasised seductiveness. The changes in camera dynamics, editing rhythms and shot sizes suggest the importance of the editor's decision-making in the film's assembly to establish the variations in which the characters' natural or supernatural properties resonate with the emotional context of scenes at the given narrative point. I will now turn to the fourth element of David Bordwell's intensified continuity. I will explore the application of rapid cutting in *New Moon*, supported by quantitative analysis and the calculations of average shot length in selected scenes between Bella, vampires and werewolves.

Fast-paced Editing

David Bordwell presents a useful timeline of how editing tempo and average shot length (ASL) have constantly been changing: starting from the 1920s, when Hollywood cinema employed rapid editing with four to six seconds per shot, followed by mid-1960s with ASLs of between six and eight seconds, and finally 1990s when some directors pushed ASL below three seconds (206: 121-122). As big-budget films are a product of collaboration, the causes for increased editing pace in films can be sociological, cultural, or achieved through experimentation and technological improvements[14] (Cutting et al. 2011).

The online editing statistics database 'Shot Logger' suggests that the ASL of *Twilight* is 4.14 seconds, which is consistent with the gradual quickening of editing over time that Bordwell has reported (2012). Rapid cutting in *New Moon* is one of the most variable features of intensified continuity within the framework of this study. Fast-paced editing is often used to differentiate between conflicting worlds and characters, and it also represents freedom and

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[14] The authors specify that these factors include the emergence of sound in film in 1927, color by 1939, wide-screen imaging by the mid-1950s, as well as 3D introduction in the early 21st century. The film has become better adapted to human perceptual and cognitive processes following the Hollywood evolution, which had a direct effect on physical variables, including ASL, editing transitions, motion, and luminance.

overcoming physical limitations. As *New Moon* introduces more action to the narrative compared to the first film, quick cutting keeps the viewers engaged while preserving their clear sense of space. Peter Lambert explains:

> As an editor, you are always trying to create a variety of rhythm. As you move throughout the film, in the way that you would think about a symphony, you're structurally thinking about it as something which takes you on a journey, which will move at different paces, have different levels of energy and different emotional registers. The difference between action scenes and dialogue-based drama scenes is a really obvious way of thinking about how you can create that kind of storytelling. The rhythm of *New Moon* was defined much more by pragmatic choices in editing. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

The analysis of ASL becomes the primary quantitative methodological consideration in the discussion of editing rhythm in *New Moon* and focuses on the relationship of rapid editing with differing natures of characters (human, vampires and werewolves) to examine how the pace of cutting mirrors their essence. One of the experiments involved the ASL analysis of 22 scenes between 34 and 200 seconds featuring Bella, vampires, werewolves, and ordinary human characters (Table 5.1). The findings suggest that the ASL of scenes in which Bella interacts with humans is slightly higher when compared to non-action scenes featuring vampires or werewolves (4.97 sec., 4.88 sec., and 4.77 sec., respectively). This is also true with Bella's father, Charlie, and him being placed in the supernatural environment, even though he only becomes aware of the fantastic world in the last novel.

Scenes that feature only humans are predominantly assembled in a traditional, continuous way with simple cuts and subtle effect transitions. Action scenes with vampires are cut significantly quicker with an ASL of 2.59 sec. There are only three action scenes in *New Moon* featuring the transformed werewolves, and the average shot length of these sequences is 3.18 sec. The strategy of handling the presence of supernatural powers indicates the excitement they evoke in Bella as opposed to her ordinary existence in everyday life. Fast editing in scenes with supernatural creatures is also often complemented by changing the speed of motion and slowing down vampires (which translates as their perspective on human time) and the variety of purposeful visual jumps, cutting to the beat, match movements, and invisible cuts. ASL variations between the characters and rapid editing in these scenes conform with the fast-cutting practices explored by Bordwell as a feature of intensified continuity. This finding reinforces that filmmakers' recourse to intensified continuity in *New Moon* is tied to narrative concerns.

To demonstrate the embrace of intensified continuity in *New Moon*, I conducted a similar analysis of ASL in *Twilight* (Table 5.2), which features vampires only, as Bella learns about

werewolves in *New Moon*. Vampire scenes were split based on the narrative chronology of Bella's awareness of them.

Bella + vampires (NA)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Edward in parking	63	12	5.25
Bella, Edward, Alice, Jasper	62	24	2.58
Bella, Carlisle after attack	85	14	6.07
Bella, Alice returns	39	15	2.6
Bella, Edward in her room	87	11	7.9
Average	67.2	15	4.88

Bella + humans (NA)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Charlie	56	13	4.3
Bella, school mates before Edward arrives	47	11	4.27
Bella, Charlie near car	89	15	5.93
Bella, Charlie after nightmare	80	13	6.15
Bella, school mates in canteen	126	27	4.67
Average	79.6	16	4.975

Bella/ humans + vampires (A)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Laurent in the meadow	144	34	4.2
Bella, Cullens at her party	69	30	2.3
Bella, Volturi, Jane attacks	34	20	1.7
Bella, Edward, Volturi attack	118	45	2.6
Charlie, Billie, Victoria in forest	59	27	2.18
Average	425	31	2.59

Bella + werewolves (NA)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Jacob in parking	80	21	3.8
Bella, Jacob in car	56	12	4.67
Bella, Jacob under rain	200	29	6.89
Bella, Emily	155	38	4.07
Bella, Alice, Jacob	120	27	4.44
Average	122.2	25	4.77

Bella/ humans + werewolves (A)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Laurent, wolves	66	17	3.88
Bella, Paul, wolves	129	37	3.48
Charlie, Billie, Victoria	59	27	2.18
Average	84.7	27	3.18

Table 5.1: A range of analysis of average shot lengths of scenes featuring Bella, humans, vampires and werewolves in New Moon
*(NA) – non-action scenes; *(A) – action scenes.

Bella + vampires (NA)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella at Edward's house	69	26	2.65
Bella, Edward first kiss	133	27	4.93
Bella, Edward in hospital	102	18	5.7
Bella, Edward after his revelation in forest	80	22	3.6
Bella, Edward prom dance	203	20	10.1
Average	**587**	**113**	**5.19**

Bella + humans	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Charlie after she moved in	67	5	13.4
Bella in canteen	57	12	4.75
Bella Charlie in restaurant (1)	56	14	4
Bella Charlie in restaurant (2)	98	17	5.76
Bella and girls at dress shop	51	8	6.37
Average	**329**	**56**	**5.87**

Bella does not know about vampires (A, NA)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Edward first lab together (NA)	190	39	4.87
Bella, Carlisle at the hospital (NA)	54	14	3.86
Bella, Edward at the greenhouse (NA)	79	6	13.16
Bella, Edward at the restaurant (NA)	103	43	2.39
Victoria, Laurent, James kill a man (A)	71	32	2.21
Bella, Edward in car after he saved her (NA)	47	17	2.76
Average	**94.6**	**23.8**	**3.97**

Bella knows about vampires (A)	Duration, sec.	Cuts	ASL
Bella, Cullens playing baseball	111	66	1.68
Edward, James fight	96	75	1.28
Average	**278**	**173**	**1.60**

Table 5.2: Average shot lengths of scenes featuring Bella, humans and vampires in Twilight
*(NA) – non-action scenes; *(A) – action scenes

Compared to *New Moon*, there are only a few long action or fight scenes in *Twilight*, which are also generally cut much quicker than non-action sequences. Non-action scenes featuring Bella and vampires present an average shot length of 5.19 seconds, while the ASL of scenes with Bella and human characters is slightly longer. Non-action sequences with vampires that precede Edward confessing his secret to Bella are cut quicker with an average shot length of 3.97 seconds. In an action scene where a vampire gang kills an innocent man on a boat, 32 cuts are used during 71 seconds of intense action, which is an example of rapid cutting

demonstrating the effects of invisible cuts and slow motion. The scene belongs to the ordinary world from Bella's perspective. However, since the girl does not witness the murder, we see the action unfold through the vampires' point of view. In contrast, the non-action scene, where Edward and Bella have dinner at the restaurant, also occurs before Edward tells her he is a vampire. Although it is a casual dialogue sequence, the ASL is only 0.18 seconds longer than during the intense vampire scene, which suggests an interesting cross-over in the film between the intensified continuity editing and the characters' point of view.

Another function of rapid editing in *New Moon*, similar to other elements of intensified continuity I discussed previously, can be linked to emphasizing the characters' features. One of the examples is the process of werewolf transformation, triggered by a vampire's presence. Their drastic mood swings and sudden moments of uncontrollable rage usually accompany imminent transformation. Therefore, quick cutting when portraying werewolves can be attributed to their uncontrollable nature, which leaves little room for thoughts and decisions. Another supernatural ability of vampires and werewolves is their incredible speed, which is quicker than cars or motor vehicles. Thus, quick-paced editing turns into a technique used to enhance the fast movements of these supernatural creatures. Lambert often uses abrupt cuts and accelerated film speed to intensify vampires and werewolves' agility and feral nature, especially in strong contrast with the weak human nature.

Bordwell warns the reader of certain dangers that rapid editing can lead to, such as a breakdown of spatial continuity. He notes that 'some action scenes are cut so fast (and staged so gracelessly) as to be incomprehensible' (2002: 123). This observation can be applied to one of the flashback scenes in *New Moon* when Bella goes out with her friend Jessica and notices the bikers. A flashback is assembled from *Twilight* shots of Bella being assaulted by a group of men and then saved by Edward. The original scene fragment is approximately 40 seconds long, while in *New Moon*, it is condensed into eight seconds with 18 shots, intercut with present Bella's close-ups. The short scene represents how all four elements of intensified continuity are joined together to achieve the maximum impact on the viewer. Close-up shots of confused Bella frame the sequence, and the same close-up (colour-graded in blue shades too[15]), intercut with the flashback, suggests that the girl is fully immersed in her memories. Applying the same blue tint over Bella's shots in the present and mixing them with the images from the past

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[15] Colour filtering is a Hollywood cliché of flashbacks, more generally. Some examples of films that use flashbacks include chocolate and yellow filters in *The Godfather: Part II* (Francis Ford Coppola 1974) or green-tinted aesthetics applied to the memory scenes in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (David Yates 2009).

conveys an undeniable spatial discontinuity, but rapid cross-cutting in this sequence helps the viewer to understand that Bella's past and present locations are spatially unrelated. In terms of narrative development, such expressive cutting makes the viewer become more aware of Bella's lost state and understand what triggered her visions. Even though rapid editing in this scene corresponds to Bella's impetuosity, the sequence can appear slightly illegible and visually frantic, especially for those viewers who have not previously seen *Twilight*.

Rapid editing is employed in *New Moon* for various reasons, including the increased engagement with action scenes and the establishment of the sense of danger and threat that accompanies the protagonist throughout the narrative journey. Most importantly, the analysis of ASL in selected *New Moon* scenes suggests that changes in editing pace consider the differences between human perception of time and the supernatural essence of vampires and werewolves, therefore emphasizing the importance of the editor's engagement with the characters and the narrative.

Conclusion

While scholars have often interrogated the nature of the saga's appeal, including feminist theories, empathy in young adult pop fiction, or *Twilight* fandom movements, less attention has been paid to critical analysis of the film versions, especially editing in the film adaptations. While *Twilight* is also a post-classical Hollywood film, which uses an impressive range of editing strategies and visual techniques, the consistency between the narrative component, characters, and rapid editing is more evident in *New Moon*. This study attempted to demonstrate that *New Moon* is a great model of effectively employing the principles of intensified continuity in contemporary Hollywood cinema, as it offers distinctive cinematic approaches that encourage the audience to engage with the storytelling and connect editing to narration and characterization in a very specific, innovative way.

This chapter attempted to explore how *New Moon* adheres to the concept of traditional continuity but at the same time also shows an increased variety of camera movements, shot sizes, and editing pace. This enhancement of classical continuity strategies characterizes contemporary visual design, and demonstrates how editing tactics reshape modern film aesthetics. Although Bordwell isolates four main techniques of intensified continuity, he also argues that they often cooperate. This synthesis is frequently evident in *New Moon* montage scenes, such as the flashback to the previous film, sequences with Jacob in the garage or Bella's severe depression episode. Apart from the use of tight framings, faster cutting, or the use of a

long lens in such sequences, enhanced editing also introduces a frequent use of invisible cuts, match-on action, unique colour-grading, use of fade transitions, and complex special effects to illustrate the achievements of contemporary cinematic style. Bordwell writes that 'these devices add decorative and expressive overlays to the story information transmitted by the basic intensified continuity techniques' (2006: 138).

Based on the critical analysis of the film, it was discovered that scenes of Bella's encounters with supernatural characters adhere more closely to the characteristics outlined by Bordwell. These sequences often include video transitions, non-diegetic sound accentuations and computer-generated imagery, transforming editing into a highly expressive strategy. The changes in editing pace and shot assemblies used for different characters also suggest a co-existence of elements arising from intensified continuity. While the traditional Hollywood editing approach is seen in the film, combining techniques becomes another expressive tool at the filmmaker's disposal.

In the introduction to this thesis, I expanded on videographic criticism as one of the primary methodological approaches in my exploration of editing practice, and *New Moon* was this project's starting point in translating the written reflections into audio-visual essays. With years of experience in video editing and no experience in academic videographic criticism, my engagement with the film's material in software happened after the written discussion concluded. Moreover, even the ASL analysis of shots was performed via conventional screening and not with the film's timeline in front of me in Adobe Premiere Pro. It was only after I imported the entire film into the editing software to begin assembling the video essay that I realised the potential of this approach in facilitating the speed of analysis of editing and attention to detail on a frame-by-frame level.

Nevertheless, as I was only beginning to explore *how* to illustrate my findings more effectively on-screen in addition to written chapters, I was less concerned with the experimental and poetic opportunities of assembling video essays. The resulting video presented the basic form of an explanatory video essay with the use of the author's voiceover, film scenes that visually accompanied the claims regarding intensified continuity examples in the film, images, academic references and selected *New Moon's* soundtrack for aesthetic purposes (I felt the silence that accompanied my speech was too *loud,* and the video would feel boring for viewers otherwise). Most importantly, from the perspective of investigating the editor's contribution to videographic practice, the video also featured samples of my own ASL analysis in discussion on rapid editing – at that point, inserting the tables with ASL calculations seemed the most appropriate evidence of my original contribution to the less researched aspects of editing

in *New Moon*. Indeed, the reflections that accompany previous case studies, and the following chapter on Tarkovsky's *Mirror* will demonstrate my increased involvement with videographic criticism and choosing modes of the audiovisual presentation that is most appropriate for the editing aspects of interest, as well as finding more engaging ways of integrating analytical samples into video essays.

Similarities in audio-visual approaches demonstrated in the post-continuity style suggest that intensified continuity develops into a distinct approach to understanding contemporary filmmaking. This suggests that the current work is not only an in-depth study of *New Moon* and the editing strategies used in the film but can also make an insightful contribution to the current discourse on contemporary Hollywood filmmaking practices. In *New Moon*, Peter Lambert's editing strategies can be effectively critically analysed with Bordwell's model of contemporary film aesthetics in mind, yet selectively so, including aspects of conventional temporal and spatial continuity, flashbacks, montage, and others. *New Moon*, thus, demonstrates how technical achievements and stylistic editing techniques embellish traditional storytelling conventions and ensure a coherent perception of the novel's adaptation.

Chapter 6: Exploring Expressive Editing & Comparative Analysis of Editing Strategies in *Mirror* (1975)

Introduction

Following the exploration of the early instances of Soviet Montage in Chapter 1, this case study engages in a comparative analysis of a later point in the periodisation of Soviet Cinema history - the Soviet New Wave and its film editing practices. The Soviet New Wave evolved during the Khruschevian Thaw in the 1960s and is best characterised by parable-like narratives, allegories, metaphors, and symbolic linkage of images (Prokhorov 2013: 24). This cinematic movement explored a wide range of themes, including the alienation experienced by Soviet individuals, existentialism, the search for meaning and freedom, and the complexities of the human condition.

The terms Soviet and Russian cinema were often used interchangeably to refer to the state-run Communist film culture of the USSR that existed from the 1920s until the late 1980s.[16] Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the complexity of the difference between terms became more apparent. The multinational phenomenon of Soviet cinema, with Russia being its central component, also encompasses contributions of other former Soviet republics (Rollberg 2013: prefix).

Documentary cinema was revived by a new generation of experimental filmmakers, including Herz Frank, Victor Lisakovich and Artavazd Peleshian, who introduced the montage-at-a-distance theory, which focused on exploring the possibilities of the semantic field created by the deliberate spacing of certain shots. Such films as *Ivan's Childhood* (1962) by Andrei Tarkovsky, *The Color of Pomegranates* (1968) by Sergei Parajanov, and *The Plea* (1967) by Tengiz Abuladze received praise as some of the most notable examples of Soviet New Wave fiction cinema.

In this case study, I will investigate the editing structure of Andrei Tarkovsky's 1975 film *Mirror* to chart how cinematic space and narrative logic are established through visual symbols, metaphors, and poetic connections. This chapter's primary element of practice-as-research is an explanatory video essay, which can be viewed online at https://vimeo.com/910572942. A link to a supplementary version of a video essay that features text on screen instead of voiceover can be found in Appendix G.

This chapter forms a culmination of my written critical and videographic research,

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[16] In fact, the history of Russian cinema began even before the formation of the Soviet Union in the Russian Empire, with the release of the first narrative film, *Stenka Razin* (dir. by Vladimir Romashkov), in 1908.

primarily informed by extensive research into comparing editing accounts of the prominent filmmakers-scholars (I will pay special attention to the famous tension Tarkovsky and Eisenstein), shot-by-shot film's breakdown, vertical and horizontal timeline disassemblies in Adobe Premiere Pro, as well as the introduction of additional theoretical framework to analysis. While I did not introduce visual references of my practical exploration of editing in *Mirror* in Adobe Premiere Pro (they are integral to textual analysis, as will be seen further), the video essays demonstrate the outcome of rigorous videographic research. Both written criticism and videographic exploration are crucial to advancing the knowledge about complex strategies of poetic connections in *Mirror*. Therefore, the reader should approach this chapter and its accompanying practice-as-research element as an example of hybrid analysis, each efficient in its own space of critical attention.

The film was edited by Lyudmila Feyginova, who edited most of Tarkovsky's films, including *Andrei Rublev* (1966), *Solaris* (1972) and *Stalker* (1979). The methodology employs three analysis forms: full film's length shot-by-shot breakdown, vertical sequence-based and spatiotemporal layer-based film disassembly in Adobe Premiere Pro.

In order to explore the dynamic and expressive properties of film editing in *Mirror*, this case study focuses on examining the spatiotemporal relationships between different shots and sequences. The study aims to investigate the extent of omissions and time-thrust used in connecting the shots to create a cohesive visual narrative. For this purpose, I introduce Artavazd Peleshian as a critical framework to investigate the expressive potential of editing strategies in *Mirror*. Peleshian is an academic-turned-director who theorised his own experiences, which is a lost practice to some extent. Similarly to Peleshian's style, *Mirror* combines archival and fiction footage in a non-linear story development and demonstrates a metaphorical interplay between the narrative layers, visuals and sounds. Peleshian's experimental approach to editing explores relationships between shots and their influence on the audience's comprehension, which is helpful when looking at overarching themes in multiple complex realms of *Mirror*. Peleshian's theory has not yet been formally conceptualised in film studies. My attempt to present montage-at-a-distance in the form of a structured framework aims to make it more accessible and available for scholars and practitioners, which is one of the wider aims of this research.

The multi-layered, diverse fragments of *Mirror*'s narrative are self-limiting, elliptical and, for all their seeming ambiguity, connected by the fabric of off-screen reasoning. Through a kaleidoscope of different periods, *Mirror* tells the life story of a dying poet, Alexei. When reflecting on juxtaposition of documentary and fiction footage, Totaro emphasises the function

of editing in matching shots of a similar rhythm and writes that 'the surface separation between the personal and the historical is shattered by editing that carefully joins the various rhythms of the stock shots to staged shots' (1992: 24). The film plays with temporal variations through the display of characters' dreams, memories and fragments of documentary footage assembled in accordance with Tarkovsky's sense of time-pressure, which he viewed as 'the consistency of the time that runs through the shot, its intensity or 'sloppiness'' (Tarkovsky, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair 1989: 117).

Tarkovsky vs Eisenstein

Tarkovsky introduced the time-thrust approach in his graduation film *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1960), challenging Eisenstein's montage style that was widely recognised in Soviet cinematography. Tarkovsky believed the film should not be a simple assembly of shots arranged in a certain sequence and progressing over time. He argued that the force or energy of time is inherent in any cinematic material and that cinematic time, significant and sincere, should exist beyond the events on the screen (Tarkovsky, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair 1989: 114, 119). This approach is substantially different from Eisenstein's montage of attractions created by the arrangement of individual shots, which suggests the structural elements of the film should be associated with a variety of concepts, forcing the viewer to do some intellectual work.

Tarkovsky viewed Eisenstein's approach as 'montage dictum', which 'contradicts the very basis of the unique process whereby a film affects the audience' (1989: 183).
A staunch opponent of montage theories, Tarkovsky believed that Eisenstein's films suffered from sequences guided by theoretical considerations rather than the practitioner's intuition:

> Eisenstein's own work vindicates my thesis. If his intuition let him down, and he failed to put into the edited pieces the time-pressure required by that particular assembly, then the rhythm, which he held to be directly dependent on editing, would show up the weakness of his theoretical premise. (1989: 119)

Whereas Eisenstein's filmmaking was centred around the intentional intellectual and conceptual juxtaposition of images, Tarkovsky was more concerned with shots that 'come together into a self-organising structure […] because of the distinctive properties given the material during shooting' (1989: 116).

Tarkovsky recognised the strong affective potential of temporality, and his *sculpting in time* perceived films as an interplay of distinctive flows or waves of time expressed by the internal pressure of shots:

> Just as life, constantly moving and changing, allows everyone to interpret and feel each separate moment in his own way, so too a real picture, faithfully recording on film the time which flows on beyond the edges of the frame, lives within time if time lives within it; this two-way process is a determining factor of cinema. (1989: 118)

Tarkovsky proposed that the rhythm of a film is created by the distinctive time that runs through individual shots rather than the edited assembly of shots (Tarkovsky 1984: 4). Russian director Yuriy Mamin, who attended Tarkovsky's workshop during The High Courses for Scriptwriters and Film Directors, remembers how the director was most fascinated by the unique natural state of things. As Mamin recognised:

> Tarkovsky preferred to film fire during rain, as if shot communicated high-tensed action, little movement should be present. On the contrary, if he had to deal with high tempo, the internal pressure was unnecessary. Thus, Tarkovsky suggested that tempo and rhythm should preferably maintain a sense of conflict. (my translation from Russian, Lubkov 2022: 284)

Unlike Eisenstein, whose attention to symbol-image was one of the primary components towards the rationale of montage, Tarkovsky was not too fond of the concept of symbols: [17]

> We can express our feelings regarding the world around us either by poetic or by descriptive means. I prefer to express myself metaphorically. Let me stress: metaphorically, not symbolically. A symbol contains within itself a definite meaning, certain intellectual formula, while metaphor is an image. An image possessing the same distinguishing features as the world it represents. An image — as opposed to a symbol — is indefinite in meaning. One cannot speak of the infinite world by applying tools that are definite and finite. We can analyse the formula that constitutes a symbol, while metaphor is a being-within-itself, it's a monomial. It falls apart at any attempt of touching it. (Tarkovsky in interview with Guilbert 1983)

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[17] When discussing the cinema of Tarkovsky, it is important to approach his claims critically rather than accepting them at face value. Although Tarkovsky was known for expounding profound discourse about filmmaking, it is necessary to analyse the gap between his theoretical assertions and the practical implementation, which relates to one of this project's research questions. Such exploration may involve examining cases where the director's intentions may have differed from the outcomes, leading to a nuanced discussion about the complexities and contradictions within Tarkovsky's cinematic works.

