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Female film editing in Hollywood cinematography

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.*

*V Olomouci dne .....*

Děkuji svému vedoucímu práce, PhDr. Liboru Prágerovi, za cenné rady udělené během vzniku následujícího textu.

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# I INTRODUCTION

In present time, film is considered to be one of the most popular narrative phenomena delivering stories to a wide scale of audiences. Apart from, for example, literary fiction, it works much less with the perceiver's individual imagination, providing him with a specific set of images interconnected by a device which is symptomatic for the art of cinematography – the editing (or more vernacular speaking “the cutting”). Director and editor Edward Dmytryk shares a witty but eloquent story capturing the essence of the craft in the preface to his theoretical work *On Film Editing*: “It was the early 1930s. A very important guest, Baron Rothschild, was being given Paramount's version of the grand tour. One of his stops was my cutting room, where I was asked to say a few words by way of defining my craft. I was young and enthusiastic. Some twenty minutes later, as I paused for breath, the Baron smiled. ‘It would appear,’ he said, ‘that film editing is the art of filmmaking (Dmytryk 1984, vii).’” Essentially, there is a great deal of truth to the Baron's statement. Not only, the editing determines pace and rhythm of the particular motion picture; it can basically be marked as the main creator of meaning. How the viewer comprehends individual cuts depends on both his ability of reasoning as well as a certain level of spectator experience. It has been more than one hundred years since the first cut was executed in a film, and the device has become a methodically standardized facility as well as a field where improvisation and experiment are never to be exhausted (excluding the rather rigid Hollywood style).

Being a film studies student and a lifelong music enthusiast, I was eventually attracted by the craft of editing because it embodies an interaction between these two branches. After gaining a slight experience by editing small Internet projects of my own, I began thinking about the process more theoretically, trying to evaluate the actual input of an individual personality to the final product. To what extent does its originator determine the particular editing style? Of course, when working on a major contract, there are a number of higher authorities one must subject to, be it, the director or the producers. But still, despite these limitations, can any idiosyncratic symptoms be traceable? Dmytryk acknowledges that the job is never just a result of routine methodics and “no two cutters will cut a film or even a moderately lengthy sequence, in exactly the same way (Dmytryk 1984, 2).” However, apart from that, I am sure the most remarkable differences would emerge when opposing the male and female approach to the task.

In my thesis, I would like to pay attention to the generally settled and time-proven approach to editing as adopted in the Hollywood sphere. Film making that originated in this cradle of cinematography has always put emphasis on tradition, continuity and intelligibility of its products. Therefore, I consider the local production most suitable for demonstrating the issue in which this paper is particularly interested - features typical in the work of female film editors of Hollywood, tracing its gender-specific character and proving, whether or not it can be cardinally separated from an analogous work executed by a male. While during the silent era of cinematography, a high amount of cutters was women (Dmytryk 1984, 2), as the years progressed (and the technology got more complex), film industry has more or less evolved into a “male territory.” Despite this decrease, several female workers persisted, received recognition and major awards, often for long-term collaborations with acclaimed (male) directors. It is their era; I am going to focus on on the following pages.

I have divided the paper in two main parts – the theoretical and the analytical one. In the theoretical part, I begin by making a general characteristic of the art of film editing. Subsequently, I will be dealing with the occupation of a film editor describing the elementary working principles. A small observation of editing creativity of female You Tube users follows next. The existing status of women in editing will be covered in chapters about prominent Hollywood representatives, sharing the stories of their careers, including the cooperations with acclaimed directors of the local industry.

The analytical part will contain concise cutting analyses of two motion pictures, one edited by a male and the other by a female cutter. By making such an insight, I hope to be able to pinpoint specific signs, which could be pronounced as a typically feminine approach to the craft.

## **II THEORETICAL PART**

The theoretical part of my thesis is divided into two sections regarding the theory and the history. Concerning the theory, my aim is to get the reader familiar with the intellectual potential and basic principles of film editing. Subsequently, I am going to analyze the influence of the film genre on its editing style and analogically, the effect the editing style has on the viewer. Deeper introduction to the topic will be provided by chapters on the film editor’s working position. I am going to briefly outline the proper psychical dispositions one should possess for the job and will also highlight the most essential parts of the working

process. Moreover, it is necessary for the reader to learn about the terminology, so that he would be able to understand the observations made later in the analytical part. The Annex of this paper discloses the basic types of cuts, which have been adopted in mainstream cinematography.

The second, historical section explores the actions of Hollywood female film editors across the decades up to present. Simultaneously, we will get acquainted with the prolific director - female editor relationships, which constitute the best example that women should pursue their place in this men-occupied industry.

## **1. Theory of film editing**

### ***1.1 General characteristics of film editing***

Vsevolod Pudovkin, a prominent figure of the Soviet montage movement<sup>1</sup> once said that “editing is the creative force of filming reality (Dmytryk 1984, ix).” That is as much apt as well as an ambivalent statement. On one hand, editing constitutes the area in which the highest amount of experiments and new techniques are being implemented, especially in the sphere of independent cinematography. In this case, the border between efficiency and plain cutting for the effect is very thin, and it depends on the film critic (or more importantly on the individual viewer) whether he will evaluate the result as innovative or a mere showing off. On the other hand, in the mainstream area (of which Hollywood cinema is the foremost representative), editing has developed into a fixed complex of rules and effective, time-proven mechanisms, the violation of which often leads to the author’s accusation of formalism or being too “alternative.” In a way, mainstream editing is an invisible art (Chandler 2009, viii), fully subordinate to the narrative and thus not disturbing the viewer from following it. Ironically, in this case, the editor can be as much creative as long as the average,

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1924 and 1930, several Soviet films exhibited a radically original film style, generally known as the montage style. Montage was used to build a narrative (by formulating an artificial time and space or guiding the viewer’s attention from one narrative point to another), to control rhythm, to create metaphors, and to make rhetorical points. The most celebrated exponents of this style assumed that filmic meaning is built out of an assemblage of shots which creates a new synthesis, an overall meaning that lies not within each part but in the very fact of juxtaposition. David Bordwell, “The Idea of Montage in Soviet: Art and Film,” *Cinema Journal* 11, no. 2 (1972): 9.

inexperienced moviegoer does not discern the fruits of his labor. Anyway, film editing, when not bound by tradition and routine constitutes one of the most prominent stylistic values of a motion picture with a major influence on the viewer.

Editing of a particular motion picture takes place in a so-called post-production phase, after all the shooting is finished. At this stage, the material of the film is raw, unformed and obviously very far from the final product the viewers see in the cinema. However, what kind of work is expected from the editor will be covered in the separate chapter. To explain film editing in technical terms, the process can be described as “the coordination of one shot with the next (Bordwell and Thompson 2009, 223).” Simply speaking, if the viewer finds something wrong with the film but cannot exactly specify where the problem might be, it is usually bad editing. Because the transitions between individual shots are probably not smooth, thereby it becomes disturbing for the perceiver’s brain. The editing manages that every single piece of the filmed material works together in a complex with the other pieces and thus constitutes a functional system. Metaphorically, it is like a machine where all the gears must cooperate perfectly, otherwise the machine breaks down.

I have explained the technical function of the editing mechanism but what advantages does it bring to the world inside of the narrative, the so-called diegesis<sup>2</sup>? Its major assets are unlimited shifts across time and space of the story, the properties of which I am going to specify in the following chapter. Such transfers are the most prominent distinctions between cinematography and real life. The everyday reality basically cannot be edited. Apart from that, in the process of editing simple effects are also being incorporated, for example, transitions between individual shots.

Before an American director and film technician, Edwin S. Porter made important experiments combining scenes together<sup>3</sup> and basically managed the implementation of cutting into common practice, the early filmmakers had been working with just a single takes<sup>4</sup> from their cameras arranged in a row (if changes in time and space were needed). One such take usually lasted up to ten minutes, since most classic cameras could only operate with this

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<sup>2</sup> In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The diegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen. Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, 491.

<sup>3</sup> Partially inspired by innovative french filmmaker Georges Melies, Porter developed more elaborate continuities between shots (not just narrative, but spatial, temporal, and visual relations). Charles Musser, “Porter, Edwin S(tanton),” in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (Routledge, 2010), 760.

<sup>4</sup> a shot produced by one uninterrupted run of the camera. Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, 494.



amount of film material (Monaco 2004, 126). Accordingly, the resultant pictures were very simple, easily understandable, of a light genre. However, Porter's innovations proved that sophisticated arrangement of shots worked very effectively with the viewer's emotions and significantly improved the complexity of the work. In one of his crucial films, *Life of an American Fireman* (1903), the director increases the viewer's suspense and involvement by alternating scenes of a mother, and her baby endangered by a fire and the firemen rushing on location to save them. Such technique is what we presently call "crosscutting." Porter also varies between real and arranged action and changes the size of shots with special emphasis on detail (Thompson and Bordwell 2007, 38). To be able to uncover the concept of film editing more thoroughly, let us now take a look on the interference between the substance and the process and the consequential psychological effect.