It is useful to recall Turovskaya's contrasting opinion:

> Tarkovsky's cinema is semiotic through and through. Sometimes the 'level of meaning" cries out for itself: the wall at the end of *Mirror*, on which mirrors of various sizes and shapes are displayed—all the mirrors of life—is semiotic to a high degree. The same can be said about the hand that releases the bird-soul. (2019: 243)

Similar to Turovkaya's observations, I argue that the way the audience approaches semiotics in Tarkovsky's films shows a stark contrast to his beliefs, and throughout this chapter, I explore *Mirror*'s leitmotifs, visual elements and props that function precisely as symbols.

Mirror: Critical Reflections

Mirror presents different temporal strands, which can be divided into pre-war (around the 1930s), war (during the Second World War), and post-war (around the 1970s), which can be further categorized as present, past, memories, dreams and imagination. We learn to understand the temporal boundaries through the author's voiceover ("The road from the station passed through Ignatievo, then swerved near the farm we had lived on each summer before the war…"), the variably coloured, black and white, or sepia scenes, or even different actors playing the same characters. The pre-war layer features a young mother, Maria, with her two children, Marina (a prototype of Tarkovsky's sister) and Alexei (a 5-6-year-old version of the narrator). The wartime fragments feature the same young mother and Marina and Alexei, now played by different, slightly older children. In post-war scenes, the narrator's wife, Natalia, is played by the same actress as the young mother (fig. 6.1). Their son Ignat is played by the same boy who appears as Alexei in the Second World War strand. The older version of Maria, played by Tarkovsky's real mother, Maria Vishnyakova, appears in all three temporal strands, as well as in memories and dreams.

Fig. 6.1: Margarita Terekhova as Maria (on the left) and Natalia (on the right)

Mirror is assembled with insertions of archival footage, including newsreel from the Spanish Civil War, Soviet celebrations of Valeri Chkalov's flight over the North Pole, demonstrations on Damansky Island in 1969, and soldiers crossing Lake Sivash. Documentary sequences add a historical dimension to intimate personal memories and juxtapose the recitations of Tarkovsky's father's poems. *Mirror* progresses through sequences not linked in a linear, chronological time mode. In *Sculpting in Time,* Tarkovsky claims that:

> Time, imprinted in the frame, dictates the particular editing principle; and the pieces that 'won't edit' - that can't be properly joined – are those which record a radically different kind of time. One cannot, for instance, put actual time together with conceptual time, any more than one can join water pipes of different diameter. The consistency of the time that runs through the shot, its intensity or 'sloppiness', could be called time-pressure: then editing can be seen as the assembly of the pieces on the basis of the time-pressure within them. (Tarkovsky, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair 1989: 117)

According to Tarkovsky, the tangible time-pressure of the shot is represented by 'something significant, truthful, going on beyond the events on the screen' (1989:117); more precisely, these shots have more ideas that should be felt and interpreted rather than being contained in their visual depiction, but also shots that establish the immediacy of the recorded moment and the diversity of life perceived. Tarkovsky also claims that *Mirror* was edited through the images' intrinsic pattern rather than readily definable intellectual meanings (1989: 116).

Totaro observes that while editing is important in Tarkovsky's cinema, its creative capacity is determined by the varying time-pressure already inherent in shots and not by 'clever or conceptual juxtaposing' (1992: 24). He compares time in *Mirror* to a kaleidoscope and provides an example of the Lake Sivash scene to demonstrate Tarkovsky's consciousness of the time-pressure. The author argues that while intercutting the documentary stock with the fiction footage, the film combines historical and personal time to achieve the highest level of credibility. Totaro acknowledges the spontaneous nature of editing and compares it to unpredictable weather powers, but his analysis of editing strategies centres almost exclusively around the theory of rhythm.

In comparison, Tollof Nelson's work provides a distinct theoretical framework that systematically explains certain editing choices in *Mirror* while also considering the paradoxes of time and temporal experiences. Apart from turning to theories of rhythm, such as Meschonnic's conception, and inventing his own critical theory of rhythm, Nelson also

considers the necessity for semiotic, linguistic, and philosophical analyses. He raises an intriguing point:

> Editing is not a primary principle of creation and engendering but an intermediary principle of assembly; editing is a bringing-about, a harboring-forth of time as it is made perceptible through technique; and insofar as it generates a new awareness of time it is as much concerned with what is omitted in the intervals between shots as it is with what inheres in and flows through shots themselves. (2003: 94)

Mroz suggests that editing in *Mirror* transforms time into heterogeneous and variable matter. The film's temporal rhythm structurally resembles stuttering like that demonstrated by the boy in the prologue sequence. She writes:

> The shot of the wind emerging through the trees in black-and-white is seen twice, interrupted abruptly both times before it can properly unfold. There are many examples of these 'stuttering' shots that are cut midway through a potentially complete action, such as a shirt flying across the room and a chicken breaking out of a window in the house. The brief shot of a hand being warmed against a fire, which is later repeated in its wider, longer context, also works towards this stammering impression inherent in the editing. The Spanish documentary footage flashes across the screen briefly twice before it is played out in full. (2012: 115)

When she explores the embodiment and hapticity within *Mirror's* temporal context, Mroz looks at the scene of a young girl warming her hands in front of a fire and claims that the repetition of this image later in the film, decontextualized, provokes '[a] kind of powerful tactile response' (2012: 115). Moreover, Mroz also discusses the shot's relationship with sequences that precede and follow:

> The fact that this image is narratively disconnected from the images before it, emerging from an unknown space and time in what might be memory, reality or fantasy, also invites a more comprehensive questioning. The image may be sensory, but it is also perplexing. (2012: 110)

The concept of meaning created through disconnecting shots prompted me to engage with the theoretical framework of Artavazd Peleshian, which I review in the following section in greater detail.

Montage-at-a-distance

Peleshian's breakthrough theory of montage-at-a-distance was developed in the 1970s and is little known in English-speaking academia. Originating from Armenia, and distant from internationally significant film industries, Peleshian's artistic and theoretical efforts did not

initially receive substantial recognition from the critics of world cinema. The language barrier also played a key role in restricting the dissemination of his work to a broader international audience. His most prominent theoretical text, 'Montage-at-a-Distance, or: A Theory of Distance', was first published in 1972, made available in Russian in 1974 in *Questions of Cinema*,[18] and translated to English in 2015 by Julia Vassilieva for the journal *LOLA*.

As a reflective and conceptual filmmaker, Peleshian is most concerned with the metaphorical properties of cinema - when shots are joined into a structure that resembles a poem or an essay and where there is space for the viewer's thought process. One of the most striking examples of Peleshian's work is *Earth of People* (1966), which looks for rhymes in everyday routine. In Figure 6.2, we can see the juxtaposition of a dentist pulling out a tooth with the worker uprooting a screw from the rails or the shot of an athlete tying his boxing gloves presented in contrast to a bride trying on wedding gloves.

Fig. 6.2: Sequence of shots from Earth of People (Artavazd Peleshian 1966)

The formative principle of Peleshian's montage-at-a-distance is the *disjunction* of shots and their subsequent redistribution in the film's timeline. Peleshian seeks to establish montage effects by juxtaposing shots and advances his theory by observing sequences or blocks of images that are remote from each other yet visually or thematically similar (fig. 6.3). Diagram 1 below presents a montage connection examined from the perspective of collision between shots A and B. Diagram 2 illustrates the relationship between two blocks of shots, which can occur over different distances in the narrative, through various intermediate links. Sometimes,

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[18] Annual book edition with most notable historical and theoretical film-related articles. Published by USSR Academy of Sciences.

the trajectory of this movement between the blocks is so complex that it is not immediately possible to distinguish it.
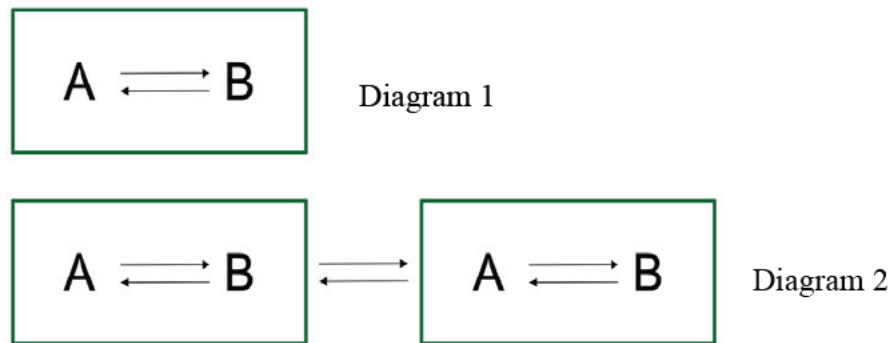

Fig. 6.3: Peleshian's diagrams of montage-at-a-distance (adapted from Vassilieva 2015)

The montage-at-a-distance approach is realised through a deliberate strategy of repetitions and variations in which the missing visuals cast an aura that emotionally resonates with the audience's perception. Within this particular interplay, the montage connections are established. Peleshian explains:

> No one has yet done montage with images that don't exist. This is just what I try to do in the architecture of many films: make visible to the spectator images that aren't there. An absent representation can be even stronger. The possibility of the unreal existence of an absent image is what makes for the mystery of montage at a distance. (Peleshian in interview with Niney 2000:96)

The disjointed fragments become key supporting points in the edit (Peleshian calls them 'bearing shots'), which push forward the film action, deepen the narrative meaning, and attain shots with new semantic and ideological meaning. The director writes:

> The most interesting part begins not when I join two montage fragments, but when I disjoin them, putting between them a third, fourth, and fifth fragment. When joining two key shots which carry an important semantic charge – we shall henceforth call them bearing shots – I strive not to bring them closer, not to make them collide, but to create a distance between them. The meaning of ideas that I want to express is best communicated not through the joining of two shots, but in the creation of interaction between them through numerous links. Thus one can achieve a much stronger and deeper expression of meaning than when the shots are joined in a consecutive way. This heightens the register of expressivity, and the quantity of information that the film can produce rises to an unprecedented level. (Peleshian translated by Vassilieva 2015)

The bearing shots become an integral part of the leitmotif type of narrative assembly in which associative connections establish the story development. The change of narrative, spatiotemporal, and mise-en-scène contexts that border the key editing pieces from both sides is strictly functional as it ensures the development of the creator's thought while also repeating the nature of the human consciousness – chaotic but at the same time consistently logical.

Having analysed Peleshian's key texts and interviews in Russian and English, I found that his theory was expounded within the text, which, although rich in detail and context, lacked systematic organisation for enhanced comprehension. Therefore, I address the gap in English-speaking academic literature by proposing the following summary of a systematically organised montage-at-a-distance theory and its key features:

1. **Refusal of the conventional application of shot sizes**– wide and full shots obtain both the function and meaning of close-up shots. Despite the universally acclaimed editing rules, Peleshian suggests that a close-up shot can be directly cut to a wide shot without the prior insertion of a medium shot. The director claims that a close-up shot in montage-at-a-distance is not intended to examine details and instead aims to convey a general feeling that carries multiple semantic meanings.

2. **What you see, you must hear. And what you are supposed to hear, you must see** – the visual and the aural should simultaneously communicate the same meaning, thought, or sensation. Critical expressiveness must be found even in ambient sounds and noises, which the editor can manipulate to change their resonance and effects. An editor should also seek to find ways to maintain the metaphorical and aesthetic functions of the synchronous sound. The possibilities of the original sound and dialogue accompanying the image should be regarded as richer than simply narrowed down to narrative representation, accompaniment, means of establishing certain mood or a contrapuntal element.

3. **Disobeying the classical rules of linear storytelling** – the three-act structure, which is typically coherent and includes exposition, development and end, is replaced by abstract and non-linear narratives and experimental editing. The filmmaker can apply circular editing strategies, disrupt the linear flow of shots by creating new, emotionally resonant connections between shots, and gain complete control over manipulating the screen time.

4. **When selecting documentary footage for the edit, metaphoric resonance with other film material, expressivity and capacity to communicate the narrative theme**

are more important than the factual contents – if the film features a mix of archival footage and shots filmed by the cinematographer, the editor must ensure the selected takes have the same underlying structure. The similarities between two types of material can be visual (set-up, composition, action, characters, mise-en-scène, graphic elements), audial (featuring similar sounds) or semantic (transmitting images which, when repeated, can attain a greater symbolic meaning).

5. **The recurring appearance of shots must give the film its poetic resolution** – when shots are repeated, their subsequent occurrence should present a qualitatively different meaning from the one it had at first, and a new cycle of thought should be initiated that can extend beyond the realms of the fictional film world. When the shot repeats twice, it can raise associative connections, but to achieve the level of montage-at-a-distance, more frequent occurrences are favourable. The editor should also be aware of the material surrounding the repeated images. Even if the selected shots have no direct contact with scenes that lead to their repetition, the distance between them builds up the semantic effect and establishes meaningful montage connections.

6. **Apply the montage of context -** each time the repetitions occur, they should appear in a different context with a different symbolic meaning. By changing the context, the editor can intensify and strengthen the theme.

7. **The editing strategy must be accepted in its entirety** – once the structure of montage-at-a-distance is established, the editor cannot arbitrarily remove one element. The film's montage strategy is either accepted in its entirety or rejected in its entirety. The editor can change the place and intended meaning of selected shots to change the balance of montage-at-a-distance, but he cannot eliminate the shots, as this would inevitably destroy the system.

8. **The authorial thought of the film director is crucial**: **one must know which elements can and will interact at a distance** - the creator must know the thematic and visual attributes of shots, as well as a clear view of the film's form so that all processes can be fully controlled and the audience's reaction to effects can be predicted.

Methodological Choices

In order to fully explore the intricate fusion of editing in switching between spatialised time and real-time*,* re-watching *Mirror* repeatedly became an essential part of the methodology. As the narrative is multi-layered, several viewings allowed for comprehensive

understanding and detailed observations of recurring themes, motifs, and symbols. As I was concerned with sequencing certain shots further to contextualise them within Peleshian's theory of distance, repeated viewings also facilitated temporal analysis of the editing choices, duration of shots, and narrative rhythm. I gathered substantial visual and auditory data, which allowed me to critically question some existing assumptions about the editing in *Mirror* and explore different interpretations.

One of the practice-based methodological choices in this study involved a vertical disassembly of the film in Adobe Premiere Pro based on spatiotemporal layers and sequence breakdown. Maya Deren claims that dramatic film structures progress horizontally in a logic of actions. At the same time, poetic narratives perform as vertical investigations, which disrupt the linear flow of time. She explains:

> In what is called a "horizontal development", the logic is a logic of actions. In a "vertical development", it is a logic of a central emotion or idea which attracts to itself even disparate images which contain that central core which they have in common. (Deren quoted in Maas 1963: 55-63)

The careful examination of cuts that occur when switching between different film realms and narrative episodes was crucial for understanding the nature of *Mirror*'s self-organizing, spontaneous editing structure.

The distinction between paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures is critical in semiotic analysis. In cinema, syntagms are horizontal structures and include ways of changing the frame (cuts or transitions), mainly comparing preceding and following shots. Alternatively, the vertical paradigmatic analysis concerns spatial relationships between the shots. In *Mirror*, the connection between different film elements (visual symbols, shot composition, camera movement, lighting, and others) is paradigmatic, where shots attain meaning through juxtaposition and being distant yet emotionally or logically similar. By applying this method to explore the vertical connections and the system of parallelisms and repetitions in the film, we can advance the investigation of editing structures in Tarkovsky's *Mirror.*

The second step of analysis identified bearing shots with important semantic charge to observe the effects of their disjunction. Nelson references philosophical traditions and attempts to study images' temporal duration and disruption to advance the knowledge of cinematic rhythms. He does this through a textual sequence-shot analysis of *Mirror* (2003: 1999-270), which, out of the available academic literature, is most significant to this case study. With the principles of Peleshian's montage-at-a-distance in mind, I began the analysis with a similar but more detailed approach. I created a shot-by-shot breakdown of *Mirror* to study the narrative's

multiple strands and the distribution of cuts around them. I noted my observations in the following order: cut number, timecode, cut type, spatiotemporal layer, notes, and representative images (shots on both sides of the cut) (Table 6.1).
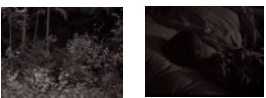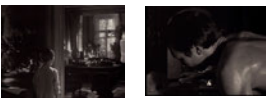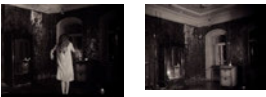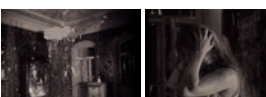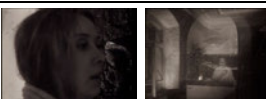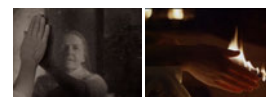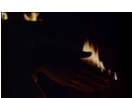
Cut	Time	Transition	Spatio-temporal layers	Shot description	Shots	Notes
18	16:20	Cut	Dream-dream	SEPIA forest - MCU SEPIA child in bed, he gets up		White shirt flies across the shot
19	16:57	Cut	Dream-dream	Child looks at the other room - MCU father with little scoop for water - moves onto mother washing her hair, camera moves out to LS, SLOW MOTION		SLOW MOTION + SEPIA (normal movements of doing an ordinary thing look unsettling due to slow-motion, setting, colour and sound scope)
20	17:47	Jump cut	Dream-dream	LS of mother in the middle of the room - same room but with ceiling falling, SLOW MOTION		Jump cut same room but more destroyed (=end of marriage), in-frame tension
21	18:00	Cut	Dream-dream	WS of the room and ceiling falling - MS of mother smiling and walking, camera moves around her, captures her reflection in the mirror, SLOW MOTION		Just as the big ceiling piece falls, there's a cut. She wraps herself in woollen scarf (contrast warmth vs water and sound)
22	18:45	Cut	Dream-dream	Mother's side profile SLOW MOTION - Old mother coming towards the mirror, her reflection		Fire, water, mirror, slow motion (old mother vs young mother), tree - the tree of life, there's some sort of texture over mirror glass (looks like wrinkles)
23	19:05	Match cut	Dream-past/ memories	Old mother is wiping the mirror MCU - Hand near open flame		Old hand - young hand/ water - fire/ sepia - colour/ slow motion real time
24	19:09	Dip to black	Time n/a	Hand near open flame, a flicker of dip to black		

Table 6.1: A sample arrangement of Excel shot-by-shot breakdown of Mirror

The Excel shot-by-shot breakdown served as the primary basis for disassembling *Mirror* into the most simple units of editing construction, but I needed to investigate the inherent patterns and motifs that these shots formed. Keeping in mind the potential of montage-at-a-distance forming the editing strategy of *Mirror*, I needed to look at the timeline in its natural setting within the software. Unlike the shot-by-shot breakdown, which helped me to uncover subtle nuances and see stylistic choices that could be missed in a more general analysis, the film

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disassembly in Premiere Pro facilitated the observation of the events sequencing and the occurrence of motifs identified in Excel but now laid out on the film's timeline.

I performed a similar vertical breakdown of the full film's length in my *Reds* chapter to observe the patterns in interviews where witnesses interact with the fictional footage. When working with *Mirror*, I disassembled its narrative structure based on two parameters. The first breakdown consisted of spatiotemporal layers with narrative strands representing reality, dreams, memories and past, history (documentary found footage) and metaphysical space (fig. 6.4). The second time featured a sequence-based breakdown (fig. 6.5).

As I repeatedly watched the film, I made several revisions to narrative layer references. For instance, I mistakenly perceived some scenes as dreams, and only as the story developed would I understand those were glimpses from the past. During repeated screenings with a completed draft of my Excel shot-by-shot breakdown, I started to pick up on more errors but, most importantly, identified visual motifs, patterns of speed manipulation, colour shifts, and camera movement, which I will review in the next section.
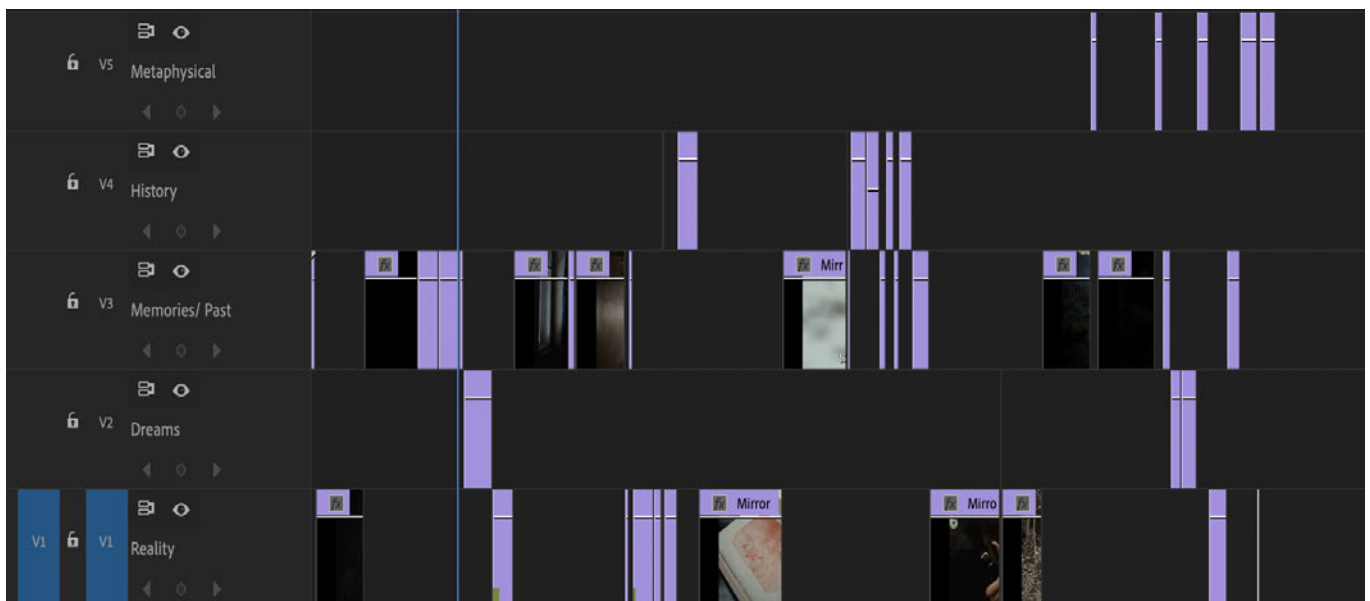

*Fig. 6.4: Breakdown of shots and scenes in Mirror that take place in different narrative and spatiotemporal layers*
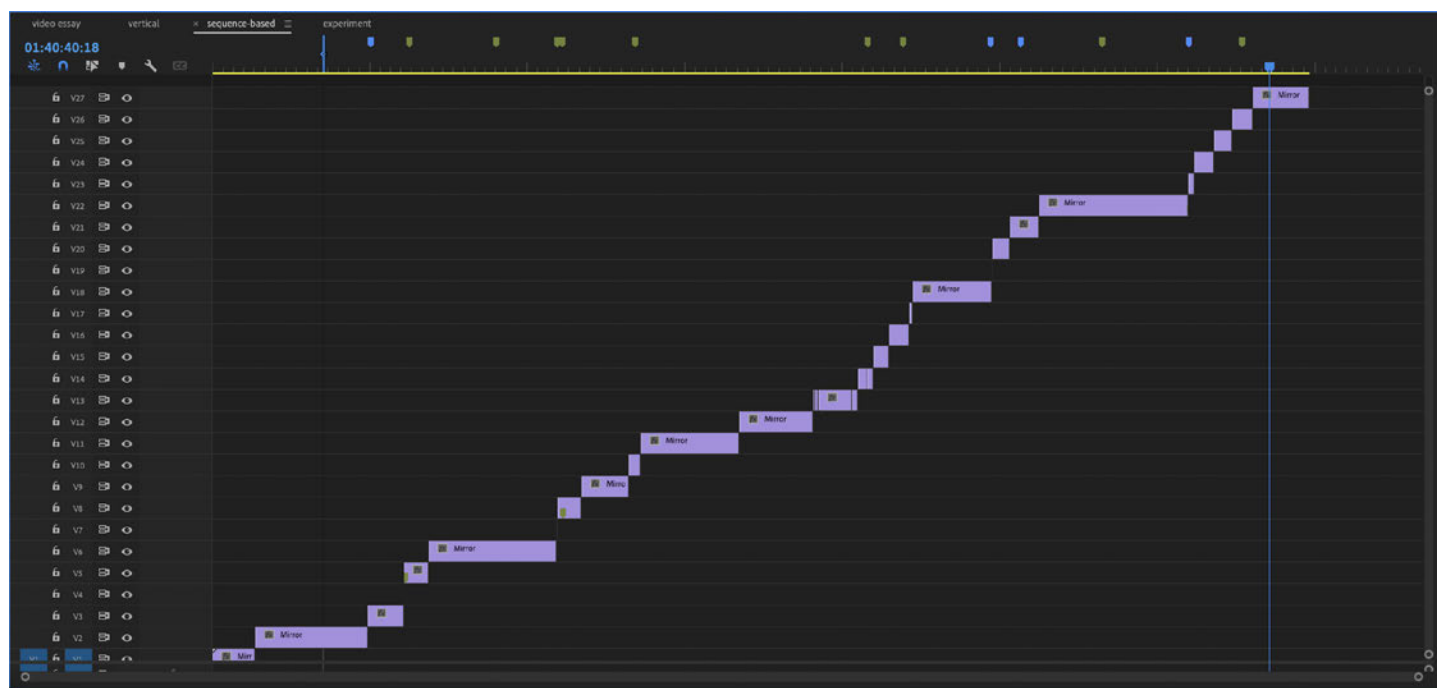
Fig. 6.5: Sequence-based breakdown of Mirror

Moving Between Time Frames

Before proceeding with the larger timeline analysis in Adobe Premiere Pro, I gathered a list of shots that stood out stylistically from the rest of the film due to uninterrupted movement or action inherent on screen. One such shot could be seen in the hair-washing dream: the boy sees his mother wearing a nightgown and dipping her hair in a tub of water. The camera starts dollying out as the mother slowly gets up, her face still covered with wet hair, and raises her hands so that the position of her body almost resembles a crucifix. The shot of the disappearing circle of condensation left by the warm cup still visible on the table's surface was another good example of a trance-like long take. There was something *alive* and hypnotic in those most often slow-paced shots that seemed to trigger my inner desire to cut while also waiting for some visual indicator to finish but not knowing when it should end.

Next, I noted all shots in which the natural powers appeared (rain, wind, fire) and discovered that shots would often be intercut with other narrative elements, creating a sense of temporal ambiguity. Then, I highlighted shots with deliberate movement of objects, as if they almost have their own organic life. For instance, when the children leave the table to see the fire, the untouched glass bottle falls to the ground and rolls on the floor. The conventional notion of time was constantly challenged by juxtaposing meditative stillness with movement, suggesting temporal distortion and allowing the shot to function within its rhythmic structure.

Mirror features various scenes that belong to different times and spaces, which can produce confusion upon first viewing. As Totaro rightly observes, Tarkovsky's films require several viewings before one can make separations between the inner (mind) and outer (social/ physical reality) world (1992:26). An example is the prologue sequence in which we see a boy in an identified apartment switching on a TV, which then cuts to a black-and-white recording of a hypnosis séance to treat stuttering. The conventions of filmmaking invite us to think that when the boy turns on the TV, the next thing we see will be what he sees on the TV. That does not work because things are not framed or expressed in the correct order, which suggests an association between the way that séances and spirituality work to explain connections between this world and the other world, the conscious and the unconscious, or between dream and reality. It may be the idea that one thing can correspond to another thing metaphorically, such as the image of turning on the television bringing up the question of annunciation and being able to speak. Perhaps the film is prefaced with such sequences as a means for the director to speak freely and express himself as an artist. Tarkovsky was known to have significantly struggled throughout his career and had conflicts with authorities, so it was vital for him to have his artistic integrity recognised and respected. While the cut between Ignat looking at the screen and the following close framing of the speech therapist suggests a jump from the present to a time that is not identified in monochrome documentary footage (and which, as I mentioned before, does not appear to be a picture shown on the TV), the visual linkage is suggested by the eyelines between the two shots (fig. 6.6). The cut between these two shots demonstrates an interesting diagonal between Ignat looking slightly down and to the left and the doctor looking up to the right in the following shot, 'responding' to Ignat's subject of interest.

Fig. 6.6: Visual linkage in eyelines in the opening sequence of Mirror

At this point, the audience is unaware of who the boy is. Later in the film, during the phone conversation between adult Alexei and his mother, we will see the same environment again and understand that it was indeed Ignat in his father's apartment. The opening shot remains

ambiguous for the audience. At the same time, the sequence sets up the narrative importance of shots that will attain visual counterpoint meaning later in the film. The viewer is also introduced to the alternation between colour and black-and-white footage, which, apart from being a stylistic approach, also holds the function of moving between time frames.

Shot Repetitions in the Context of Montage-at-a-distance

A key defining characteristic of Peleshian's theory is shot repetitions, which can give the film its poetic resolution, facilitate the lyrical resolution of specific themes, or simply support the general structure of the montage-at-a-distance. In the famous phantasmagorical episode of the mother washing her hair, we observe the repetition of visually almost identical shots. The scene begins with a medium close-up of small Alexei in bed, sleeping with his face turned away from the camera. The boy then wakes up and sits up, looking around as the camera follows his movement in slow-motion mode. The film cuts to the key bearing shot in *Mirror* – a monochrome full static view of trees and bushes that slowly tracks from right to left as fierce wind blows across branches and leaves. The next frame shows a similar set-up with the small boy again (but now in black-and-white), in which he calls for his dad, then sits up and gets out of bed. A few visual signifiers of a demarcation line between the realms of reality are introduced to this sequence:

- The use of different speeds of slow-motion
- Alternation between colour and monochrome footage
- Cutting on a character's profile
- Perpendicular tracking shot over nature (Totaro 1992: 26)

We see the first monochrome wind shot after Alexei's line: "An angel as a flame coming from a bush appeared to Prophet Moses. He led his people out across the sea," and Natalia wipes her tears and responds: "Why has nothing like that ever appeared to me?" The dialogue scene is preceded by DaVinci's portrait of Ginevra Benci (who has an uncanny resemblance to Natalia): the time frame and the narrative of the shot are ambiguous, dramatized by dream-like bokeh overlays. This shot disorientates the viewer by switching to monochrome, which at first glance can be attributed to a switch to the past, dreams or memory.

On another occasion, when the black-and-white wind shot is repeated, we see Natalia looking through photographs that capture her and Alexei's mother. This sequence is the only one in *Mirror* that belongs to the reality time layer but is shown in black-and-white mode. As

the argument continues, the shift to monochrome signals the repetitiveness of Alexei and Natalia's quarrels, in which the woman becomes more helpless and hopeless. The cut to a wide static monochrome shot of the wind, slightly moving the leaves, then begins the tracking motion, which only lasts a frame. It is matched with a colour low-key medium shot of an unknown woman's face appearing through the dark door frame. The narrator recites: "With an amazing regularity, I keep seeing one and the same dream," which suggests the shift to the realm of dreams again. The sound of the rain continues to play during all three shots, bridging the distance between the present and memories of the past seen in dreams. The rain stops when we hear the line: "Everything will be possible", as if explaining the magical link that can join different realms. In this instance, the brief occurrence of the monochrome shot serves as the transition shot between the narrative layers and introduces the viewer to a dream fragment.

The last time the wind shot appears is during reciting the final poem, 'Eurydice'. The film cuts from the close framing of young Maria looking away from the camera to the wide shot. A small bird flies across the screen from right to left, and the wind emerges powerfully through the bushes. The shot does not end there; the camera tracks to the wooden table, capturing a kerosene lamp and a clay pot fall. Similar to Asafyev's shots, which were spread across three sequences, the wind fragments in slow motion can also be joined into one whole piece. While the first instance of seeing the beginning of the shot is ambiguous, by the time of the second repetition, the viewer has already been introduced to visual cues that signal the shifts in time and attain the meaning of entering a utopian dream. When the shot plays for longer, and we finally see more of the environment apart from the bushes, the tension is raised by the subtle movements of everyday objects in the shot. This emotional anticipation leads to the last dream in the film, a vision of the child finally opening the door and entering the house he had longed for. In this way, the third repetition of the wind shot acquires a qualitatively different meaning compared to its initial occurrence, as it seems to initiate a new cycle of thought that can expand beyond the film's narrative. The slow-motion wind shot catalyses the feeling of déjà vu, signifies a dream, and is repeated in all three dream episodes in *Mirror*. The montage in context becomes an important underlying feature here, as the material surrounding the occurrence of this shot changes with each repetition. In this way, the viewer's experience of seeing the repetitions of the shot attains associative relationships.

Not all shot repetitions, however, contribute to the function of montage-at-a-distance and establish an intricate pattern of developing meanings. The quick cuts to brief insert shots at the end of sequences, such as the wind emerging through bushes, the burning fire behind the child's hand, and the fire in the distance of a forest, echo the experiences of other shots in the film.

Matilda Mroz points out that one of the expressive capacities of the film's editing is inherent in 'multiple ways, but this process of expression is more akin to the stuttering that has been healed than to the speech heralded by the boy. The film repeats this stuttering temporal rhythm structurally and cinematographically throughout' (Mroz 2012:115). The repetition of certain shots later in the film revealed in their larger context, contributes to their complex unfolding process. For instance, the first time, there is a close-up image of a hand with fire flickering briefly after the shot. Then, the old mother looks at her reflection in the mirror and reaches out with her hand to touch it. A good example of the graphic match cut can be seen here, even though sensually, the two hands, one cold and ghostly and the other one appearing warm and young, evoke completely different responses in the viewer. This shot of a hand, now played in its full context and duration, repeats later in the sequence, and we learn more about the setting and the red-haired girl warming against a fire. While the wide shot of the fire in the countryside appears only once, it produces a similar effect of signalling the past, which was seen in the scene of the burning barn.

Gaze at the Camera

Another distinctive bearing montage element within the montage theory of distance is the image of characters looking directly at the camera. The film features framing techniques involving actors, real-life individuals in documentary footage, and even artwork subjects, all directing their gaze towards the audience. This approach is repeated at several points in the film, especially during transitions between two different spatiotemporal layers (see Table 6.2). As I was concerned with developing relationships between shots through my vertical disassembly, I only considered the occasions of direct gaze at the moment of the cut.

Let us look more closely at the conversation scene in the present time in which Natalia and Alexei discuss the issues of their unsuccessful marriage. Natalia's eyeline changes from looking at herself in the mirror to looking at Alexei, who is invisible and off-screen, which simultaneously appears as the eyeline directed into the camera lens and at the viewer. Then, the medium close-up of Natalia's reflection cuts to a servant carrying a little girl, with a dacha seen in the background. Their dialogue continues over the scene from the past, which is signalled by Alexei's line, "When I recall my childhood and my mother, somehow she always has your face." The sound bridge, thus, is the primary narrative tool in conveying the shift in time, as the scene does not demonstrate the typical visual signifiers of entering the memories used in other parts of the film.

Nevertheless, the viewer saw this shot in the film's beginning when Arseniy Tarkovsky was reading the first poem. In this scene, we could see the girl sleeping on hay on the ground and the maid picking her up. The two fragments used in different Mirror parts form one split shot in the edit.

| Nr.	Shot description	Spatio-temporal shift	Reference image
1	Old mother looking at herself in the mirror	Dream – memories/ imagination	
2	Ignat looking at his mirror reflection	Past/ memories - present	
3	Redhead girl wiping blood from her lips	Past – documentary footage	
4	Afasyev on top of the hill	Documentary footage – past	
5	China-Russian border conflict crowd	Past -documentary footage	
6	Soldier's CU during China-Russian border conflict	Documentary footage - past	

7	Ginevra de' Benci, da Vinci's painting	Past – spatiotemporal layer is not defined	
8	Girl looking at the camera through the door frame	Dream (monochrome) – dream (colour)	
9	Young mother after chicken slaughter	Past - dream	
10	Father and levitating mother in the background	Past - dream	

Table 6.2: Occurrences of the gaze framing in film during transitions between spatiotemporal layers

While thematically, narratively, and visually distant, the shots of characters looking directly into the camera evoke a sense of shared experience, drawing the viewer deeper into the switch to another narrative strand. The repetition of such gaze instances turns into a chain reaction that breaks the fourth wall and disrupts the conventional boundary between the spectator and the multi-layered inner world through which Alexei (and Tarkovsky himself) takes us. Also notable is the diversity of the characters brought together – mother (young and old), father, Ignat, a family member, a childhood love, unknown soldiers and ordinary citizens, and works of art – their eyelines blur the line between the characters and the viewers, reminding us about being part of this world's existence and the inevitability of death.

Peleshian states:

> That's retroaction, the reverse effect that fastens the sequence or the film into itself. Flux and reflux. Movements from birth to death but also from death to birth: growth - decline, death – resurrection. (Peleshian quoted in Niney 2000:95)

This film fragment and the preceding quarrel scene are integral to understanding the spatiotemporal construction of scenes featuring Natalia, off-screen Alexei, and their Spanish friends in the same room. Natalia says, "We are getting more and more distant, and I can't do anything about it". The close-up shot of a red plant in the foreground with Natalia's reflection in the window slightly out of focus cuts to a full shot of Ignat by a window his mother had been standing by just a few seconds before (fig. 6.7). The camera pans to the right; we see a medium shot of a Spanish man calling someone named Maria, and Natalia's close-up appears again.
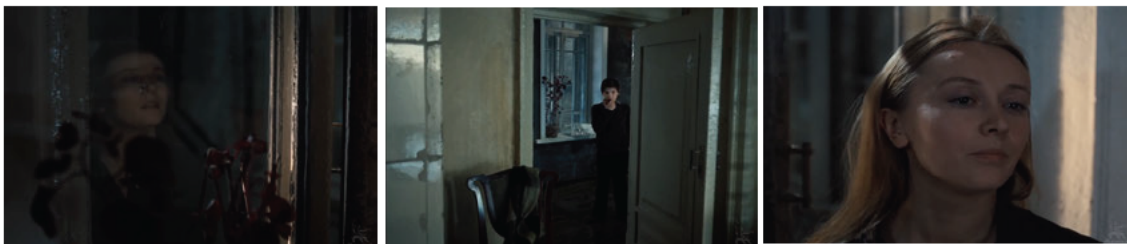
Fig. 6.7: The intervention of Ignat between two shots of Natalia signals that the new sequence begins

Profile Shots

In a breakdown of *Mirror*, Nelson presents the Spaniards' episode as constructed from two sequences he called 'The Exilic Chronotope of the Spanish Refugees' and 'B/W Documentary of Spanish Refugee Children' (2003: 198). The blocks of fiction and newsreel footage form one unique and inseparable structure as the careful selection of documentary shots (introduced to *Mirror* in the timeline for the first time) finds its poetical resolution through metaphorical resonance between the archival footage and the fictional material which forms one of the guidelines of the montage-at-a-distance. The critical expressiveness of the Spanish Civil War footage finds its reflection when juxtaposed with conversations between the Spaniards about their personal stories of leaving their homeland as refugee children (Figure 6.8). In one of the newsreel shots, a woman passes across the frame carrying a long broken

mirror, and we hear the line: "Most of all, he was excited by the farewell he was given." This shot is framed by an image of Spaniards, with collages of mirrors seen behind them.

Fig. 6.8: Spaniards' scene intercut with documentary footage

In this scene, the archival shots and the film footage have the same underlying structure and advance the theme of memories, grief, orphanage, and silently accepting fate. All instances of cutting to documentary footage in this sequence occur on the character's profile shots, which supports my argument that this framing signals the shift to a different spatiotemporal layer (Table 6.3). Also notable is the match cut between the close framing of Natalia breathing into the mirror and the wide monochrome newsreel of the matador in the bullring. The fight between ex-partners is over, and Natalia's breath is an audial accent of its ending. Her breath facilitates the effective immediate cut into the past, and we hear the excited crowd cheering while the bull chases the matador. However, the metaphorical resonance concealed in the cut does not only function as the transition in time; it can also signal that the broader conflict between Alexei and Natalia is not yet resolved, and their power dynamics are not equal.

Shot 1	Shot 2	Spatiotemporal layers
		Present – not identified
		Memories – dreams
		Present – past (archival footage)
		Past (archival footage) - present
		Past (memories) - past (archival footage)

Table 6.3: Examples of occurrences of character's profile framing in film during transitions between spatiotemporal layers

One of the most ambiguous constructions in the sequence-based vertical breakdown occurs after Afasyev's prank on the shooting instructor. After the close-up shot of the character's love object, Redhead, touching blood on her chapped lip, the sequence thematically shifts to a documentary newsreel of soldiers crossing Lake Sivash. The brief shot of a naked man carrying a crate cuts to the long shot with Afasyef in the shooting alley amongst other children. The montage sequence is assembled from 18 chronicle shots of varying sizes, most frequently long shots, showing soldiers pushing cannon carts, marching in the water, and loading missiles. No close-up shots of soldier faces are seen, and the masses merge into one 'Unknown Soldier' or the image of a lost father, whom the orphan-rebel Afasyev metaphorically introduces from a personal to a collective perspective. Wide shots of the newsreel acquire the resonance of a close-up because the point of view is introduced through the gaze of Afasyev's child figure, who lives through the momentum of catastrophic events. Arseniy Tarkovsky starts reciting the poem 'Life, Life' as the procession of soldiers monotonously continues. The documentary sequence ends, but Tarkovsky's poem continues as the film switches to the wide shot of Afasyev climbing the snowy hill (Tarkovsky's reimagination of Breughel's 'Hunters in the Snow'). As the boy reaches the top, he turns his head right and as he whistles, the film cuts to the archival footage of the end of WWII.

The fast-paced sequence that features flickers of blasts in the darkness, shooting, bombings and explosions lasts less than a minute, and the monochrome newsreel ends with the spreading of the Hiroshima mushroom cloud (a visual reference to the earlier shot of the disappearing ring of the vapour left by the mysterious lady's cup). Afasyev looks directly into the camera in the following medium close-up, then walks away in slow-motion and stops, facing the tree. He stands still for a few seconds, and very careful observation of the shot will reveal a subtle jump cut to allow the white bird to fly into the shot from the left side. The bird lands on Afasyef's head, and after the second barely noticeable jump cut, the boy reaches out to grab the bird and squeezes it.

The small white bird, another bearing element of montage-at-a-distance, appears in several instances in *Mirror* – we can see it fly across the frame in the full shot with the young mother levitating above the bed in the dream scene; it is seen in the bearing slow-motion monochrome shot of the wind passing across the bushes; finally, in the sequence of Alexei's death, he finds a wounded bird in his sick-bed, picks it up, and gently tosses it into the light. As the bird appears in different realms, including past, present and memories, it significantly facilitates temporal disparities. Apart from being associated with transcendence and

spirituality, the bird also links personal and collective memory that switches back and forth between the dying narrator and Afasyev. Nelson explains:

> In this sense, the bird, clasped at two separate moments, also effects or enacts something of the rhythmic gap in the phenomenal experience of viewing the film, since the vision of its being launched forward in memory/ forgetting later through the glowing light of the narrator's dying, outstretched, open hand. (2003: 250)

The bird, shown at a particular point, fully reveals its semantic function of communicating memories only when repeated for the fourth and final time. By this point, the viewers have reached the logical resolution of the film's story and the montage connections have been established in their minds as they have witnessed all varying realms of Alexei's existence. Moreover, the material surrounding the bird's occurrences, even if not directly juxtaposed with these shots, has also been experienced and becomes part of one significant unity. These factors contribute to the evolution of the meaning attributed to this visual component, and the image of the bird, as per Peleshian's theory, also becomes the key-bearing montage element.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed editing choices in Tarkovsky's *Mirror* using the guidelines proposed by Artavazd Peleshian in his montage theory. The methodology presented three ways of analysing the film's editing strategies, including a shot-by-shot breakdown, vertical sequence and spatiotemporal layer-based disassembly of the *Mirror'*s timeline in Adobe Premiere Pro. This hybrid approach allowed me to observe the editing principles on a deeper paradigmatic level, which in turn facilitated an advanced study of parallelisms and audio-visual motifs in the film. The proposed repetitions and established patterns were identified and analysed based on the visual comparative analysis of the marked shots. The vertical film breakdown allowed for a 'viewing-between-the-lines' experience that would not have been achieved by traditional paper-based analysis of film shots and scenes. The particular mixture of written and practical research demonstrated in this chapter fully immerses the reader in the critical analysis. My main intention was to communicate the artistic impulses of poetic editing and montage-at-a-distance whilst retaining a strong academic focus. The written chapter seeks to explore the strategies from purely theoretical perspectives. At the same time, two different versions of video essays demonstrate the potential of digital humanities and technology to

advance film criticism. From the personal perspective of a scholar-academic, this case study was the most unambiguous in terms of establishing the connection between the insights gained from the literature review and my videographic practice, as towards the end of this doctoral project, I had already been aware of different modes of audiovisual criticism. The video essays can be viewed as self-sufficient examples of videographic exploration of editing, and due to Tarkovsky's unique approach of sculpting in time (in my opinion, most effectively expressed and experienced on-screen), I would argue that editing strategies in *Mirror* are most effectively engaged with through the audiovisual medium compared to the written counterpart.