### **1.1.1 Influence of the material on the editing**

"When watching an action film such as *Die Another Day*; we expect the cutting to be very fast. Many shots showing various angles to extend the action as far as possible, to amaze the audience and in parts to contribute a little humour. In contrast, if we were to watch *Pride and Prejudice*, we would see far longer shots with a lower variety of sizes and elements (Main-Vision)."

If we refer to the word "montage" as a synonym for the type of editing featured in a particular film, everyone who has ever seen a movie and paid just a little attention to the way it is cut, will confirm that it varies not only from genre to genre, but also between sequences, even scenes of a single piece. That is because every kind of action needs a different type of tempo and different rhythm to make exactly the one intended impression on the viewer. As I have mentioned in the Introduction, in these aspects, editing is a strongly influential element.

Since we are mainly concerned with the Hollywood cinematography, where editing is usually strictly routine (because fully employed to work for the story, not for its own), it is quite easy to make a generalization of the established processes. Presumably, the least demanding work is cutting dialogue, where the emphasis is put strongly on a stable mutual position of the speakers and the information passing between them. As the intention is to drag and maintain the viewer's attention to what is being said, no brisk changes of rhythm or stylistic exhibitions are desirable. The main purpose should be to sustain the scene well-arranged, with clearly defined spatial relations and an adjustable focus on either the originator

of the speech, or the emotion it revives in the opposite party. It is important to keep in mind that the more overt the visual aspects are, the more they distract from the intellectual content. That might offer the answer to why such a big amount of contemporary Hollywood production is so rich in effects.

“While most dialogue scenes appear nearly identical editing-wise, action scenes are almost always unique. Some action scenes take place in a large physical space (for example, ballroom dancing), while others focus on tiny details in one location (such as cracking a safe). Some action scenes involve continual movement from one place to another (like delivering milk). In any of these cases, the specific details of the action will often call for different types of coverage (Peachpit).” The cutting of action scenes does not have any prescribed proportions and thus relies fully on the choice of the director and the editor. However, to achieve a smooth outcome, the rhythm should be corresponding with the tempo established by other constituents such as the camera movement and motion of characters inside of the frame. To speak in simpler terms, action is supposed to be lively, gripping and a general opposite to the conversational scenes. It should be a moment when the perceiver can slightly turn off reasoning and give vent to physical feelings such as suspense, fear or amusement.

Because action scenes provide a substantially broader area for unlimited editing skills and experiments, these primarily are the unconcealed bearers of the editor’s creative personality. The difference between male and female film editing will certainly not lie in the way they cut a dialogue, but in a way they cut action. In this matter, editor Susan E. Morse remarks: “An editing style is intrinsic to the style of a given picture. One could point to certain devices that given editors use repeatedly. It’s simply a recognizable flourish, like a handwriting flourish that tells you who wrote a line. I’m not sure I can give you an example in my own work. Maybe my style is to be invisible (LoBrutto 1991, 212).”

### **1.1.2 Influence of the editing on the viewer**

“Film (Cinema) perception refers to the sensory and cognitive processes employed when viewing scenes, events, and narratives presented in edited moving-images (Smith 2009, 458).”

Despite the ideal Hollywood model of editing being “invisible” for the viewer, it has a major, even though sometimes subconscious influence on him. If the editor refused to respect the rules described in the previous chapter, it would most probably lead to distraction or

frustration of the audience. As modern filmgoers are still more and more familiar with formal structure and technical aspects of filmmaking, they certainly have particular expectations. In other words, if the production serves us a car chase or a fight scene with down tempo editing, there will be feelings of retardation, an insufficient amount of information about the ongoing action, and last but not least – the overall visual dissatisfaction. On the other hand, modern viewers (even the mainstream ones) are relatively more capable in context understanding and do not need to be explained things as literally as for example a decade ago. This trend leads to an elevated use of elliptical and also more whimsical, intellectual style of editing.

According to acclaimed Hollywood editor Walter Murch, the most important aim of a cut is to arouse a certain emotion in the audience (Murch 2001, 18). For Murch, emotion is even more essential than story development. I could not agree more because since an average viewer's perception of a specific motion picture is different and predominantly subjective, it is likely that people are more prone to favor the abstract experience to the objective aspects of narration. However, if we consider emotion as the main product of a proper editing, it is highly dependent on a certain quality level of the other ingredients, such as the camera, the soundtrack and perhaps the most important – the acting. When the actors' performances are poor, even the most sophisticated cut will not bring the audience to the desired sympathy.

This rule goes both ways, though. A skillful cutting always cooperates, lives in a symbiosis with the characters within the frame. As soon as the viewer starts noticing more the structure of editing than the plot on the screen, its form has become too overshadowing. It is a technology that works the best until it starts living a life of its own.