The seemingly invisible, slow-paced and continuous cutting exhibited in *Mirror* was analysed in more detail to explore its creative and expressive capacities and was found to consist of intricate patterns of complex montage connections. Amongst the key bearing elements of montage in *Mirror*, I identified the visual pattern of cutting on profile shots and direct gaze into the camera to shift between the realms of reality, as well as the symbol of a small white bird and slow-motion wind shots representing the bridge between memory, present and past experiences, as well as imagination. I demonstrated how editing decisions such as shot repetitions, visual similarities found in different thematic blocks, as well as the use of ambiguous sound bridges in *Mirror* adhere to distant montage principles, creating expressive effects and eliciting emotional resonance. Summarising a previously unstructured theory should make it more accessible for fellow scholars and filmmakers to engage with and apply to practical works. Moreover, by introducing Tarkovsky's film as a case study to research the effects of the distance theory, I provided a framework that can lead to a deeper understanding of editing in *Mirror* without comparing it to the context of other directors' films.

Conclusion

In Summary

This project looks at the potential of videographic criticism as a methodology that can add value to written criticism. It also explores the advantage of professional editors engaging with this academic form. The main objective of answering research questions posed by this thesis is to understand how theoretical concepts align with industry approaches and how practice can enhance the study of film editing, above and beyond what written scholarship has offered. Using my experience as an editor and as an academic, I critically evaluated and investigated the more elusive features of editing that are under-researched.

As this thesis is concerned with exploring how editing knowledge is shared and communicated, in **Chapter 1**, I studied three different sources and looked at two major cinematic traditions, Soviet and Hollywood cinema, to explore the development of film editing practices across different periods, movements, and schools of thought. The first step in investigating film editing was to examine scholars' approaches to communicate their theoretical understanding of filmmaking practices, followed by exploring practitioners' works. Filmmakers articulate their practice based on professional experiences and often cover functions and characteristics of which the theorists may overlook due to the lack of involvement with the production. Moreover, practitioners are naturally more familiar with the technicalities of editing, which scholars may only understand and explain from a theoretical perspective. One of the key concepts that is often brought up by film editors in their discussions is intuition, which is a notion that is still challenging to describe in the theoretical framework. Most frequently, intuition is compared to the sense of rhythm, a sense of a good cut coming from within, a retentive memory, or a gut feeling, but above all, intuition is deemed incredibly important during the creative decision-making process. This chapter also offered a detailed overview of interviews with film editors who provided essential insights into contemporary industry practices. Although these are different examples of discourse, this project attempted to draw connections between them and identify some problematic areas and potential knowledge gaps. The appendix section of this thesis includes complete transcripts of conversations between myself and industry professionals from the UK, Ireland, Spain and Australia, in which they shared valuable insights on the process of their work, decision-making and creative possibilities of editing reflecting on their practice. Such careful and detailed research on film editing is essential as it examines different creative and strategic editing functions in various established

theories and brings these discourses about filmmaking into meaningful contact. One contention of the thesis is that traditional academic writing needs to pay more attention to what film editors can reveal. There is an enormous sense of rediscovery in the interviews; therefore, this study suggests a need for a substantial move towards closer dialogue and integration between theorists and practitioners.

This thesis presents five independent but connected film case studies demonstrating different editing approaches, aesthetics, narrative challenges and techniques. In **Chapter 2**, I explored the Soviet Montage and Sergei Eisenstein's five methods of montage in a case study on *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). I reviewed the importance of Soviet montage in light of the history of editing and also looked at the complexities of Eisenstein's work as a filmmaker-theorist. By addressing Eisenstein's theoretical thinking in the context of contemporary perspective on the editor's position in relation to academia, I explored each of his montage methods: metric, rhythmic, tonal, overtonal, and intellectual through the videographic PechaKucha deformation model. This approach suggested a novel way for exploring five montage methods, leading to new insights on the logical connections established through editing not readily visible through conventional film's viewing. The practice-as-research demonstrated in this case study also extended the scholarly value of PechaKucha approach, as it suggested this model of videographic criticism could lead to more nuanced understanding of complex editing structures in a fast-paced film. The findings also suggest that our perception, reception and interpretation of Eisenstein's theories have changed with time but are still highly relevant to the basic understanding of shot juxtaposition functions, visual conflict and visual rhythms. Thus, the chapter argues that Eisenstein's approach is much broader than the scholarship suggests. Continuing close engagement with his ideas, especially considering efforts to translate and publish more of his uncirculated works, can lead to discoveries in his research and practice and offer more insights into shifts in his theoretical thinking.

In **Chapter 3**, I looked at Warren Beatty's biopic *Reds* (1981), which engages with the Russian Revolution theme from the perspective of New Hollywood filmmaking. The continuity approach, radically different from Soviet Montage in *Battleship Potemkin*, was effective in the complex assembly of real-life interview recordings of witnesses and fictional film material, which expanded into the inquiry of several narrative layers in the film, including romance and political counterparts. In contrast to videographic approach carried out in the previous chapter, this case study demonstrated the direct involvement of Adobe Premiere Pro for the research purposes, combining visual samples with written criticism to create an audiovisual essay. The video essay explored technical insights into film's editing, utilising tools such as markers, video

layers and multiple timeline breakdowns for a comprehensive examination of multiple-layer structures. The introduction of timeline breakdowns in the editing software became the critical methodological approach in this case study, as by disassembling the film into parametered sequences (such as based on the inclusion of different characters or their combinations, or the geographical breakdown of the film's narrative, which features scenes set in different countries), I was able to discover patterns in the placement of witnesses within the fictional narrative and proved that their use in the film extends beyond their primary informative function, it also serves as a tool for transitions between time and space and becomes rhetoric about truth-telling. Additionally, timeline breakdowns provided space for immediate playback and captured on-screen interactions between selected shots and sequences, allowing me to incorporate data-driven insights into both literary and practice-based analysis.

The following two chapters shift from revolutionary themes to romance and love triangles and consider Hollywood films. In **Chapter 4**, I first looked at Douglas Sirk's melodrama *All I Desire* (1953), noting all transitions (fades and dissolves) used throughout the film and critically reflecting on their functions from the position of the film editor, primarily through my direct involvement with the film's material and attempts to re-edit some scenes in Adobe Premiere Pro. In this chapter, a hybrid theory and practice-based approaches were presented, each demonstrating variable audiovisual forms to communicate findings. Therefore, one of the main challenges on case study on *All I Desire* was the complex relationship between the achievements of the scholarly analysis and the approach of a film editor. The chapter reflected on the Classical Hollywood tradition and continuity editing system, which acknowledged the frequent use of editing transitions in films of that time as indicators of the passage of time, location changes, and practical tools to allow the natural editing flow. However, by re-imagining film fragments, in which I replaced transitions with simple cuts (and the opposite), I claimed that their functions and effects could be elevated to create more meaningful shot juxtapositions and provide visual clues without the need for explicit exposition.

Chapter 5 presented a modern love triangle in its exploration of the Post-Classical film *The Twilight Saga*: *New Moon* (Chris Weitz 2009), which had enjoyed little academic attention from the perspective of its editing. Despite the sequence, in which the videographic work was presented in this thesis, the audiovisual essay created for *New Moon* was the beginning of my exploration of engaging with the film's material in the editing software, thus, demonstrating the first attempt of translating the textual analysis into digital space. Supported by insights from a personal interview with the film's editor, Peter Lambert, I explored the

elements of modern filmmaking within the framework of David Bordwell's intensified continuity, which was found to be highly relevant when exploring the complex relationship between quick editing pace and a range of cinematography decisions. Discussing the film's editing directly with the practitioner involved in the technical and creative process allowed for unique insights into decision-making, suggesting the importance of professional voices for enriching the scholarly knowledge on less researched aspects of film editing constructions in *New Moon*. The chapter findings suggest that while maintaining the classical continuity principles, *New Moon* is an example of intensification of the established editing techniques, which in turn greatly contributed to the portrayal of characters in the film, especially the difference between humans and supernatural creatures.

Finally, **Chapter 6** was a stand-alone piece of research on the Soviet New Wave and poetic cinema, which looked at the range of editing structures in *Mirror* (Andrei Tarkovsky 1975) and how poetic linkage between shots, scenes and blocks of scenes, as well as the repetition of visual symbols, creates ambiguous meanings and allow for further interpretations of the film's narrative. I reviewed and explained the montage-at-a-distance theory by Artavazd Peleshian, little known in English-speaking academia, and concluded that the editing strategy in *Mirror* follows the similar principles of Peleshian's theoretical framework, which allowed for the creation of complex parallelisms and audio-visual motifs in the film. Two methods of film's disassembly in the editing software, the vertical sequence and spatiotemporal layer breakdowns, allowed me to observe and deduct the film's visual patterns and compare them with principles outlined in montage-at-a-distance, suggesting their relevance and interpretative possibilities in the context of Peleshian's theory.

During this project, I incorporated videographic criticism as an additional methodology, transforming a project originally conceived as writing into a combination of writing and practice-as-research. The audiovisual essays were presented as part of the practice element, demonstrating varying forms and approaches to scholarly videographic criticism, guided by exploring different decision-making aspects and editing functions. 36The created video essays are as follows:

1. A series of **five videographic PechaKuchas** that explore and illustrate examples of each of Sergei Eisenstein's montage methods in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

2. An **explanatory video essay with elements of a desktop documentary method** that investigates the contribution of editing in establishing a relationship between documentary-style inclusions of witnesses and multi-narrative strands in Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981)

3. An **explanatory video essay that** looks at the use and narrative functions of fades and dissolves in the 1953 melodrama *All I Desire* by Douglas Sirk

4. **Re-editing experiments** with selected scenes in Douglas Sirk's *All I Desire* (1953)

4. A **supercut** that features all fades and dissolves in Douglas Sirk's *All I Desire* (1953)

5. An **explanatory video essay** argues that the contemporary Hollywood editing style is demonstrated in *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (Chris Weitz 2009) and critically analyses it in the context of David Bordwell's intensified continuity hybrid approaches.

6. An **explanatory video essay** introduces Artavazd Peleshian's montage-at-a-distance theory to analyse editing strategies and poetic linkage in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1975 *Mirror*. Additionally, a supplementary **text-guided explanatory video essay** is presented in Appendix G, which demonstrates an alternative approach to studying poetics in montage.

Findings

The extensive analysis of different literature and sources of knowledge, such as theoretical books, texts written by practitioners, and interviews with filmmakers, facilitated a much-needed closer focus on editing. Both types of literature are interesting for the reader, but they are of different value for scholars and filmmakers. In my close analysis of these texts, I have discovered a chain of differences between academics and practitioners discussing editing. The large majority of literature composed by practitioners and filmmakers comes from outside of academic film criticism, which provides different terminology and different areas of emphasis, mainly focusing on the contribution of the editor to various stages of the production process, the general editing workflow and aspects of decision-making, director-editor relationship, technical challenges and troubleshooting, as well as the specialist use of specific techniques. Such practical concerns are rarely reviewed in detail by academic writers.

Scholars often lack real-life experience in the editing suite, which includes witnessing informal conversations between crew members. This can result in deviations in terms used to describe elements of the editing workflow, low awareness of the specialist jargon, and use of vocabulary that attempts to explain a specific term but is not used in professional communities and may not be immediately understood. The same goes for filmmakers, who sometimes use niche vocabulary developed over years of practical experience and may be found unfamiliar and obscure by academics. Interviews that I conducted mention some new vocabulary that a

reader would not find in editing handbooks, such as 'chataway', which Peter Lambert explains as a cut between a shot, in which a character walks out of the frame in one shot and the following shot, in which this character walks into the frame. Critics and film theorists are more dedicated to the craft of writing than practitioners, and such vocabulary is unlikely to be featured in literature as it can be viewed as too ambiguous. Therefore, bridging the gap between the industry-specific vocabulary used by editors and the scholarly discourse is an essential initiative for efficient communication and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange.

While all personal interviews I conducted are of unarguable importance and relevance to editing discourse, the conversation with the editor of *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, Peter Lambert, offers an important critical perspective into how editors reflect on their work. Moreover, this case study is especially valuable in addressing the research question that explores the relationship between the principles of editing in academic writing and the experiences of practitioners, as I had the opportunity to discuss my critical analysis of *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* with the editor face-to-face, which allowed for direct access of knowledge and exchange of opinions, facilitating even closer dialogue between academia and industry. On a few occasions, when I was suggesting my interpretation of certain editing techniques and effects they create, the filmmaker expressed his interest in how academics perceive his work but ultimately suggested, 'I didn't think that way when I was editing' or even directly implies that the way theorists and editors discuss films is different. For instance, when discussing fast-paced editing in relation to characters' representation, Lambert says:

> Well, when analysing *New Moon* as an academic, you will be absolutely right in saying that rapid cutting reflects the impulsivity of the werewolves. But when you're the editor, you're also thinking about acting, *textures* and *colours* that you're getting from the shots, as well as the technical concerns of the process. (personal interview, Lambert 2020)

When further discussing how editing strategies adapt to different characters in a film, Lambert acknowledges that camera movement and cutting rhythm reflect their dynamics and establish the sense of the world around them. He also addresses the deviations from script and filmmaking choices that can occur on set and lead to unexpected changes during the post-production process that an editor must always be prepared for. Lambert explains that editors do not have to understand *all* the underlying symbolism and meaning inherent in filmmaking choices. They do not have to think of these in advance. The unique qualities present in the captured footage often influence the practitioners' creative decisions and allow for a responsive

editing process. This observation leads to Lambert's remark on the editor's instinct and 'being sensitive to material', which is similar to insights expressed by other interviewees. In this sense, the critical analysis and interpretation of the final film that scholars perform often differ from the editors' perspectives and may yield varying insights, as the academics' discussion is not guided by first-hand experiences and the unique intentions, decision-making and knowledge of the process that the filmmakers possess. However, this does not necessarily mean that their conclusions are incorrect. It simply suggests that the decisions behind film structure may be more straight forward than the intricate logical chains of meanings often analysed. Filmmakers are often concerned with factors not considered by academics, revealing that the creative process involves a complexity that goes beyond the boundaries of theoretical interpretation.

Theorists' writings are mainly informed by film history, film theories, and existing literature on cinema (Dancyger 2007); therefore, the theoretical emphasis in academic works is attributed to the primary purpose of such writings, which is to contribute to scholarly discourse. Academics often tend to provide extensive critical analysis for specific editing issues rather than addressing some *hidden* or more comprehensive filmmaking concerns that editors can automatically anticipate due to their troubleshooting experiences. Some theorists, such as Bordwell, rarely extend beyond technique into the realms of editing as a creative pursuit but are more interested in the connective functions of editing. Film theorists tend to emphasise editing terminologies (montage, decoupage), while practitioners often use the word 'editing' in a generic sense. Theorists observing practitioners sometimes assume that editorial decisions are intentional and have been planned before the post-production process, which creates a critical tension between the idea of editing as systematic and intuition guiding the editing choices of the filmmakers.

Filmmakers' editing definitions often focus on function rather than form, and practitioners are more aligned with the knowledge needs of filmmakers and creative industries, which makes them respond to those without the limitations of the formal literature field. When asked how to cut, editors often reply that they cut based on instinct (Pankow quoted in Oldham 1995:177; Kahn quoted in Chang 2012: 236; Budzynski 2021), which can neither be taught nor predicted. While scholars are often secondary sources of knowledge and reflect on film editing through their analyses, interpretations and summaries, filmmakers offer first-hand perspectives based on their experiences in the field. Often, creative and technical choices in editing are made as summative results of various factors, including but not limited to relationships with crew members or production aspects under the surface of known filmmaking facts. Real-life experiences can make editors' reflections more engaging and relatable, enriched with practice-

based insights. Therefore, filmmakers sometimes tend to be personal and emotional when describing their work, using a more informal writing style (LoBrutto 1991). They also tend to be biased towards discussing their work rather than looking at and evaluating editing techniques in other practitioners' films (Chung 2012). Most often, editors focus on films that have become the most popular and reached larger audiences, even though some of their less famous films are of more interest for debates on editing.

Reflections on Videographic Work

As findings in my case studies demonstrate, videographic criticism is a highly suitable tool for the analysis of film editing, and it is not limited to the creation of video essays only. Modes of video criticism employed by me as an editor-practitioner included direct references from films along with simultaneous commentary, creative deformations, series of supercuts, video collages, re-editing the existing film material, manipulating film's construction through breakdown in video layers and spatiotemporal analysis of different film editing elements.

The videographic work greatly reflects on my practice as a film editor, and the barrier between the perspectives of an editor and a researcher was a very challenging aspect of the process. While the technical skill and the speed of assembly I accumulated during years of my filmmaking experience have greatly supported the editing workflow, the excitement of discovering the effectiveness of the videographic approach in communicating my argument through visuals and sound was sometimes affecting the clarity of the argument at stake. Discoveries I was making while breaking down film timelines in Adobe Premiere Pro (as opposed to written analysis performed on the side) would sometimes pile up in a long list of exciting editing instances that go unnoticed during the casual film's screening. While highly relevant for critical film analysis, I had to apply a strict filter mode first to decide which observations relate to film editing and which deviate towards other aspects of filmmaking, and then I needed to test the effectiveness of the videographic mode to express my academic investigation. Some video essays, such as the supercut 'Fades of Desire', were assembled before the written case study. The explanatory video essays were predominantly a result of those aspects of critical analysis that I struggled to express in text or were more effective and accessible to the audience through their audiovisual exploration.

It is essential to note that the creation of video essays does not reflect the order of case studies: the video on *New Moon* (2009) was the first attempt to translate my written analysis into an audiovisual essay. Therefore, it presents the basic mode of explanatory video that

functions as the overview of four different techniques of intensified continuity with representative film fragments and is less connected to videographic research than other case studies. I continued videographic exploration with the video essay on *Reds* (1981), which shows my closer engagement with the editing software in critically reflecting on the film's editing and presenting timelines with film breakdown as a part of my discussion. In the *All I Desire* case study, I demonstrate a similar explanatory video essay approach but engage with the film more decisively and re-edit some scenes from the perspective of a modern editor. Moreover, the growing interest in videographic criticism and the increasing awareness of related practices and modes of video essays encouraged me to experiment with a poetic approach, resulting in the supercut assembly. Two versions of explanatory video essays were created during the analysis of *Mirror* (1975). The voiceover-led videographic work was presented as a main part of this practice-as-research, and the link to the supplementary video essay (without the voiceover and guided by text) can be found in Appendix G of this thesis. While the written analysis of the Soviet Montage and *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) was the first case study, the series of PechaKucha videos turned into a culmination of my videographic practice and was assembled in the final stages of my PhD.

Pearlman relates expertise to technical aptitude and introduces 'breathing with the Avid' as a concept that denotes 'knowing your gear of choice so expertly that its operation doesn't require conscious thought' (Pearlman 2015:26). For me, the practice-as-research part of the project was 'breathing with Adobe Premiere Pro'. As a video essayist, my biggest privilege was years of technical skills and general storytelling experience. Instead of a simple flow of film shots or images, separated by straight cuts and accompanied by a voiceover (undoubtedly, such video essays hold no less informative value than the ones edited in a more advanced way), I was able to assemble more complex audio-visual structures with hundreds of elements used to edit short videos. I often had the full video essay's structure play in my mind before editing, like imagining the film's shape after reading the script and viewing all the rushes before assembling the rough cut. Once settled on the topic and having my case study arguments formulated, I could envision the structure of the video essay clearly – this involved knowing the creative framing of work (such as the use of collages to demonstrate series of shots' texture overlays to achieve specific stylistic effects, or the required animated elements, such as GIFs to complement the voiceover). I did not view the videographic work as complementary material for the written text, and I wanted video essays to be effective as standalone pieces.

The editor's perspective and the point of view of a researcher were also sometimes clashing, leading to not only multiple revisions of video essays (which is a typical element of

the post-production workflow in the industry, too) and rounds of technical adjustments to fix technical audiovisual or factual mistakes (such as missing references for copyright purposes) but also complete re-edits of videographic works. For instance, the first finished draft of the video essay on *Mirror* (1975) was created without voiceover and with title cards and selected film scenes, accompanied by an excerpt from Bach's Matthaus – Passion, BWV 244 being part of the film's soundtrack. The more significant challenge in assembling a video essay that is supported by text cards is not only a much stricter selection of arguments to be featured on-screen but also the considerations of the duration of these text cards, their interaction with the film's material (preceding shots on a plain background, overlayed over the footage or presented as lower thirds in blank space) and the limitation on the number of arguments and description that can be introduced to analysis. In this regard, my preference went towards explanatory essays guided by the voiceover, as they allowed for a more direct and tangible author's involvement with the film's critical analysis, a more extensive discussion to be communicated through speech, and also the impression of documentary-like editing, which felt like using the voiceover as the script for selecting the visuals and presenting them on-screen to accompany the narration. However, the pacing and allowing sufficient pauses have remained the most significant challenge throughout the videographic practice, as I was often struggling to find the appropriate balance between the author's voiceover and breathing space to play the selected film fragments.

The range of Adobe Premiere Pro applications in videographic work is immense. The wide array of tools available in the program, such as coloured markers, multiple stacks of video and audio layers, a workspace that allows accommodating different sequences, in-built effects and transitions, and the high number of audiovisual elements available online allow for an enhanced video essay experience and endless experiments with the film's material. Primarily, I used Premiere Pro as a tool to lay out the whole film's duration in front of me on the timeline so that I could view the moments of interest shot by shot and even frame by frame, which is not always feasible in media players such as QuickTime or VLC. Then, I was able to manipulate the body of the film – deform it into shorter sequences, rearrange the order of shots, scenes and segments, change the duration of footage, and assemble film pieces into a variety of separate sequences. Most importantly, Adobe Premiere Pro allowed me to break down the film's material into a stack of layers, rename those thematic layers and observe the narrative's horizontal flow and the shots' vertical juxtaposition. The markers feature was handy when marking the cuts of interest and changing colours for representative markers to detect the distribution of edits, repetitions, and established patterns. There is no alternative way for such an approach outside

the context of the editing software, mainly since the program features the opportunity of live viewing of the film's material and noting the placement of the visual marker within the entire film's narrative.

I frequently used the manual arrangement of shots of choice in assembling collage grids – in video essays on *Reds* and *New Moon*, they featured screenshots (another function readily available in Adobe Premiere Pro), but in video essays on *All I Desire* and *Mirror*, I used playing film fragments. Finally, the screenshots and screen recordings of the film's timeline open in Adobe Premiere Pro were the direct source of my analysis. I included them in parts of video essays that reflected on findings as a result of manipulating the film's material in editing software. There is a more significant potential for desktop documentaries focused on film editing to utilise screen recordings of the program's interface as these would directly reflect the workflow, tools used and immediate effects of editing in live mode.

I suggest that the film's breakdown or disassembly in Adobe Premiere Pro can become an indispensable researcher's tool to conduct a preliminary analysis, which can be further translated into a written critical discussion or used in the video essay in the form of representative screenshots of the film's timeline along with video and audio layers. Film breakdowns in the editing program are meticulous and highly accurate tools to disassemble the footage and view the components of the cut (shots, sound and transitions, if any) to analyse their underlying functions, how they create the meaning, and which creative effects they establish. The ability to review shots and transitions frame by frame, as well as the diverse range of thematic, narrative, visual (and others, as per the researcher's objective) layers to work with, and the ability to have specific parameters and corresponding motifs and patterns identified all in one software presents a variety of opportunities for film editors and researchers. For instance, frame-by-frame selection and review allow for accurately noting cuts and referencing shots on both sides of the cut. This approach allows us to engage with other challenging aspects of editing, such as multiple narrative strands or repetitions across the film, and the film's timeline is the best visual tool to aid such analysis. Alternatively, this method is also effective when working with smaller editing elements, such as transitions or editing techniques.

Adobe Premiere Pro (Keathley and Mittell 2019) and Final Cut Pro (Lee 2019) are frequently selected as the editing software in videographic analysis. The commencement of this project's videographic practice coincided with a significant shift in my filmmaking practice when I transitioned from Avid Media Composer to Adobe Premiere Pro due to its growing involvement in commercial content editing. Avid was not efficient enough in being compatible with the import of files of different formats and third-party plug-ins, as well as providing

modern-looking transitions and effects. Avid Media Composer is generally not the most user-friendly when assembling various media pieces, including images, overlays, GIFs, plug-ins and presets. However, since Avid remains primarily suited for the filmmaking industry demographic, there is a great potential to investigate and test different videographic opportunities opened up by different software to which the editors can significantly contribute.

Compared to traditional writing methods, video essays offer new ways to interrogate film editing techniques, thus demystifying the 'hidden art' and the different functions of film editing, such as its expressive properties, establishing rhythm, contributing to mutual relations between the characters, attaining symbolic or metaphorical meaning to various elements through their repetition. The list of these functions is not limited to the ones I mentioned. The intention to dive deep into the intricacies of film editing in film examples was both rewarding and highly challenging, as there is never just one guiding principle of editing construction. Using specific techniques leads to discovering the chain of other, equally critical creative decisions. Therefore, the narrow focus on a small selection of editing methods presented in each case study is intended to open up a more extensive conversation, which can consider further inquiries into many other editing decisions integrated into the general narrative structure of a film.

Practice Informing Theory, Theory Investigating Practice

With video essays' growing popularity and acceptance as a reputable alternative to written publications, there is also an emerging variability in forms and modes of videographic analysis. They were initially introduced and explored by scholars interested in using editing software and experimenting with the film's material (Keathley 2011; Grant 2012; Mittell 2019;), and now there is a potential for editors to explore other ways of creative audiovisual investigation when performed in the digital realm. As editors are more aware of the extensive tools and functions available in the software, their workflow and decision-making process will significantly differ from those of video essayists with no professional editing experience. Therefore, editors can also discover or propose new videographic modes of film analysis and introduce novel parameter-based presentation styles. Considering the ever-changing technological advancements, the input of editors is incredibly vital. Their up-to-date awareness of tools to tackle various technical issues and adapting new editing software functions can allow for more creative freedom and complex audiovisual assemblies.

The reason that audiovisual essays often feature other filmmaking elements such as mise-en-scène and cinematography, and less often editing, can be explained by the strictly

visual approach to those topics, and the arguments can be fully supported by simply playing the entire duration of the shot or scene of choice to communicate their intended meaning. The exploration of editing is relatively more challenging to translate to the screen medium as it often occurs so quickly that a more thorough analysis and stronger emphasis are needed to present the cut instance effectively, observe the narrative and audiovisual context it is placed in, and explain what effects and meanings are established by a given editing method. Such an intricate and meticulous approach to even the most minor elements of film's assembly makes much difference to the existing body of videographic research dedicated to editing as it not only presents different forms of audiovisual essays to tackle various editing styles and techniques but also explains the reasoning behind the practical context to the way films are put together. There is much potential in researchers conducting a full film breakdown to understand and effectively communicate a videographic exploration of film editing strategies, in which shot-by-shot analysis is the primary element. As editing assumes the juxtaposition of images on its most basic level, this would be the starting point in further investigating broader patterns of meanings and effects that emerge within scenes or sequences.

This study has the potential to lead to further investigation in a broader range of topics on film editing explored in academic writing traditions along with videographic film criticism. I conducted a large part of my doctoral journey during the Covid-19 pandemic and started a new job in a country that is only now beginning to explore the realms of filmmaking and film studies. The limitations of face-to-face presence in the editing suite along with other crew members and live interactions with the academic community facilitated a re-evaluation of digital mediums, encouraging a concentrated exploration of videographic criticism and its dissemination. With enhanced skills in videographic criticism, editors can now start to get more actively involved with academia so that editing remains a 'hidden art' only during the experience of watching films but becomes more recognised and understood as a practice.

Due to the ongoing exposure of film editors to technological advances and creative storytelling shifts in the practice-based field, they can enrich videographic criticism by introducing more modes and shapes of audio-visual essays that are not fully explored by academics due to their limited software skills. By integrating their professional skills into creating the videographic work, editors can also significantly contribute to establishing specific delivery standards, ultimately contributing to a higher visual representation standard. Their technical advice on general troubleshooting that often occurs when assembling video essays and prevents scholars from communicating their arguments effectively can also prove highly beneficial. Moreover, editors can offer a different perspective to approaching the critical

analysis of films, as their attention, unlike that of scholars, is more likely to be triggered by such technical aspects of assembly as the use of transitions, the focus on J and L cuts, the investigation of ASL and rhythm structures that are less frequently addressed by scholars partially due to the practice-based nature of these editing decisions that is challenging to articulate without the relevant experience and technical skill.

The participation of editors in videographic practices is essential from the point of view of facilitating the share of knowledge and making it more accessible to different audiences. Since the realm of editing software is where the magic happens, it may be the most effective form of communicating the process. By sharing their experiences and insights on various editing challenges and creative decisions, editors can evaluate the reasons for certain choices and improve their practice by articulating their thinking process. When the whole film's timeline is laid out in front of them, whether verbally or by writing, reflecting on the final film's assembly, editors can fully engage with the methodology and provide a comprehensive look at the range of technical and creative decisions achieved during the process. The contribution of editors in expanding the possibilities of videographic film criticism and enriching the scholarly discourse has great potential, especially within digital media's growing popularity and influence. Moreover, even such aspects of academia as pedagogy must embrace and accommodate the importance and value of professional experience and its validity against conventional theory-based knowledge. Theory investigates practice, and practice informs theory – both contain important principles essential to learning and understanding editing and effectively employing it in filmmaking.

Practice-as-research PhD Videographic Work

Battleship Potemkin **Metric PechaKucha:** https://vimeo.com/910390801/13a8541712

Battleship Potemkin **Rhythmic PechaKucha:** https://vimeo.com/910394202/b49aeb21bb

Battleship Potemkin **Tonal PechaKucha:** https://vimeo.com/910394059/b80b8f3413

Battleship Potemkin **Overtonal PechaKucha:** https://vimeo.com/910392604/cddc471880

Battleship Potemkin **Intellectual PechaKucha:** https://vimeo.com/910391382/fc4ca164fd

Revisiting the challenge of multinarrative strands and Witnesses to truth through film editing strategies in *Reds* (1981): https://vimeo.com/910944847/ba0f1938c3

The Fades of Desire: https://vimeo.com/910571463/f494328d5c

*All I Desire***: The Affordances of Videographic Approaches to Deal Analytically with Functions of Editing transitions:** https://vimeo.com/910584006

Editing Experiments with Douglas Sirk's *All I Desire* (1953): https://vimeo.com/910610762/01a738893

The Twilight Saga: New Moon **2009 and Hybrid Approaches to Intensified Continuity in Film**: https://vimeo.com/909638333/458b3fc752

Linked by a Bloodstream - Editing Choices in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975): https://vimeo.com/910572942/8443cf4d64

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Filmography

Primary Films

Battleship Potemkin, dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Goskino, 1925)

All I Desire, dir. by Douglas Sirk (Universal International Pictures, 1953)

Mirror, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Goskino, 1975)

Reds, dir. by Warren Beatty (Barclays Mercantile & Industrial Finance & JRS Productions, 1981)

The Twilight Saga: New Moon, dir. by Chris Weitz (Temple Hill Entertainment & Maverick Films & Sunswept Entertainment, 2009)

Secondary Films

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror, dir. by F.W.Murnau (Prana Film, 1922)

Strike, dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Goskino, 1925)

October – Ten Days that Shook the World, dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Sovkino, 1927)

Man with a Movie Camera, dir. by Dziga Vertov (All-Ukrainian Photo Cinema Administration (VUFKU) & Dovzhenko Film Studios, 1929)

Fantasia, dir. by Samuel Armstrong, James Algar, Bill Roberts, Paul Satterfield, Ben Sharpsteen, David D. Hand, Hamilton Luske, Jim Handley, Ford Beebe, T. Hee, Norman Ferguson, Wilfred Jackson (Walt Disney & Ben Sharpsteen, 1940)

Shadow of Doubt, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (Skirball Productions, 1943)

And Then There Were None, dir. by René Clair (20th Century Fox, 1945)
Brief Encounter, dir. by David Lean (Noël Coward & Anthony Havelock-Allan& Ronald Neame, 1945)

Distant Journey, dir. by Alfréd Radok (Československý státní film, 1948)

Gunsmoke, dir. by Norman Macdonnell (Arness Production Co. in association with the CBS Television Network, 1955-1975)

Dracula, dir. by Terence Fisher (Hammer Film Productions, 1958)

Imitation of Life, dir. by Douglas Sirk (Universal-International, 1959)

Pillow Talk, dir. by Michael Gordon (Arwin Productions, 1959)

The Steamroller and the Violin, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (VGIK, 1960)

The Hustler, dir. by Robert Rossen (Rossen Enterprises, 1961)

Ivan's Childhood, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1962)

Rear Window, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (Patron Inc., 1964)

Doctor Zhivago, dir. by David Lean (Carlo Ponti Productions & Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1965)

Andrei Rublev, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1966)

Earth of People, dir. by Artavazd Peleshian (VGIK, 1966)

Bonnie and Clyde, dir. by Arthur Penn (Warner Bros. Pictures, 1967)

The Plea, dir. by by Tengiz Abuladze (Kartuli filmi, 1967)

The Color of Pomegranates, dir. by Sergei Parajanov (Armenfilm, 1969)

The Wild Bunch, dir. by Sam Peckinpah (Warner Bros.-Seven Arts, 1969)

Winter, dir. by Marcel Hanoun (Hanoun Productions,1969)

Don Giovanni, dir. by Carmelo Bene (Carmelo Bene, 1970)

Daughters of Darkness, dir. by Harry Kümel (Showking Films & Maya Films & Roxy Film & Ciné Vog Films, 1971)

Solaris, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1972)

Vampire Circus, dir. by Robert Young (Hammer Film Productions, 1972)

The Exorcist, dir. by William Friedkin (Hoya Productions, 1973)

Mahogany, dir. by Berry Gordy (Motown Productions, 1975)

Taxi Driver, dir. by Martin Scorsese (Bill/Phillips Productions & Italo-Judeo Productions, 1976)

Apocalypse Now, dir. by Francis Ford Coppola (Omni Zoetrope, 1979)

Stalker, dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1979)

Raging Bull, dir. by Martin Scorsese (Chartoff-Winkler Productions, 1980)

On Golden Pond, dir. by Mark Rydell (IPC Films & ITC Entertainment, 1981)

Raiders of the Lost Ark, dir. by Steven Spielberg (Lucasfilm Ltd., 1981)

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, dir. by Steven Spielberg (Amblin Entertainment, 1982)

Visual Essays: Origins of Film, dir. by Al Razutis (Al Razutis, 1984)

Rude Awakening, dir. by David Greenwalt and Aaron Russo (Aaron Russo Productions, 1989)

Les Amants de Pont-Neuf, dir. by Leos Carax (Films A2 & Gaumont International & Les Films Christian Fechner, 1991)

Bram Stoker's Dracula, dir. by Francis Ford Coppola (American Zoetrope & Osiris Films, 1992)

Blade, dir. by Stephen Norrington (New Line & Cinema Marvel Enterprises & Amen Ra Films & Imaginary Forces, 1998)

Meet Joe Black, dir. by Martin Brest (City Light Films, 1998)

Fight Club, dir. by David Fincher (20th Century Fox, 1999)

Magnolia, by Paul Thomas Anderson (Ghoulardi Film Company & JoAnne Sellar Productions, 1999)

In the Mood for Love, dir. by Wong Kar-Wai (Jet Tone Production & Paradis Films, 2000)

Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, dir. by Hong Sang-soo (Mirashin Korea, 2000)

K-19: The Widowmaker, dir. by Kathryn Bigelow (Intermedia Films & National Geographic Films & Palomar Pictures & First Light, 2002)

Panic Room, dir. by David Fincher (Columbia Pictures & Hofflund/Polone& Indelible Pictures, 2002)

Brokeback Mountain, dir. by Ang Lee (River Road Entertainment, 2005)

Jarhead, dir. by Sam Mendes (Red Wagon Entertainment & Neal Street Productions, 2005)

The Queen, dir. by Stephen Frears (Pathé Renn Production & Granada Productions & BIM Distribuzione & France 3 Cinéma & Canal+, 2006)

Hairspray, dir. by Adam Shankman (Ingenious Media & Zadan/Meron Productions & Storyline Entertainment & Offspring Entertainment, 2007)

Twilight, dir. by Catherine Hardwicke (Temple Hill Entertainment & Maverick Films & Goldcrest Film Finance & Aura Films, 2008)

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse, dir. by David Slade (Summit Entertainment, 2010)

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1, dir. by Bill Condon (Temple Hill Entertainment & Sunswept Entertainment, 2011)

The Day He Arrives, dir. by Hong Sang-soo (Jeonwonsa Films, 2011)

The Act of Killing, dir. by Joshua Oppenheimer (Final Cut for Real & DK Film, 2012)

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2, dir. by Bill Condon (Temple Hill Entertainment & Sunswept Entertainment, 2012)

Gravity, dir. by Alfonso Cuarón (Heyday Films & Esperanto Filmoj 2013)

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed interview questions
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1. What is your background as a film editor? How did you learn the craft of editing?

2. Did you obtain any formal film education, or are you a self-taught filmmaker? If you went to a film school, could you tell me more about the course and the most important things you learned?

3. What does an editor do?

4. How would you describe your editing style?

5. Do editors bring their own style to the films they work on?

6. What factors are you responding to in making a cut? Does it vary depending on context?

7. Could you describe your editing process?

8. How would you describe the creative contribution of the editor to the final film?

9. What is the editor/ director relationship like? How does it vary, in your experience, from project to project?

10. Are you intuitive or intellectual in your approach to a scene?

11. What was the impact of digital technology on editing styles? (Marek only)

12. Could you show me the scene that you edited and that you are most proud of? What was the most challenging about editing it? What is it that makes this scene so special for you? Which techniques did you use to create this sequence?

13. What are your most determining factors when deciding when to make a cut? How important is cutting for emotion to you?

14. Is it valuable for a film editor to have a background in film studies?

15. Do you read film journals, blogs written by film scholars and critics, academic articles, and textbooks on film?

16. Do you think that rhythm in editing can be taught or learned, or is it intuitive only?

17. How do you know that a cut or a scene does not work?

18. To Marek: How has digital editing impacted learning to become an editor?

19. What are the creative challenges of being an editor?

20. How would you define good editing?

21. How do you see the editor's role in the industry?

22. What is your favourite editing technique or editing trick?

23. What do you consider to be the attributes of a good editor?

24. What are the main differences for you editing long feature/ documentary films as opposed to short commercials, music videos or adverts?

25. How do you find the film's story/structure that you edit?

26. Why did you decide to pursue your career as an editor?

27. What is your preferred editing software? Why did you choose X over Y?

28. Why do you think editing is so rarely discussed in film critics' reviews?

29. Do you see a scene complete in your mind before you begin to edit it?

30. Can you give an example of a pictorial problem you had on a film, and how did you solve it?

31. Have you ever used material originally intended for one part of the film in a different section?

32. What are the most difficult scenes to edit?

33. What are your feelings about how an editor is treated in the industry?

34. Have you experienced any discrimination as a film editor because you are a woman?

35. Do you have to know all the editing rules to break them? Do you generally obey the rules?

36. How much impact can an editor have on the success of a film?

37. How relevant is classic film theory to contemporary editing practices?

38. Are there any editors or theorists whose writing you have found useful?

Recorded on 14th of July, 2020

Peter Lambert started his career as a trainee editor on the movie Love Actually (2003). He worked as an assistant editor on *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón 2006), *Hannibal Rising* (Peter Webber 2007) and *Body of Lies* (Ridley Scott 2008) starring Russell Crowe and Leonardo DiCaprio. Peter's big break came with the release of *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (Chris Weitz 2009), which was a second part of the popular vampire series.

Selected editor's filmography: *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (Chris Weitz 2009), *Now Is Good* (Ol Parker 2012), *The Death of Stalin* (Armando Iannucci 2017), *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again* (Ol Parker 2018), *The Personal History of David Copperfield* (Armando Iannucci 2019), *Ticket to Paradise* (Ol Parker 2022).

Q: How did you start as a film editor?
I went to Manchester University to study drama because when I left school, I was interested in theatre. During the course, I became excited by the possibility of film, largely because of the module contents. Professor Alan Marcus taught in my first year, and I learned that watching popular commercial films was something that people actually took really seriously on a critical level. I learned to think about films from the academic perspective, and when I started working on student projects, I realised I felt particularly drawn to the editing part of the process.

Q: In your editor's CV, I read that you went to NFTS – what was this experience like?
Yes, I applied to the National Film and Television school when I was in the final year of my undergraduate degree. I had to choose what specialisation to apply with, and knowing very little I just thought 'Oh editing, I like doing that. And I'll probably have more chance of getting into this film school if I apply as an editor rather than as a fiction director'. I went for an interview and immediately realised it was an amazing film school. However, I also realised it was completely outside of my ability to get a place there. It was a film school where you had to have experience in the specialisation that you were applying for. I left and I worked for a couple of years in television in London, making very low budget TV programmes, but I always gravitated towards editing. I ended up working as an editor on these tiny budget cookery shows.

They were not tremendously ambitious or creative, but it was a way of learning how editing works and learning technical aspects of it. Moreover, I had a hankering to work in fiction, and I wasn't getting anywhere near that. I still had in the back of my mind that there was this film school, so, I applied again two years later and at that stage, I finally got into NFTS.

Q: Did you enjoy the course?

Absolutely! It was a two-year MA course, where everyone arrives with a particular specialisation. Mine was editing, and there were six editors, six DOPs, six fiction directors, six documentary directors, six sound, production, design, animation students, and so on. As an editor, you were learning through making stuff all the time, they had amazing resources! We were incredibly spoiled and there were three directors for every editor at the time: a fiction director, an animation director and a documentary director. They were all making their work, and all of them needed editing, so you were just constantly cutting. The way you were taught was that there were brilliant teachers just hovering around looking at what you were doing, reviewing your work and giving criticism and feedback.

Q: Do you do think that you have to go to the film school to become an editor?

I'm sure you don't because there are lots of really great editors who haven't been to film school. I personally was somebody who liked an idea of institution, and I enjoyed being taught. But you definitely don't have to do it to be a great editor. There are things for me that I know now I'm better at because of the stuff I learned when I was at film school, no question about it. I thought editing was about making really good choices at an early stage, putting together a good cut, and then refining it and polishing it, and that's the film. But I learned at the film school that the film can be re-made over and over again, endlessly during the editing process.

Q: This sounds so familiar to me… Sometimes you feel like you can never finish editing the film!

You never settle when you're editing. Never decide 'this is done now', as you are constantly keeping your mind open to the possibility that something can be improved or re-invented. That was also a steep learning curve for me at the film school. But I know now since I've been editing professionally, I'm much calmer about things. It's not only that I'm calmer about the possibility of things having to change, but I'm also open to finding the discovery at the last minute.

Q: I suppose this only comes with experience, you wouldn't think that way in your first year of university. I mean, the more hours you stay in the editing room, the more you get used to surprises and challenging that editing brings.

Of course, and it requires exactly as you say, experience, which gives you confidence that it's going to be okay, and the film is not going to fall apart completely if you change things.

Q: Do you think that being aware of certain filmmaking conventions and rules, especially after you obtained your formal film education, help you edit? What is the relevance of those theories to the practicalities of your editing?

It's hovering around in the back of your mind the whole time, and very often you might instinctively think this is the place to start. When you're trying to work out why you feel that way, you realise that there is some kind of theory in the background that explains it a little bit and which has been driving you.

Q: Are there any particular rules or conventions that you follow as an editor?

I have a few things which I try to hold on to, I guess because they are not contrary to my instincts. One: always engage with another person's idea, even if it seems completely wrong or stupid. Don't just engage with it to be polite or for political reasons, but take it seriously and try to imagine how it can work. In fact, don't just think it through, try to execute it practically. It took me a while to wrap my head around this because if you're working really hard and you've got tight schedules, and somebody comes in with an idea which just seems stupid, it's quite hard to really buy into it. But if you do buy into it, there will always be rewards. Often ideas which don't make sense at first are actually great when you try them in the edit. If they're not, they help me identify a problem. They make me realise *why* somebody suggested that idea. What's more, if you don't engage with people's ideas, they will be very unhappy and feel like they're not being listened to. People really want to feel like they're listened to. If you can show them that you've genuinely attempted to integrate their idea into the edit, they will most likely trust you if you then suggest moving in a different direction.

Two: When you're working on a film you have to be really patient. It has taken me a long time to learn this. If the director thinks we should go in one direction, and I think we should go in a different direction, first of all, I should follow the director. It's completely unprofessional not to. Don't worry if you think it's the wrong direction, because there's always time to bring it up again and to talk about it again. Don't panic if something ends up in the film, which feels completely bad to you, it can stay in the assembly for weeks and weeks and weeks. And then,

after a while, the area of concern will come up for discussion again, and you can have another stab at making it better. Or, better still, you might understand why the director was arguing for it, and come to love it yourself.

Q: Are there any rules of thumb or techniques that you've developed yourself which you find helpful?

Give a cut time to heal is a big one. After a while, if you haven't changed certain sequences, you develop muscle memory for how they play. You hear the rhythm of the dialogue in your head as if it's a pop song from the radio. You feel the rhythm of the edits as they go and you come to expect them. If you then make changes to the sequence, the next time you play it back, your brain gets tripped up by the changes. You react not to what it is, but you react to what it *is* in relation to what it *was*. That means you need to take some time. You need to let it live like that for a while. This will often be the case where you have an idea for something that you have to improve, something you're not particularly happy with. Sometimes you try something and you go 'The idea is good, but the execution is not right. It's not as good as what we had before'. Generally, in that situation, I would leave the new version in the film, keep it for a few screenings, and find out whether the reason it doesn't feel right is just that it feels different to the old version. My rule of thumb number two is to never give up. That's the big one. If the scene is not playing well, keep working on it, and it will. If it is playing well, don't get complacent, keep trying to make it better. It's an insane job to be sitting on a computer, moving little visual blocks around for months, having endless discussions and watching the same material over and over again. To make sense of doing that, you have to believe that the film you're working on will be the best film that's ever been made. That this film could change not just the future of cinema, but the future of civilization. And don't give up until they stop paying you. *(laughs)* All of this is taken in the context of what works for me. I really don't think that this is universal at all, everyone has completely different ways of working.

Q: Presumably there are lots of contextual factors which shape your approach to particular moments when editing. What factors are you responding to in making a cut?

I'd say there are two different strategies or philosophies. In American or Western tradition of filmmaking, a cut to a new shot answers a question which is asked in the shot before. If you think of Griffith, for instance, and you're in a wide shot, you ask yourself 'What's in our hero's mind?'. Just as you think of that question, just before you've articulated it, it comes to a close-up of your hero. He's looking at something off-camera – what is he looking at? You cut to a

bird in the sky. One way of thinking about cuts is to think of what point is the audience in need of new information, and do you want to deliver it just when they need it, after, or just before? Then there's another way of cutting that follows a more Soviet tradition, which sees cuts as a tool to provide new and contradictory information. By juxtaposing two contradictory images or ideas you generate a new idea. It's obviously a Marxist way of thinking about editing. Let's say you have the scene with two people chatting and then boom, you cut and somebody else is watching them when you don't expect it. That cut is not answering or giving you information which you were hoping for, but it's creating a whole new set of ideas.

For me, certain film rules are probably always in the background, they are the things that define when I cut and what I allow the viewer to see on screen.

Q: I assume that when editing big feature films, you use Avid Media Composer?

Yes, the last time I edited something non-Avid was around 2006… Since then I've just worked in Avid. In my experience, it is the industry standard. I know that some interesting and big films were edited in Adobe Premiere, but as far as I understand, they're still the minority, and they're exciting and interesting partly because they were edited in Premiere. In my experience, if I work on a film with a new studio with a new set of producers, and they're planning how the workflow is going to work, no one even says to me 'What you're going to edit on?'. It's just an assumption that the film will be edited on Avid. If I said 'I want to edit on Premiere', people would go 'Oh, okay'. They'd have to think about it and how it will work, whereas editing on Avid is the default position. The knowledge base in the feature films industry is much smaller on all other interfaces outside of Avid.

Q: I was also trained to work in Avid when I did my BA in editing – I still prefer it over other software I've tried.

I would definitely advise Avid to students in terms of just being able to slot quickly into a job in the UK on a feature film if that's what they are interested in.

Q: Would you ever want to try another programme?

Every time I finish a project, I say 'I'm going to do the next film on something different'. Just to throw me out of my comfort zone. Although I do believe that the tools you use can all do the same thing, I think the interface that you're using immensely affects the way you work creatively. I think it would be quite interesting to see if new software would affect the way I think about editing. But then every time I actually plan to do this, there are so many other things

to think about. It always feels like there are so many other challenges, and I think 'Why give myself another bit of homework, I'm going to stick with Avid'. Once you use it a lot, you're not thinking about how you're doing things. I don't think 'I'm going to make an in point and an out point and use the lift function to cut this shot out'. I just think, I'm going to cut the shot. And my fingers do it! That familiarity would be a lot to give up.

But the main problem for me now is that I have the luxury of working with assistants. The pool of people who are doing their jobs as assistant editors or visual effects editors on Avid is enormous. I don't personally know any assistants who I could employ if I wanted to work on a big visual effects film on Final Cut or Premiere. Moreover, what Avid can do brilliantly compared to the other systems, is shared projects. You can have multiple people working simultaneously on the same project, not even just on the same media, so I can cut a sequence and abandon it, and an assistant can open it up. Avid handles that exceptionally well.

Q: In my own experience, Premiere is often requested for editing commercial videos, promos or adverts, but there are still so many opinions on what the modern industry-standard really is.

Well, some people (including me) like the idea of Avid *not* being the industry standard because something about just one particular company monopolising the market in feature film editing isn't very attractive. While the idea that a new influx of editors will come using different stuff is very appealing. But the only feature films I know were edited on Premiere, for example, are the ones where you read about them as part of the publicity for Premiere.

Q: How would you describe the craft of editing?

It's a very big question. I wonder if it's a very big question for anyone's job. I can only describe a fraction of what I think I do as an editor. I can also only talk specifically about editing drama because I think editing a documentary or animation is a very different set of skills.

Q: So, how do you edit drama then?

The easiest way to think about it is that almost every scene in a fiction film or a conventional TV drama will have been shot several times, from different camera angles, and with the camera doing different things in relationship to the actors. If someone was filming a conversation at a dinner table, you might film a very wide shot through a window. Then you might move the camera and film one person's face for the whole conversation. Then you'd move it again and film the other person's face or film over the shoulder. Each of those camera setups and camera

angles has a different meaning in terms of how the audience will read it. On the most basic level, if you're filming through a window, that will give you a feeling either that the characters are being watched, or it could be a very objective shot without carrying much emotional weight. Whereas obviously, if you play the whole conversation on one person's face, even when they're not talking, that implies that something meaningful is happening to that person. When you add these pieces together, the smashing up of two different camera angles creates a whole new meaning. That is, of course, only a tiny aspect of it, because within those shots you have a huge number of other variables.

Q: Which variables do you pay the most attention to during the edit?

Probably the most obvious and important one being performance. Within each of those takes, the actors will be giving different performances. Sometimes the variation will be whether it feels believable, or whether it doesn't feel believable. But very often, every take will feel real, the actors will be convincing throughout, but they're interpreting the scene differently in each take. One take might be very emotional, but in another take, the same actors can be very repressed in their performance. As an editor, you are placing together fragments from all these different choices, you're trying to navigate your way through a scene to dramatize it and fulfil the film's potential in the best possible shape. That's just talking about the sequence. In any film, we're dealing with a huge series of sequences, all of which can be picked up and moved around, and the meaning of them can be completely repurposed by taking bits out of them or changing what people say and what the audience sees. You're dealing with a sequence on a micro level, but also you're dealing with it on a macro level structurally, with how a story is told. That's just talking about the craft of how you put a film together. Because on top of that, you're handling the politics of how you interact with the director or with producers, who might be completely at odds with each other about what they think the film should be. You're dealing with a team of people who you're working with as collaborators, as assistant editors, visual effects artists, sound designers, composers, and so on.

Q: When you think about editing, do you look at is a process of cutting things out or as building them up?

I don't think editing is a process of cutting things out at all. It's a process of constructing a huge amount of work which has already been done by other crew members, and which is vitally important to how the film will turn out. But for me, I see it as a process of creating a set of ingredients for the edit. You know, it is the analogy of cooking in a sense that you're given a

bunch of good ingredients and bad ingredients, and you have to make a great stew out of them. You get the opportunity to choose how much you use of each and how you put them together to create your films. Do you see that?

Q: I think every editor has their own analogy for editing: some practitioners compare it to a puzzle; some editors say it's like an orchestra…
Yeah, but I think if one says editing is like a puzzle, it implies that there is an image which already exists. However, you can never know 100% what the final picture is. Moreover, the pieces don't have to fit together the right way. Some of them won't match each other however hard you try, but you can actually take the pieces out and put the puzzle together and create a different, completely different picture of your own choice.

Q: When you say 'your own choice', do you mean your own editing style? Is it in general possible for an editor to have a signature style? Or is it something that in your opinion varies from project to project?
I'm slightly cautious about the idea of having an editing style because I like to find a style that is unique to the material I'm working on. My job has to be sensitive to the material. I don't want to impose my own style on the material too much unless it is complementary to it. But I think some editors do have a distinctive style, and they've made a career through just being great at it. They're so good at it that they can get the jobs on the films for which that style is appropriate. I like to work on lots of different types of films. I tend to find that the editing rhythms and style are an organic response to the material I'm working with.

Q: Did you know what New Moon story was about before you joined the project?
I learned that I would edit *New Moon* just as *Twilight* had come out. I instantly ran to see the film and read all the books and was really, really excited to become part of it. I felt it was important to know the whole story because it was clear that this film would stand or fall on whether it pleased fans of the book. The real primary agenda in making *New Moon* was to not to upset fans' adoration of the novels.

Q: I guess the film had to be quite versatile visually because there were two main points in the story: there was the long-awaited introduction of the werewolves, and then there was also Bella and Edward's breakup. Did this affect your choices when constructing the pacing and rhythm of dramatic and action scenes?

As an editor, you are always trying to create a variety of rhythm. As you move throughout the film, in the way that you would think about a symphony, you're structurally thinking about it as something which takes you on a journey, which will move at different paces, have different levels of energy and different emotional registers. The difference between action scenes and dialogue-based drama scenes is a really obvious way of thinking about how you can create that kind of storytelling.

Q: That's interesting to hear from you because there are several theories around Twilight Saga stating that when you deal with humans, editing makes scenes feel more natural and realistic, while when you deal with supernatural characters, cutting is vivid and flexible to represent their fantastic nature and speed.

Sometimes, with a lot of the choices you're making, you're not articulating necessarily *why* when you're doing them, they are instinctive. But I love this theory. I like the idea that this might have been what was going through our mind when we were editing. When you're editing, you're constantly prioritising, and you're often negotiating between idealistic strategies for how a sequence might play. There are also much more practical concerns, like 'How do we cut these six seconds? ███ ██ ████████████████ We'll just have to cut to a different shot to be able to get back to where we want to go later. A lot of times these kinds of considerations can define the choices you make. I think even if you are making editing choices based on those kinds of practical concerns, the mark of good editing – and what I try to aspire to – is to make every edit feel like it serves the storytelling. Then the audience will feel like each cut answers the question in their mind and drives things forward.

Q: Which scene in New Moon are you most proud of, or which was the most challenging?

Um, which scene in *New Moon* do you like the most? *(laughs)*

Q: The breakup scene.

That's probably my answer too. That's probably both of them. The breakup was definitely a very challenging sequence to cut. Not because there were problems with the material, but because we wanted to do it as well as we could. The first assembly was very long, and there was much more dialogue in it. Chris *(the director)* made the choice to shoot it with constantly, or almost constantly, moving cameras, which made up the majority of the material, as I remember. I don't think he had a preconceived idea of what you'd be on during which line, but he wanted to create a sense of disorientation for Bella and the idea that she's experiencing this kind of push-pull relationship with Edward, or feels drawn to him but is pushed back. I remember watching the rushes and thinking 'This is really an amazing combination of performance and camera!'. But practically it was quite tricky to cut because they did lots of takes. Let's say where the camera was on take three of one set up, it was moving on this particular line, but there might be a completely different take four, where it was moving in a

different direction. You might have used a take from the contradictory angle for a line and think 'Okay, now I want to go to this performance here', but the camera was in a completely different place from where we left it. Finding a way through the scene which felt coherent and sure-handed in terms of the editing and its relationship to the camera was very, very tricky. When we realised that we didn't want the scene to be as long as it was, finding ways to cut it down so that it didn't feel choppy was pretty hard. That was a lot of work, so, this scene was something we just went back to over and over and over again. I'm really glad that's your favourite scene!

Q: It really is! As an editor, I was also impressed by the variability of close-ups, medium and wide shots in the sequence.
Oh, the wide shot. It's when Edward says 'You don't belong in my world', right?

Q: And Bella replies 'I belong with you'…
Wow! *(laughs)* I was quite startled by that cut when I watched it yesterday. I remember we chose a point, where we would change the angles to provide a better perspective when looking at the two main characters. We wanted Bella to look very small in the frame towards the end, and we were definitely trying to control the emotional temperature. I mainly did that through performance choices, but also through what the camera was doing, and where it last was in relation to Bella or Edward. It is an incredibly powerful way of controlling how *hot* or *cold* a scene is emotionally. I'd say that was what made it challenging, trying to get the best version of the dramatic moment. The angles at which we look at Bella also create a different balance, as they change the way we experience the moment from her point of view. We chose high angles that created a sense of vulnerability for her; we also chose shots that were constantly moving towards and away from the characters to create the sense of push and pull that Bella was going through. It was an intention to get a sense of nausea and panic, and the camera was precisely reflecting that. I have no idea why we cut to the wide shot in the middle of the scene. I feel now if we were to do that, I would probably stay on it for a bit longer – a line or two – because something is jarring about cutting out to a wide shot and then just cutting back into close-ups without anything important seeming to happen.

Q: I think the wide shot worked well, as it conveys the distance between the characters and allows the viewer to see how small and vulnerable Bella is compared to Edward.
It creates distance between them, definitely. Throughout the film, personal space and the distance between actors was very important. The way we used editing to indicate that was a

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big thing. For instance, Bella is constantly moving into Jake's personal space, because she's drawn to him, but also in a way which absolutely seduces him. That's obviously important overall in *Twilight* because the central idea is that Bella wants to get close to Edward, but there's such an inherent danger to her life if she does so.

Q: Did you use any strategies when establishing how Jacob and Edward will be presented?

Well, I remember the mise-en-scène in the car park was quite important, that's when Edward walks towards Bella for the first time, and we give him that kind of sexy, slow motion. Then we use the same angle for Jake's arrival in the scene, but not played in slow motion, because he is introduced as the alternative to Edward. This scene was carefully composed, especially when we have Bella and Jake in the foreground with Edward in the background, and Jacob lifts up a dreamcatcher to block out Edward. Those small things were thought through in advance. With regards to Edward, one of the main challenges was his absence, which meant we had to try to find visual ways to keep his character alive throughout the story. In the book, I think she hears his voice in her head. Is that right?

Q: Correct, while in the film you introduced smoke effect visions of Edward.

It was a very conscious decision to do that to keep Edward alive and to get as much Rob time as we possibly could because people love Rob Pattinson! It also felt like it would make a huge difference just to see him in some way rather than only hear him, while vision scenes also allowed us to keep the thread of Edward and Robert alive throughout the period where he's away.

Q: Not just him, other vampires are also almost non-existent in the film until Alice finally returns to check up on Bella and takes her to Italy.

Oh, the Volterra part! I like this sequence because there's a real energy to it, even though we found it very hard to play vampire speed. If you just film people and then speed up the footage, it looks pretty ridiculous. We ended up generally slowing them down to portray the fact that they're going really fast as vampires. Another interesting thing about the Italy sequence was the choice of deliberately keeping red as a colour absence until Bella meets the Volturi. Viewers are sort of aware of not seeing the shades of red, you hardly see that at all, until Bella gets to Volterra. Then suddenly, there's an explosion of this burst of colour, just to take us into a different realm in that point of the film. But that was not necessarily editing choices.

Q: How did editing help to keep track of other characters in New Moon?

I remember during pre-production we talked a lot about creating a different camera language for three different character types. For instance, Bella's experiences with high school friends were going to be handheld to create a more human, naturalistic feel. Stuff with Jake was going to be shown on the Steadicam, which has easy fluidity to it. Scenes with Edward would be shot on tracks, which has movement, but it's a much more rigid and controlled movement. I'm also thinking now about the scene with Carlisle and Bella, which is a very quiet, slow, beautifully shot scene. The camera is stable, the cuts aren't jarring, and there's some Schubert playing in the background very gently. Those choices are there because they're saying something about Carlisle's vampire world, and the fact that he has managed to find incredible self-control and Bella feels safe with him. As an editor, I didn't have to understand all these things to cut the scene that way. It's there in the background and you're responding to it, but I didn't have to think it through in advance. For Chris, certain choices obviously would be indicative of the contradictory relationships between the characters. When it came to shooting, these ideas were a very helpful way of thinking about what the different scenes would feel like, but we didn't necessarily stick to them all the time. Sometimes when Chris found himself on set with the actors, he thought 'This isn't going be the best version of the scene if I stick rigidly to this rule', and they would try something different. For me, however, this strategy completely affected the editing rhythm, because the way you cut into a shot filmed on tracks will be completely different from editing handheld material, which just lends itself to a scrappier type of cutting. We don't expect elegance when cutting by necessity. We don't by default expect the same kind of seamless rhythm with handheld material in the way that you do something that's shot on tracks. That's what I mean by being sensitive to the material, looking at the rushes and trying to feel instinctively where the right cut is.

Q: What about the werewolves? One of the reviews on Twilight that I read suggested visual speed and vividness of werewolves in the films could be linked to the nature of their biological transformation, which is impulsive and uncontrollable. Could you perhaps comment on this theory?

To be honest, I didn't think that way when I was editing, but that might be explaining our instincts when we were cutting around werewolves. When you're editing a film like that, everyone is trying to treat the emotions as real, and to play the human side of life for the vampires and for the werewolves, rather than the creature side of it. When you watch Bella interacting furiously with the wolf pack who have taken Jacob, in her mind, and somehow

drawn him into a cult, you're probably going to respond to the fact that she is at boiling point. The wolves are also angry because they know that Bella is hanging out with a bloodsucker. The editing rhythm will be inevitably more impulsive because of real emotions. It would be that way around rather than thinking 'I need to find a way to represent the werewolves' impulsivity, and therefore I will impose an editorial rhythm to it'.

Q: I assume such theories occur as a result of us, academics, trying to interpret certain elements of the final film in our own philosophical way. But it is also fascinating to see how your practical concerns when editing New Moon have a slightly different dimension to the scholarly discourse.

Well, when analysing *New Moon* as an academic, you will be absolutely right in saying that rapid cutting reflects the impulsivity of the werewolves. But when you're the editor, you're also thinking about acting, *textures* and *colours* that you're getting from the shots, as well as the technical concerns of the process. They are dictating the rhythm. I'm sure the writer and the director have thought about that when they were constructing certain parts, but I'm just trying to find the way that feels right for that scene, as well as the material in those performances.

Q: Is there anything you would have changed in New Moon?

I thought the sequence immediately after the break-up – of Bella walking through the woods and passing out – was perhaps a little less successful. And then the scene after it, where she's being carried by a half-naked guy, was a real shock! *(laughs)*

Q: I think the shot of Bella laying down is a very beautiful shot!

Now again, I'm glad you like it. I remember why we never cut those things. It's easy to look at the film now and just go 'Why didn't we make that choice?'. But there was so much passion for episodes within the book, and we were really aware of that. It was like a fever for that stuff. We didn't want to let our audiences down, as they were looking forward to that moment. I remember at one point thinking 'How are we going to make the film shorter?' because it was really long. It wasn't that we didn't like it, we just had to find ways to shorten it. We were trying to find elegant cuts which would improve the film structurally and potentially improve the storytelling. Even if it sometimes involved repurposing one scene or changing a line. Then we were sometimes just tapping away on the computer to google what are the 10 things that fans are most excited about in *New Moon*, and we found that three of them were in a particular sequence which we wanted to cut. So, we just thought 'Well we can't cut them out, it just

wouldn't be nice to the fans'. There was so much excitement for the whole story, from the beginning to the end, so we didn't have a choice.

Q: What is the editor/ director relationship like? How does it vary, in your experience, from project to project?

If it works, it is the best thing about the job. It's probably why I was drawn to editing more than anything else, because of the experience of collaborating with another person creatively. However, it can vary enormously in terms of how you work together. Some directors will sit next to me and discuss every decision down to the frame as to where we cut. Chris, who directed *New Moon,* is very much like that. He was completely honouring my opinion, but he expected to be driving the process on a microcosmic as well as a macrocosmic level. On the other hand, some directors won't be in the room for much of the time, they'll come in, they'll look at the work to give notes and feedback, and then leave you as an editor to work on your own. Both of these director types can have immense value. For obvious reasons, the first one allows you the input of a director on a nuts and bolts level, which can be invaluable. The other allows you to have somebody who has much greater objectivity about the material than you do, especially after you've been working on it for a long time. Either way, when you enjoy each other's company and you sync up in terms of the way you think about the project, it's just totally delightful.

Q: How can you describe your experience when working on a New Moon?

I had not known Chris for very long before *New Moon*. I worked very briefly on his adaptation of *The Golden Compass* and that's how I got the job on the *New Moon.* We just clicked very quickly. The process of working on *New Moon* was as follows: each day at lunchtime during the shoot, we would watch the previous day's dailies, as they call it in America, or rushes, as we call it in the UK. As we watched them Chris would say 'That's good. I like that' or 'I don't like that. How about this?', 'This is the shot I was thinking we could use for this moment', and I would scribble down notes. And then after lunch I would be cutting the previous day's stuff on my own. We had a short schedule on *New Moon*. We didn't start shooting until March or April, and it had to come out in November, which was tight for a film with visual effects. So we met every weekend during the shoot: I remember I would go to Chris' house in Vancouver and we'd look over the material which I had assembled during the week; then we would do a quick pass together, re-cutting it based on his instant reaction. When we started post-production, Chris was in the room all the time. I would sit in front of the Avid, and he would

sit on a cushion on the floor, or lie down and look at the screen. He's a really funny guy and an exceptionally nice man. A brilliant director, wonderful collaborator and now one of my closest friends. We laughed a lot, while also taking the job very seriously. We enjoyed arguing with each other about certain things, but always in a completely amicable way. We came up with all kinds of weird sort of shorthand for different types of edits. He really likes coming up with strange words for the for cuts or edits.

Q: Such as?

Well, the biggest one was a 'chataway', which has expanded to be used by other directors. A friend of mine called Adam Chataway made a video on his parents' camera when he was about ten. It was called *The Colombian Killings* and involved a bike chase, in which he got on a bicycle and he had to bicycle from one house to another. Instead of realising that in films you are allowed to jump through time, he just set up a camera and bicycled across the frame. Then got off, moved the camera, bicycled to the next part, got off, moved the camera, bicycled to the next part – so he had a series of shots. I mentioned this to Chris when talking about a particular cut. I can even tell you where this cut is in the film: it's when Bella walks down the hill to find the bikers. It's a half-chataway because she walks out of the frame, then we cut to her and she's already in the frame, but continues walking. So, if somebody walks out the frame, and you just cut to them walking into the frame, that's a chat-away. This is something that we got so excited by for having discovered that we then both talked about chat-aways on future jobs. You start realising filmmakers like David Mamet, his films are full of chataways. Anyway, it was a very long way of saying me and Chris shared a similar way of thinking about things in a slightly silly way. That was a lot of fun.

Recorded on 13th of January, 2021

Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas was born in Barcelona, Spain, but has been based in the UK for the past 20 years. Her work includes the Oscar-nominated and Bafta-winning feature film *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer & Christine Cynn 2012). Fatjó-Vilas has worked on nearly 20 documentary and drama features, animated films and TV series, and she also taught editing for the Ethnographic & Documentary Film MA at University College London.

Selected editor's filmography: *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer & Christine Cynn 2012), *What Nobody Can See* (Stanislavs Tokalovs 2016), *The Drift* (Maeve Brennan 2018), *Finite: The Climate of Change* (Rich Felgate 2022), *Fadia's Tree* (Sarah Beddington 2022).

Q: How did you come to the UK and begin your editing career?
I am originally from Barcelona where I did a four-year BA course in Media Studies. It was during the second year that I discovered my interest in editing. That summer I decided to do a traineeship as assistant editor, where I learned how to use Avid and over the next years, I edited some small projects. As my specialty on the BA was in directing though, I also undertook roles as assistant director on some other projects (including a feature-length drama), where I learned a lot. But it became clear to me that I preferred editing than being in shoots. However, as my BA course was quite theoretical, I felt I lacked some practical knowledge. Researching I found that the editing MA at the National Film and Television School had a hands-on approach, which was exactly what I wanted. I managed to get a place there and came to the UK in January 2004 to start my 2-year Master. While at the NFTS, I established some contacts, some of which gave me or recommended me for my first freelancing jobs after graduating. This fact, together with the fact that having studied at the NFTS is very well thought of within the UK industry, it meant I felt I was at a better position to establish myself in the UK than back at my hometown. That's why I initially decided to stay and now I have created a life here in UK.

Q: You edited one of your first short films Opción C in 2002, was it your student work?
Yes, it was my BA graduation project. *Opción C* is a short film about a woman who wants to erase the memories of her previous relationship. But, when she somehow manages to do this,

she falls in love with the same guy again. In fact, it's a very similar storyline to the great film 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind', which came out later.

I think *Opción C* had a very original concept and pretty high production values, considering it was made as a BA graduation film. I was the editor of the film and I later used it to apply at the NFTS, so it partly contributed to me getting a place on the MA.

Q: You worked on this film almost 19 years ago now! How do you think editing has changed over the years?

The biggest change I've seen is the digital revolution. Filmmaking technology, cameras, software and hardware have become more accessible than they used to be. Editing programs are not only widely available and much cheaper than before, but you can even edit in completely free programs. It is both good and bad. On one hand this has 'democratised' the access to filmmaking which is fantastic. But on the other hand, it has contributed that some people think of editing only as the technique of joining clips inside a software without the thinking behind the process.

In fact, one of the big differences has become the speed you're now expected to start cutting. Before it was understood you had to spend some time watching your dailies or rushes and thinking about the best way to put them together. But this change has been happening for a while, even before my time, when people were working on celluloid, one wouldn't even touch anything until you were sure how you wanted to proceed. Over the years, less and less time is given to preparing for the edit and thinking about the story.

In my case, when I start editing a documentary, I usually spend between two to four weeks watching material and thinking about the story, basically editing without the machine. This process is really important and in fact it speeds up the whole editing process but in certain environments it's hardly appreciated and in many occasions I have to argue to have this space to think and plan the whole film.

Also, with this democratisation, the cost of filming has reduced considerably. This means that more material is being shot and some of the decisions that used to happen in the preproduction or production periods are getting postponed until postproduction. This means that editors are dealing now with bigger quantities of material, with more decisions to make and with less time to think and deal with than before.

Q: You worked on a few films where you had to edit foreign language dialogues, including Fadia's Tree and What Nobody Can See. How is it like to edit a film in the language that you don't speak?

I think probably 70% of the films I edited are in a foreign language. It's certainly slower to edit in a foreign language because you need to get the material translated.

This was one of the first things we had to organise when working on *Fadia's Tree*, as we needed the translation to understand which scenes and sections we wanted to use and also to be able to edit them. With *What Nobody Can See* I came in when there was already an assembly edit, which contained subtitles. But since we were constantly revisiting the cut, we kept finding new sentences that had not been included in the assembly cut, so they were not subtitled. As the film was in the director's native language it was not much of an issue, as we were working together and so he could translate anything I needed on the spot.

The process may be slower on one hand, but on the other hand, it helps you focus on things that you wouldn't necessarily notice otherwise. For example, the main character in *Fadia's Tree* is a kindergarten teacher, and there was one scene, not fully translated, where she talks to children. Even though I didn't know what she was saying, I edited the scene based on her movements and the physical way she delivers her talking. The scene, of course, needed some changes, but I had understood the logic of the scene even if I had not understood the exact words of what was being said. So, I think that sometimes when you don't know the language, you focus on emotions, rhythm and non-verbal communication more than you focus on words.

Q: How did you find the story/ structure of Fadia's Tree?

The edit process for *Fadia's Tree* was particularly long. This was because of several factors, including that the director had been shooting this film for 14 years and so there was a wide range of material. But more importantly than this I believe, was the fact that throughout the editing process we realised that the initial idea of the director contained the use of some devices that only after time and trials we came to the realisation that were not suitable for the film that she wanted to make.

The film tells the story of a Palestinian refugee who dreams about her ancestral home. She constantly thinks about her grandparents' house now in Israel, a place where she can't return nor visit, and she 'sends' the director to find the tree that grows next to that house.

In the beginning, the idea of the history of borders was meant to be a strong emotional and visual tool in the film to represent how over centuries more and more borders have been built and regions have been compartmentalised. As we were working on the project, we realised this

device was not supporting the story of our main character. And even worse, it was alienating some of our audiences. The film wanted to be inclusive for everyone independently of their ideology, it wanted to create an emotional journey which everyone could empathise with, and the maps had the opposite effect, they felt too political and so they divided the audiences. So, we removed them.

Another device that was part of the initial idea was using mythology and an Earth narrator. Following this idea, we had built a very beautiful and grand beginning (with the universe and a voice over telling us about a myth of creation). But unfortunately, it didn't help our story either. When we showed a cut to some audiences, we were told that starting so big, when we got to our character, it all felt too small and it diminished our story. The main recommendation was to focus on the development of our character, and if the story needed to grow further, it could do it towards the end of the film, not the other way around. As the edit progressed, it became clear that the more we focused on our story, the less space there was for the mythology strand and eventually, it disappeared.

Another complicated issue was finding the balance between giving enough context to understand the story and not overdoing it. We tried different ways of giving the context that didn't exist in the material itself: voice over by the director, phone calls between the director and the main character and text. We eventually settled for a mix of phone calls and text, as the director felt her voice over was taking away attention from the main character.

Fadia's Tree was a 20 month editorial exercise of removing and stripping things carefully to find the essence of the film. By removing all these different ideas that were supposedly there to say more, we strengthened our story.

Q: Could you describe your typical editing procedure from the time dailies come in?

I always start by watching the rushes to familiarise myself with the material. The average amount of material I get on a documentary project is about 300 to 500 hours of footage. In the past, we used to watch absolutely everything that was filmed. Now, I rarely get to see all the material, as it's not feasible. Instead, I watch selected sections and start thinking about the story by doing a paper cut, together with the director.

Paper edits are a very common practice throughout the industry but they are especially helpful when working in documentaries. Frequently, when filmmakers come to me with their rushes, they have an idea or a theme, but they don't have a defined story. The beginning of the story is usually clear, but the ending or how it develops, isn't. The paper edit helps to establish the story by arranging scenes on cards and visualising what the audience will see and hear. You can

either use a line of cards, or you can add cards on top of others to represent, separate sources of image and audio. By building this paper edit with the director, we develop the story with a fairly realistic idea of how it can be crafted and we start to understand what the beginning, middle and end of my film are and when certain information needs to be delivered or events need to happen.

Most of the time first paper edits are extremely ambitious and so they change over time, but still, they provide a concrete plan with an overview of the film, material strategies on how to proceed with the edit and a first understanding of what is possible and what is not with the material that exist. So paper cuts materialise the film before the actual edit, and give a concrete plan to follow once you sit in front of the computer.

Q: Do you have an editing style?

I think it is very important to adjust your style based on the film you edit, so I can edit in different styles depending on the story.

On *Fadia's Tree* the pace is fairly slow as the director is an artist who likes the audience to have time to contemplate and reflect. However, the film I am working on at the moment is called *Finite*, and it follows some activists campaigning against opencast coal mines. The material captures some fast pace events and so the editing has to be raw and fast at times.

Obviously, there are also certain ways of editing and editorial choices that go beyond the style of the film and can vary between professionals. For example, I always prefer cutting on the pause within a movement instead of cutting on the movement itself. And not only this, you also have your unique way of thinking that will inevitably come across in the films you work on. For example, on several documentaries I've edited you can recognise certain ideas that repeat, the reason being is that your contribution in the edit will always be based on your ideas and perspective.

To sum up: as an editor, I always adapt my editing style to the films I work on, but at the same time I also have a unique way of looking at things, perceiving, feeling and identifying the context. That's why different editors bring different qualities to their work.

Q: What are the most determining factors for you when deciding when to make a cut?

I completely agree with Walter Murch's rule of six, which considers cutting for emotion the most important reason to cut. And when I said before I like cutting on a pause, this is because for me these pauses, these moments, are when turns of emotion happen, when decisions are made. For example, you see me lick my lips in thirst and search for something with my gaze,

then you cut. In the next shot, I take my cup of tea. I call this type of cutting 'cut on intention' and so it's not a random aesthetic idea but a way to drive the story forwards through emotion and story. Murch separates emotion, rhythm, and story as a way to build his discourse, but in fact, when you edit, these three concepts are interconnected. Editing means telling a story through an emotional journey with a rhythm that supports this journey.

Q: Can you give an example of a pictorial problem that you had on a film, and how did you solve it?

I edited a project called *My Grandfather, The Spy*, which was a thriller spy type documentary. The main character tries to research on his grandfather who supposedly disappeared 40 years ago, and who he believed was a spy.

The way the character discovers new information is through conversations and it's built chronologically, in an unfolding story, as one thing brings him to the next one. Each conversation had to give certain information and context and the way the film was designed, and its unfolding condition, it didn't allow us to use moments from previous scenes on a later stage when a more adequate condition for these came up. This meant we couldn't sometimes give the right information in the way we thought it was most emotional and compelling. For example, an 'emotional bomb' would be thrown during a conversation but we couldn't pause on that moment to give it the emotional space it needed as other things had to come out from that scene. Unfortunately, the cut aways or reaction shots did not have the length, meaning and strength necessary to help us in some of these cases. We needed to visually leave the spaces the scenes were occurring in with something that emotionally supported the scene.

From the beginning of the project, it was always the intension to use some fictional material to tell some sections of the story. But when we had the first assembly, we realised that we needed more of it to bring the story to life. For example, when the main character would discuss with his parents about the past when he was a child and his grandfather was still around, we could then see a fictional scene of him being suspicious about his grandfather's activities. Using these scenes helped the audience feel more immersed in the story -as they were able to visualise the emotional context behind the story- and also were able to emotionally navigate the scenes in a way that we thought was most fitting for the story.

Q: What personality traits do you think are necessary to be a good editor?

I think it is very important to be patient because it can sometimes take a very long time to build a story and if you rush, you might not let the film flourish in a way that it could do.

You also have to be positive, as you need to be able to see that there's always a film in the material you're presented with. I had an interview this morning, and the director said "Oh, when you see the rushes, you'll probably think – God, what did she do?". I never think like that. I have great admiration for directors and it is my job to find a way to best tell the story they intended to communicate. Of course, sometimes you might find that you need more footage than was originally intended, but as an editor you need to have the vision of seeing what can be done to tell the story. Not to linger on the problems but to be a problem solver.

Editors must also be good listeners, as they need to understand what the director or the producer really wants, which it's not always obvious, sometimes not even for themselves. So as an editor you need to listen enough to understand the essence of what they want and also, you need to listen to the material, as it also talks to you and asks to be cut in certain way. If you don't listen to the material, you will be forcing your ideas onto it and the film won't be as rich as it could be.

Finally, editors need to have good communication and diplomacy skills because we are hired to express our opinions and bring ideas to the project but at the same time, filmmaking being a collaborative and a team effort, you need to understand when the right conditions exist for certain thoughts.

Q: What are the main differences for you editing feature-length dramas, as opposed to documentaries?

The biggest difference is that dramas are based on a script and documentaries, in most cases, aren't.

So in fiction there is usually less work on getting the structure working as the basis of it is in the script, and instead there is more work on establishing the right performance, rhythm and emotional journey. Understanding this emotional journey and the audience's feelings and perceptions throughout the film will help you decide the type of performance, angle and characters to show at a given time.

In documentary, the most important part is identifying what the story is about, and to choose the right material and structure to support it. So if in fiction the biggest task tends to be in the 'detail', in documentary the biggest task tends to be in the structure.

Drama and documentary editing also each have certain specific methods. In documentary editing, you must be able to manage and navigate huge amounts of material. In drama that's not the case, but instead you need to manage the fact that there are many takes of a certain given sentence, with techniques like breaking one word or phrase from all the takes where it is

said and putting all of these collected bits in one timeline. So for example, you end up with a 'hello' from take 1, 'hello' from take 2, 'hello' from take 3 etc. one after another. In this way, it is easier to choose between takes.

So, editing fiction and documentary may be approached in different ways, but the concept and focus behind is always the same, to tell a story in the best way possible. So, the essence between editing drama and documentary I believe is exactly the same.

Q: What are some of the technical rules of editing that practitioners should be aware of?

Crossing the line is definitely a rule to be aware of, as crossing it can be unsettling and might make it complicated for the audience to understand the geography of the space and where the characters and objects are situated within the scene. But you can, of course, cross it if it's not a problem for the scene or it helps what you are trying to communicate at that moment. I think all rules in editing can be broken as they are all dependent on the story and the type of film you are editing. But it is important to understand them and their effect on the audience to make an informed decision on following them or not.

Maintaining the continuity is the one rule that many people seem to think editing is all about. Personally, continuity issues are at the end of my scale in terms of importance, as my emphasis in cutting is in the emotion, the story and the rhythm of the scene.

In fact, look at YouTube – there are so many videos with examples of continuity errors, some of which seem so obvious once they are revealed to you. For example, a scene with a character alternatively smoking in one shot and not smoking in the next shot. The reason why there are so many examples is because editors have realised that most people won't notice these issues when watching the films, as they will be engrossed in the story and the emotional journey if the edit is successful. And so the priority is in the emotion, story and rhythm and not in the continuity as such.

Having said this, it's important to understand the logic of this rule as it can present some challenges. Let's say you want to cut from a sunny shot to a cloudy shot. The lack of continuity may imply that there is a passage of time. If this is not what intend, you may need to stick to either the sunny or cloudy takes, or otherwise find a way to surreptitiously move from one type of takes to the other.

So the more you understand the effects of certain decisions, the better choices you make.

Q: Do you think that women make better editors?

In the film industry women have consistently been underrepresented as heads of department and this is a real shame as I think it's crucial that audiences are able to watch films and stories with different type of characters but also from different perspectives. I don't necessarily believe women make better editors, but I do believe there is a need for a diversity of gazes, and as such I mean, people with different genders, sexualities, races, classes, abilities or disabilities, body shapes, types of neurodiversity, etc. The more variety of gazes in filmmaking, the better, as this will bring different sensibilities and perspectives into the screen.

Q: Have you experienced any challenges as a film editor because you are a woman?

Absolutely. Filmmaking is one of the most unequal industries that exists, because of the way people are hired, mostly far from a fair and open process based in merit.

Traditionally the industry has been dominated by white, middle to upper class, heterosexual abled men with seemingly no caring responsibilities. As jobs are offered on recommendation and commonly, people tend to get along, trust and recommend people similar to themselves, anyone who doesn't fit this traditional model finds it harder to get in and progress in this industry. Networking events, another route of meeting people and finding jobs, don't offer a better route either as again, people have a tendency to talk and feel 'attracted' to people similar to themselves but also as they often take place at night and involve drinking, they exclude certain type of people: either people that don't feel comfortable in these situations, find it difficult to get to where they take place or they are carers or have children and can't easily organise going out when the events happen.

There is also a language and attitude used in selling themselves and projects that don't suit everyone. For example, women have a tendency to undersell themselves, say 'sorry' and not be as assertive as men, all behaviours typically associated to a lesser skill or competence. This results in very capable women not being hired or given an opportunity because the hiring process is mostly based on the way people present themselves and the way they are perceived by others, more than on their merits.

In editing specifically, and probably in other roles where technology is involved, as a woman you often have to battle the common assumption that because of your gender, you have less technical abilities than those of men.

I'm aware than being a woman and a migrant has made it harder for me to get some type of jobs, but at the same time, I've got other jobs working with people more in tune with my beliefs. As I've benefited from the recommendation system, these jobs brought me to other jobs with

similar type of people. So, I've been lucky that I've been able to build a career doing mostly projects I love and working with people I feel really comfortable with.

There is lot to change in this industry in order for it to get fairer, more diverse and representative of the society it is meant to represent. But still, I would recommend anyone who's passionate about editing or filmmaking to try hard and persevere in their pursuit getting in the industry. And the more diverse the industry becomes, the more inclusive it will be.

Q: You have taught editing on a few filmmaking courses in London. What are your main responsibilities as a tutor when you teach the craft of editing?

My main focus is on storytelling. I want students to be able to build the best structures for their story while creating emotional journeys. As well as this, I try that they cultivate critical thinking, as it will allow them both to develop their technique by constructively criticising their own work and the work of others, but also deal with criticism. Criticism is part of an editor's routine, as it comes from directors, producers, commissioning editors, test screening audiences, etc. But as you may get different criticism from different people, you need to have the skill to understand the essence behind the comments and also decide the best route to follow. It's important to listen to comments, but also not getting lost in them.

Recorded on 28th of May, 2021

Marek Budzynski is a director, editor and producer with over 40 years of experience in broadcast television, short films, feature films and documentaries. He received his MA in Film and Television at the Royal College of Art and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Film Production at Arts University Bournemouth.

Selected editor's filmography: *Friday Download* (TV series produced by Saltbeef Productions, 2011), *The Turtle and The Sea* (Marek Budzynski 2014), *Never Trouble Trouble, Until Trouble Troubles You* (Marek Budzynski 2018).

Q: How did you discover your passion for cinema?
I've been obsessed with films since I was young. When I was about eight-nine years old, I was in a film for the London Film School. That must have been where my brain said 'This is the career path you want to take'.
When I was ten years old, I got money for my birthday. I got on a bus to the west end of London, and bought a ticket for *2001, A Space Odyssey*. I also used to sneak down on the TV and watch film noir films without realising what they were. I wanted to see as many films as possible.

Q: How did you get into editing?
To get into the film industry, I thought I needed some training. The only way I could be trained was by watching as many films as possible. I spent a year working at repertory cinemas. I'd work the early, evening, and night shifts at three different cinemas, including the Scala, where I met Steve Woolley.
I also worked with Nicky Hamlyn, who's a professor of film in Canterbury now. He was behind the bar, and I was tearing tickets. One day, I chatted with him, and said, 'I really want to make films.' He worked at the London Film-Makers' Co-op and ran the workshop there. He said: 'Why don't you just come down and buy some film? I'll show you how to operate the camera,' and I did that. My girlfriend bought me three rolls of film, Nikki showed me how to operate a Bolex and a Beaulieu camera, I filmed some stuff and then edited what I shot. For me, the

editing process was a natural thing. I didn't have to make conscious decisions about what I was doing; I knew how to put this stuff together.

Q: Did you go to a film school?

After making my first film, I applied to the Arts Council in Great Britain, and they gave me money to make another film. Later I applied again and received another grant. I ended up having a portfolio of three films and went to the Royal College of Arts to get into the MA course. But I didn't do a BA. I spent all my time watching films, playing in bands, and working. I was working in the Scala, and I was also training to be a camera assistant. I used to go to the rental house on the afternoons and learn how to load cameras, but I never pursued the loading until I went to the Royal College.

Q: Why you didn't do the BA?

It's almost pointless in my perception of it. You must train yourself to have a visually retentive memory to do the job. It's like the language; you don't have to know the strength of a language to speak it. Ask me what an adjective or an adverb is - I don't know because I'm dyslexic. But I can talk to you, and I can make myself understood. It is the same in cinema; if you expose yourself to enough moving images from a young age, you learn to understand how it's put together without knowing the specific grammar.

It's interesting how I first ask students in film schools: 'Do you know what a bad shot is? Do you know what bad acting is?' They all go: 'Yeah.' How do they know that if they've never been to film school? A bad cut is a bad cut, whether you have a formal understanding of the process or don't.

Q: What was your first professional work experience as an editor?

When I was at the Royal College, I worked at the BBC as an assistant film editor on training courses, which was interesting because it was a very fast turn-around. The directors were given a film crew; they would shoot stuff, then I would work with an editor to put their films together, and then they'd be screening them. Even though I wanted to direct and shoot, I was doing more editing because it was the easiest for me to get a job. I could do one or two days' work to cover my living expenses.

When my first year at Royal College finished, I met Lutz Becker, my tutor. He was working on a feature film, *The Lion of Judah*, about Mussolini trying to expand his empire into Ethiopia. Lutz was famous for making films from newsreel footage from the 1920s,30s, and 40s. He'd

already worked on a film called *Double-Headed Eagle* about the rise of Hitler. Prior to the Second World War. He also worked on Swastika where he discovered Eva Braun's home movies. He asked me if I wanted to work on the film [*The Lion of Judah*], and he got me a job as an assistant sound editor working with an editor called Pete Goddard. Pete ended up working almost exclusively for Tony Kaye, the film and commercials director. I used to work on many music videos with Pete as his assistant editor, and this was how I earned money back that day. Nobody gave me jobs being a director.

Q: How would you define an editor's job?

My job is very simple. Back in the day, you had people shoot film, print it onto a big roll, and then chop it up. Some film would be used in the movie, and the rest of it would be hung up in the trim bin. Imagine you have a strip of film; down the edge of the film, you have key code numbers. You would have a different number for every foot of 35 mm, which was 16 frames. So, when the editor told me, 'I need to extend this shot by 15 frames,' I had to know where every clip of that film was in the trim bin. You're talking about 1000s of trims. Over the years, I developed a visually retentive memory. Film editing is about the visual sense of memory, where when you sit down and watch the rushes of film from beginning to end, that's always been the process. You don't start a film by selecting the best bits; you look at *everything*. I was trained to remember every single frame of film. I can edit the whole film in my head even before I make the first cut.

Q: In your opinion, what is the most essential editing rule or convention?

The conventions of film editing have radically changed over the years, while back in the 1950s, they were the right thing. You had to make editing invisible because you wanted to tell a story. You didn't want the editing to get in the way. Now, when you watch something like an episode of *Watchmen*, you will get sequences that jump up. A few years ago, if you attempted to show a jump cut sequence to the BBC, their line would be: 'The audience won't understand what's going on.' Now, even shot-reverse-shot doesn't even need to exist anymore. People are so used to having an in-depth understanding that conventions are not always as important. Well, certain elements of conventionality have to be there to make the audience understand that something's happening, even though it's not real. You can get away with rest. That's a really good thing because everybody is so literate in cinema form and style and TV form and style that rules are not needed to be adhered to.

Continuity cutting is not difficult because you know if it works, and you know if it doesn't work. At film schools, students will always match the movement because they want to make the cuts smooth, which is fine. But look at Martin Scorsese – he doesn't give a damn about continuity because it's all about the emotional engagement with the audience and the characters.

Q: As a lecturer, what is an important piece of editing knowledge that you want your students to learn?

There's an exercise that I do with my students often. I ask them to find an interesting film, select the scene, and then take a shot out of it and see if we can change the audience's relationship with the characters. Because once students crack that and understand that, they've got everything. The shots that editors put into the film will make the audience react in a certain way, tell the story in a certain way, and give the audience an understanding of the characters and backstory. If we see someone looking at something, we have to see the close-up. Without that information, the audience is not going to understand what's going on. I teach how to *deconstruct* what we're watching to make the audience do what we want.

Q: How can one learn to edit?

One of my students said: 'Editing is like a chess game,' and it's right! You're playing the game ahead and referring to what's happening in the future while you're doing it. You've got all the rushes in your head; you'll know exactly how to do that and how to put it together. If you're intelligent, you'll pick that stuff up anyway. I didn't need to be taught because I picked it all up while watching films.

It's like reading books; you will understand what a good book is, what a bad book is, and how you react to it. Whether you can write the book that's a different story. But if you want to attempt to write a book, you have this amazing amount of information in other books that you can pick and choose. If you approach writing a book without having read anything, you'll always lose.

The only way that you can learn to cut is by cutting. You can't learn it from a book. You can read Walter Murch end to end, but if you're faced with looking at rushes together with customers, you will end up doing it your way anyway, whatever Walter Murch said. Murch's Rule of Six was like the ten commandments in the Bible. If I was lucky enough to be Walter Murch and I worked with Francis Ford Coppola, I'd be working with one of the world's best camera people, actors, and script. Then I could make his choices. In reality, I work with

different directors, scripts, and actors, and I still have to cut it together to make something that people will enjoy.

Every editor works completely differently because of the material they're presented with. Some are lucky to work with talented people, and others are unlucky to work with untalented people. Editing is a craft. You don't have to be massively talented; you just have to do the job.

Q: How would you describe the experience of shifting to digital editing from film?

The most significant change was the linear editing. What linear editing was between film and digital was tape-to-tape editing. People had to change how they thought. Editing reverted to what it was initially. In tape-to-tape editing, you had to play the first shot, record it onto another tape, then play the second shot, record it, and so on. It was like a b, c, d, e, f g; you couldn't go back and stick a shot between d and e. That was impossible; you'd have to go right back to the beginning and start from scratch. With digital editing you would approach editing the same way that film used to do.

Let's say that the interim linear editing was with film: you would shoot the film, have a print made of that. You would cut prints, make all the cuts, and then give that cut to a negative cutter. They would take the negative of the film, and edit it the same way you had cut the film. It would be pristine negative, and then they would make the print from that, which would be your final print. There'd be a little mucking around with the lights to make shots lighter or darker. That was the only real change you could make back then.

Years back, when the DOPs were lighting the film, they were lighting the final product. They weren't going: 'Oh, we're gonna post-grade it' as they do now; that's a slight difference. You had a film where you could change the order of shots quite easily until you had the picture lock, and then that would be taken to the negative cutter. It didn't matter how messy you could cut. That's probably the reason why I went into editing rather than cinematography. If you make a mistake on set with lighting or camera work, you cannot fix it afterwards. But if you make a mistake when making the cut, you just stick it back together with sticky tape, add some frames, take them away, or reorder the shots. To reorder things is easy. If you make a mistake in editing, you can unmake that mistake because you're not cutting the negative.

Q: When did you try digital editing?

The first time I did non-linear editing was in France in the 1990s, and there were two main editing systems, Avid and Lightworks. Lightworks had a controller exactly like the one on a Steenbeck but with a big red button for doing the cut. So, it was like working on Steenbeck,

but I didn't have to cut instantaneously. It's not like there wasn't time to think; if you have a visual retentive memory, you already know where the cuts are. Your first cut is the only iteration of the original script. And after that, you can start being creative.

Q: What are the attributes of a good film editor?

I think it is the ability to tell a story and know when to let go and do what other people say. That's really difficult when you're young because you put your heart and soul into editing. If somebody says to you: "Can you replace the shots? Can you change the sequence?" you get upset because you've done the best job possible. You have to learn that if they're paying for it, you have to let them change it. If you want to fight karma, that's completely up to you.

I'm working on a TV series at the moment, and the production company that we're working with said, "That's great, but can you take out these specific words, these phrases? And can you add another couple of bits?" My response was, "No worries. We can do that." I'm not going to stand my ground, which is what I would have done at 24. That is what my attitude would have been then. I've taken that down a notch because I lost so much work.

Q: Would you call it a creative limitation?

What you're doing is you're not disagreeing. At the end of the day, I'm never going to win the fight. The person put money put in, and it's up to them if they want to ruin what they've done. I'm going to try and edit as best as I can because it's going to reflect on me. My job as a film editor is to get the audience to engage emotionally with the characters in the story. If you work with a director that knows what they want, they're only going to shoot what they want. Then, you can only cut the film that way, which is good.

Q: What is a good cut?

It's very difficult to make a bad cut. 99 times out of 100, you're going to make the right cut. How do you know it's right? You just do it, and it works. It doesn't matter where you make the cuts because you're telling the story. As long as you understand that the story flows in a linear way, you're doing the right thing.

You've got three points you need to know: Who is the person? What do they want? What is their super objective? If you understand that concept, you know who the most important person in the scene is. That's the kind of logic you can't get past even though it's not a taught thing. How do I know that? Because you watch it on TV and in films all the time.

Q: What is an editor's instinct?

It's not a question of instinct or intuition. It's more of behaviour rather than intuition. When watching film and TV, it's impossible not to understand what you're watching. Unless the film is done really badly, it is not editing that matters. It is what happens between the cuts. Audiences are incredibly intelligent, and they're very, very savvy. Everybody watches moving images every day throughout their lives, and very few people don't. It's not difficult to make an editing choice. You already know the choices because they've been done 1000s of times in films and TV.

Q: So, do you think there's no such thing as editor's intuition?

If I don't think about it, I'd call it an autonomic response instead. I just do it. That's why I say it's almost impossible to make the wrong cut.

Now you can work as a Hollywood editor because there is no magic, no dark art behind being the best editor. Cutting two shots together is like a no-brainer. If it doesn't work, you can recut. It is really simple. You can't do that if you're a cinematographer. If you're an actor, maybe you get a couple of extra takes. But being an editor, I can chop and change, take stuff out, and put stuff in as much as I want.

Q: While working on Turtle and The Sea, did you pre-visualize the story? Or did it develop during your editing process?

I had a fairly good idea of the structure from remembering the rushes. As soon as I finished shooting, I took a month before I did anything because I wanted to get distance. I just let the assistant sync up the rushes. There are no longer selected takes like back in the olden days because the film was so expensive, you would only get a print of the selected take. Editors were more hamstrung over what they could use or not because they only had the best takes. But now the difference is because you're shooting digitally, you'll have all the stuff. You have to watch all the material, and it's a much harder process. Because I was my boss, both the editor and the director of the film, I had full control over what the final edit would look like.

Q: Since you had the freedom to decide what do, how did that feel?

It made the process much easier. I wasn't constantly having someone making spurious choices. I was trusted to make the correct decisions. I tend to do a lot of work on my own anyway because I work with people who trust me. It's getting to that position of trust. If I work with people who don't trust me and are overbearing, I choose not to work with them because it's

pointless. I knew how I wanted the audience to react to the characters. I knew when I had to stick to a close-up or cut to a reaction shot. The people that looked at the first cut gave me a clue as to whether they understood the story or not.

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Nick Emerson's editing career began in TV news before he moved on to feature films, TV dramas and documentaries. Emerson edited his first feature film, *Cherrybomb,* in 2009 (dir. by Glenn Leyburn & Lisa Barros D'Sa). One of his most recent works is a mystery drama, *Eileen* (William Oldroyd 2023), featuring Anne Hathaway.

Selected editor's filmography: *Emma* (Autumn de Wilde 2020), *Daphne* (Peter Mackie Burns 2017), *Lady Macbeth* (William Oldroyd 2016).

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Recorded on 11th of August, 2022.

Matt Villa is BAFTA and Oscar-nominated feature film editor with over 30 years of experience. In 2013, Villa won the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award and the Film Critics Circle of Australia Award (AACTA) for Best Editing for *The Great Gatsby* (Baz Luhrmann 2013). One of Villa's most known works is a 2022 epic biographical drama *Elvis* (dir. by Baz Luhrmann), for which he also received AACTA Award for Best Editing.

Selected editor's filmography: *The Great Gatsby* (Baz Luhrmann 2013), Predestination (The Spierig Brothers 2014), *The Water Diviner* (Russell Crowe 2014), *Winchester* (The Spierig Brothers 2018), *Elvis* (Baz Luhrmann 2022).

Q: How did you become an editor?
As a little boy, I skipped the usual dream of being an astronaut, fireman, or rock star. I always wanted to work in the movies. I'm old enough to have grown up with the original *Star Wars* films. As a child, I saw these films in the cinema and was mesmerised by what could be accomplished with vision, sound, and music combined in a big dark room. I have always loved telling and writing stories. Films were all I ever wanted to do.

There were two options for studying film production in Sydney when I left school: the Australian Film School and a technical college running a film course. I went to the college, where the structure was one year of study followed by a year's work experience before returning for two years' further study part time.

The first six months were spent studying everything - cinematography, sound, editing and film appreciation. Then for the second half of the year, you had to choose which strand you wanted to specialise in. My dream was always to be a writer-director, and I felt editing was the best stepping stone to get to that, so that's what I chose.

During my work experience year, I got a job as an assistant editor on a miniseries shot in Sydney. The industry in Sydney was quite small and I was lucky that that job led to another which led to another. I always count myself as very lucky because I was starting out at a time when many big films were being made in Australia, both local productions and American films. The next film I worked on was the first *Babe* film. That led to *Dark City, Babe 2, Mission:*

Impossible 2 and *Moulin Rouge*. I just happened to be around at the right time.

This was the time where the transition to non-linear editing was taking place. These films were being cut on Avid or Lightworks but required an accompanying film conform (the same edit using final print) for screenings etc. As I'd trained as a film assistant, I ran the film department while a very dear friend of mine, Jason Ballantine, was the digital assistant. We complimented each other's skillsets and would move from show to show as a team.

One day I was approached by a former production manager that I'd worked with a few years before. She was producing a very low-budget film and asked if I'd like to cut it. That's always the phone call that you're waiting for, the opportunity to cut for the first time. It was terrifying but it was exhilarating, being in the editor's chair for the first time.

Then, on the first day of that job I had another knock on the door. It was somebody else I'd worked with in the past who wanted to introduce me to the *Spierig Brothers.* They came in, we had a chat, and we got on really well. We were film nerds, the three of us together. They offered me their next movie to cut. And so, it went from there.

I never take for granted how lucky my path was. I was at the right place at the right time and the right kind of era, I guess. I made those connections and moved around.

Q: If you could define the craft of editing, how would you describe it?

Editing is the manipulation of all the material produced into a coherent narrative. And I say "produced" because it could be shot (live action films) or computer generated or drawn (animated films).

I like to consider the editor as the arbiter of the story. We have the luxury of having no investment in how much effort went into making the material, but we have to put together the story as best we can. Editors are in charge of letting the audience know where they need to be geographically and emotionally within the story. If either of those two things gets confused, and the audience gets lost.

Q: Are there any rules of thumb or techniques you follow when editing?

I firmly believe that the job differs from project to project. I don't know how books about editing are written because the craft involved depends on the material produced for each project. Unless there's a book written for the specific dailies you're working on or the director that you're working with, one book couldn't tell you what you need because the rules change. Editing is very instinctual, it's very musical and rhythmic and it changes depending on what you're doing. For example, the pacing in *Elvis* varied throughout the timeline, as each scene

required a different rhythm. Concerts were cut quickly while I could take my time with conversational footage later. It just depends on what the material is, what the project is, and what the narrative is.

Q: How would you explain what an editor's instinct is?

It's the internal tracking of what the audience needs to follow a story. The editor needs to be a proxy for the audience. The editor needs to be aware that a wide shot is required because the audience may be confused about where they are, or they may want to see the reaction on the face of the person listening rather than see the person speaking. As an editor, you have to feel your way through what the story requires. That just comes from an instinct.

I won't always be right. I put myself to the test by showing the cut to other people, and if they're confused, then I have to adjust the edit. When I say I am editing instinctively, I can only go by how I would want to be treated if I was the audience.

Q: Is the editor's instinct something like an inner clock?

We've all got a metronome inside us that gives us rhythm. I am a musical person; I've played piano in the past. I'm not sure how much it helps, but editing is definitely a rhythmic thing.

It all works into the way Walter Murch talks about the rhythm of when you blink. Walter Murch writes that while people often believe they experience the world continuously, they are in fact experiencing cuts with each blink of their eyes. We have a blink rhythm and we accept cuts in movies when they fall in line with when we blink. In a conversation for example, blinks fall naturally at specific moments. Sometimes it's a longer period, others a short one. People blink when they understand what you are saying and film editing is no different. Much like the conversation, the rhythm must be found and this will dictate whether to hold a shot or cut sharply. When we understand it as an audience, we can blink (i.e. cut)

Q: What is a good cut?

It's difficult to give a definite answer because it depends on what we are cutting from, what we're cutting to, and where the story is at the time. A good cut drives the narrative forward and keeps the story from being boring. You don't want to give the audience too much information. I like to work in a way where you keep the audience just leaning forward because they want to get to the next thing. Again, it's a sort of instinctual thing. If it feels right, it feels right

Q: What about the film's end? Would you still edit in a way so that the audience wants to learn more, or does it have to have some conclusion?

It really depends. I worked on a film called *Predestination*, which was a very convoluted time travel story. It had one of those endings that was a little bit ambiguous and could have gone one of two ways. The directors and I thought we had it right but when we put it in front of an audience, and they got confused. So, we had to go back and add a little bit more. Audience screenings are very important because you get too close to the material and can lose perspective.

Q: One of the first films you edited was Bangers. How has editing changed since then?

Audiences now can absorb a lot more information quicker. I haven't seen *Bangers* for a long time and there's every chance that if I cut that again today, I'd cut it quicker. Whenever there's a movie with a car chase, the benchmark is often *Bullitt* with Steve McQueen from 1968. But if you watch that now, it actually feels quite slow. I'm sure it was huge back then, but now in the days of *Mad Max*, the *Bourne* and *Mission Impossible* films, the audiences can absorb more information faster. It has changed the editors' way of approaching a film.

Q: What is the editor and director relationship like, and how do you think it varies from experience to experience?

That's a great question. I think there's a reason why a lot of directors work with the same editors again. I worked with the Spierig Brothers and Baz Luhrmann several times because we found a likeness in how we tell a story. I've always found collaboration rewarding, and I think a good director does as well because editors are their sounding board. They slave day in and day out to get all the footage and they depend on you to not to care how long it took, or how expensive it was to shoot. You, as the editor, have to throw that away.

I worked with directors that'll sit there all day and say: "I like *that*, and I don't like *that*." Other directors will come in and give you notes based on how they feel about a scene, and then they leave you to come up with a solution for it. There are different approaches that directors take, and I'm open to them all. It's an important relationship because the editing room is a very safe space for a director; it's usually just you and them. They can leave all the other questions, the crew, and everyone outside, and a really lovely relationship comes from that. You have to combine your visions to make the story work.

Q: Could you compare the experience of working with Baz Luhrmann and the Spierig Brothers?

The Spierig Brothers are a unique example because they're twins. There are two of them in the room, and they are of one mind. Sometimes they disagree, and I have to be the arbitrator. They like to sit in the cutting room all day and read a magazine or sit on their phone while you work. But they're always around because they enjoy the process.

Baz is more of a "give you notes and go away" kind of guy. Until it gets down to the nitty-gritty when he will sit there and go through takes and frames. Baz has got so many other things on all the time. He's just as involved in the music as in the picture. He's always gathering other bits of material, music, and graphics, and then he brings them into the cutting room. He spends a lot of time out of the cutting room, but when he comes in, it's like a whirlwind of new stuff you've got to sort out. It is a lot, but it is rewarding. I find both ways of working great in their different ways.

Q: Baz Luhrmann has a very distinctive and unique filmmaking style. Do you think editors can also have a style?

I think editors can have style, but we must mould it to the film and the director. I quite enjoy crosscutting and parallel storytelling, that's a particular style that I'll employ if it suits the film. I'm not the only one, obviously, but that's the style I enjoy if the story allows it.

Q: In Elvis, the story combines politics, history, and personal relationships. When you edit a film with multi-narrative strands, how do you manage to balance such a large amount of information in the cut?

It's challenging and takes a lot of trial and error. A few scenes in *Elvis* were always designed to be cross-cut. An example of that was the moment we called "The Hayride Weave" where we cut between young Elvis in the Pentecostal tent and older Elvis standing with his family in the back alley of the Hayride, coming on stage, and so on.

Another example was the Ferris wheel scene, when Elvis is talking to Colonel Tom Parker and we cut away to the family signing the contract and breaking up with the girlfriend etc. These scenes were written, designed and shot this way.

Whereas there were other scenes, like the moment when Elvis was walking down Beale Street in the daytime, and we crosscut with him pulling up outside where he lives and doing his hair in the truck. Those two scenes existed in two completely different parts of the movie.

But the original assembly of Elvis was four and a half hours long. We had to find ways to cut

it down. This was when we started looking for those areas to crosscut. Various factors govern where you spend your time and when you get rid of the extra scenes to get to the desired duration. Once you find the style and rhythm, it's just a matter of ensuring that each narrative strand is given the amount of time required to tell the story.

Q: How did you decide which scenes to remove in the final cut?

We had to keep one focal point always on our mind. The film had to be the relationship between Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker. There were more scenes with his first girlfriend and his first band and they were beautifully performed and shot. However, they weren't keeping on point with the relationship between Elvis and the Colonel. So, we knew they had to go. At the end of the film, as we watched Elvis's decline, he was stuck in the hotel, shooting out TVs and he had the girl on his bed. These all existed as big, long full scenes. But by the time we got to that moment in the story, it was more effective to create a montage of the decline. It was a lot of trial and error just to ensure the audience was still getting all the information they need, but kept moving forward.

Q: Would you say expressive and noticeable editing is becoming more prevalent now because the audiences are more knowledgeable?

Yeah, I think so. For example, a show came out when we were designing the split screen sequences. It was a Netflix show called *Cowboy Bebop*, and they released a trailer, which was all split screen. We panicked because we thought they'd jumped on our idea. But they had their style. They shot with split screens in mind because people were pushing the frame out of the way, which we didn't do. Similarly, I've just been watching a show on Disney called *Ms. Marvel*, and they've got this fantastic sequence where she's riding a bike down a street while animated superhero characters are leaping from billboards on buildings. It's all animated, whereas she's real, so it was just a way of suggesting that this is a world where superheroes exist. Everyone's coming up with a new style, which is prevalent. You just got to come up with a fresh idea to keep people engaged.

Q: Is there something new you would be willing to try as an editor?

Elvis put us to the test a little bit because Baz always knew he wanted to have montages in the style of the period it was in. In the fifties, for example, Elvis went on his first tour, and there were lots of overlays and superimpositions. In the sixties, we had the graphics whizzing around, and then the seventies were all split screens. Baz wanted to take what was traditional, then

improve it. That took a bit of thinking; how do we improve upon what has always been a certain way? I'm always tooling around with stuff. If a movie calls for a different approach to things, I am always happy to do it.

Q: Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker: was the editing approach to those characters different?

Not really, because they are in so many scenes together. I mean, the editing style between the two didn't change but it changed between whatever was happening at the time. The film is always about the Colonel's perspective and what he sees. The Hayride, which was Elvis's first show, was all about explaining to the film's audience that Colonel Tom Parker was seeing something the world had never seen before. This was a phenomenon that was being unleashed on stage for the first time. That scene was cut frenetically and excitingly, reflective of what Colonel Parker and the audience were experiencing.

Whereas later in the Russwood sequence, when Elvis did the concert on the baseball field, that was all about the Colonel thinking that he convinced Elvis to behave himself. At the beginning of the concert, Elvis gives a speech and Colonel is nodding and smiling at him. We had to lull the audience into this false sense of security that everything would be okay. Then suddenly, the defiance comes. Elvis starts wiggling, and the Colonel gasps at what is happening.

The editing rhythm ramps up as the tension on stage ramps up until the number becomes a cacophony of imagery, sound and music. The edit style follows suit to depict the chaos that ensues. The style would change more in keeping with what the film was doing at the time rather than the relationship between the two.

Q: Which scene in Elvis was the most challenging to edit?

They were all challenging in different ways. The big concert scenes; there was a lot of footage for those. There were always four cameras, sometimes five. There was lots and lots of footage, different options, and ways to handle the scene. They were quite overwhelming to assemble.

At the same time, you often got a little two-hander conversation between the characters in which both actors gave such extraordinarily nuanced performances. The challenge was to ensure that we were using the right performance, the best performance for the scene. Everything was challenging in their ways.

But to answer your question, I would say the sequence we call the "Burning Love" sequence, where Elvis is doing his Vegas residency and national tours. He starts to decline, he breaks up with Priscilla, we see him with other women, he shoots TVs, he goes off the rails. This was really challenging. You needed to show him succeeding before you showed him declining, but

spend too long in either camp and the sequence would become repetitive. There were times when it was a lot longer than what it currently is in the film, and then it was too short. There was a challenge just to get the balance right.

Q: Is there a scene you're most proud of in the film?

I think it's the scene with the little boy in the Pentecostal tent and into that first concert, just because there was so much to balance. We were telling Elvis's origin, his history and where his influence for music came from. We were telling the story about how the world had never seen this kind of thing before. If you'll allow me to say so, I think it was a particularly good sequence.

Q: What are the quality traits of a good editor?

I've often said editing is 70% talent and 30% politics. On top of the internal rhythms that we were talking about earlier, being politically savvy is essential. The cutting room is a safe space for the director, but it can also become a bit of a political minefield if producers come in and have opposing ideas. There can be some big egos in that room.

Good editors have to listen; they have to be open to ideas, but have to protect the story. They have to be pretty thick-skinned. If an audience hates a movie, they often blame the editing because it's too confusing, too fast, too slow. Patience is important, as well as the ability to take ideas from two people who might be arguing and create a third option.

Q: Do you think editing can be taught?

That is a good question. I'm interested in that subject myself because there have been times when an assistant would say: "I cut this. What do you think?" and it just doesn't work. You can give pointers, and they might go away go away and improve it… But sometimes they won't.

I think the editing process starts from an innate rhythm inside. If you don't have that sense of rhythm, it's like some people can't ride a skateboard or some can't play the piano.

There are some elements of cutting that you've either got or you don't.

Q: If you could epitomize editing in one word, what would it be?

Probably rhythm. It all comes down to rhythm.

Q: And if you could compare editing to a process of doing something?

Editing is like stitching something together roughly, then going back to do the fine needlework,

the really fine embroidery. It is how I've often described the rough cut versus the fine cut. Where you get it all in place, and then have to do the precise work. There are other times where if something isn't working, you've got to smash the bone open, and recast it differently. The way a surgeon might take a bone that has healed incorrectly. Sometimes you can't just adjust it slightly, you have to break the bone and recast it entirely. Another surgical consideration I often ponder is that you have to cut to heal. To improve a scene, cuts sometimes need to be made.

Q: Are there any insider jokes that you often hear in editing suites in Australia?

There's a very niche joke that always makes editors laugh, "c*opy.copy.copy.copy.copy.copy@this one definitely*****". You always say "this is the final version. This is the final, final version". And then you need make **one more change**. So you duplicate that edit in the computer which produces a sequence that has ".copy" at the end of the name. You then need to do another change so you duplicate it again, producing ".copy.copy" in the name. And so it goes, until you end up with several ".copy"s at the end of the sequence name at which point you try and placate yourself and your crew's morale by adding "this one definitely" at the end. Sometimes you just can't stop fiddling with the cut.

Appendix G: Video essay 'Poetics of Montage in Andrei Tarkovsky's Mirror (1975)'

A text-guided explanatory video on poetics of montage in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975) can be viewed online at: https://vimeo.com/910588650