## ***1.2 The work of a film editor***

“For years, editors have been the best-kept secret of the movies (The Cutting Edge 2004).”

The quote from a documentary about film editing epitomizes well the long prevalent status of a film cutter which, hopefully, is no longer valid. One of the most crucial craftsmen in film making has deservedly developed from working as an inferior, machine-like mechanic to being the director's right hand and the most credible counselor. It is sad to acknowledge the reason why such a number of women were being employed in the early years – because the position was generally considered peripheral and of a zero artistic use. However, with the coming of sound and the consequent treating of film as more of a technical business, men started to replace them, soon to become the leading power in the cutting room. It was not until

the nineties when these women were finally brought to recognition by feminist film scholars (Wright 2009, 8). Nonetheless, irrespective to the gender, over the years the conception of the job has slowly become satisfactory. The film director may be the person with the vision, but his editor is certainly the one who builds its scattered pieces up to materialization. “Editing involves not merely a theoretical consideration of the effect of one shot upon another, or a linear rendition of a script, or a mechanical measurement of frames. It is all that and much more – rhythm, instinct, emotion, psychology, art – and it draws from the total talent of one person, the editor, who collaborates with the director to create a cumulative sensory event (Oldham 1995, 1).” Which processes precede the emergence of such an event and which character features one must possess to become an editor, will be the subject of the following chapters.

### **1.2.1 The editor’s personality**

As an essential shift in recognition of the editor’s work has already been made, film editing is finally acknowledged as a decent, creative and responsible occupation. However, same as with any other vocation, not everybody owns the right parameters for doing the job. In the script, *Střihová skladba ve filmu a v televizi*, Doc. Jan Kučera accurately summarizes the required disposition of a proper editor as it is valid to present days (Kučera 1983, 255-257).

Kučera sees the editor as a source of knowledge that the director usually does not possess, and even if he does, there are a few cases in film history where the director would edit his work just on his own. It is necessary that the editor had the same deep, extensive and sensitive cultural-political outlook. He also must fully comprehend and perceive the meaning of the processed work. The author especially emphasizes the degree of responsibility the editor has compared to the rest of the staff. That is because of the unprecedented length of time he spends with the piece, being in contact with it yet when all the other processes already were terminated. It is predominantly his responsibility how to thoroughly and delicately promote the values that were put into the material by its immediate originators.

Furthermore, Kučera states that editing is by no means a unilateral profession. The knowledge and understanding of all the other branches of the filming process are essential. Without sensitivity for the right dramatic construction, educational quality, or the best performance of actors and camera operators, he would never be able to select the crucial

images for the final composition. Additionally, an ear for music is another advantage to feel the pace of the scenes and for building the corresponding rhythmic structure.

However, pace and rhythm alone would hardly do the trick. Assembling the fragments into the ultimate complex is very dependent on the editor's specific fantasy and could never be achieved by the bare method of trial and error. The editor must imagine each shot, scenes, even sequences in a way they will cooperate and function in the resultant form, with all the additional effects (sounds, commentary, score, special effects, etc.) incorporated to it. Apart from fantasy, a good memory is a prerequisite. Without memory, fantasy could never work as the material must initially be completely stored in the brain before any plans and forming of ideas can commence. Moreover, memory can save the editor when some part of the process is not working as idealized. Then, remembrance of a particular shot excluded a long time before may come in handy. "Every editor really has to remember almost every frame. It's like chess; you have to be able to think ahead and think back (LoBrutto 1991, 80)."

Eventually, we cannot omit the qualities which every proper employee should possess, these being patience, diligence and consistency. Film editor must be able to concentrate fully, to completely cut out from his surroundings for a while. The work is quite time-consuming and stress inducing, if we consider that a single task may require several re-editing in case of dissatisfaction. Another option is the usual fight against a strict deadline. The processes which take place in the cutting room will be analyzed in the subsequent chapter.

### **1.2.2 Basic working principles of an editor**

So far, a lot has been said about the principle of film editing, about its technological and ideological parameters; however, in what way does this all relate to the editor himself? How far does his authority and ability extend? Were we to divide various types of filmmakers according to the filmmaking phase (*the production* = filming on the set; *the post-production* = the work on the filmed material in some kind of a studio, f.e. the editing, the score composition, the digital effects, etc.) they take part in, practically there will be only two of them, which participate in the material from the very beginning to its final release. Naturally, this is the director and his editor. I used the word "his" intentionally because their relationship ought to be as positive as possible. It is nothing exceptional in Hollywood that directors and editors develop a close relationship, working together on multiple productions for many years.

It is no exception that directors can practice editing themselves and are often listed in the credits as members of the editing crew. Despite, the role of an objective editor is still priceless. Of course, the director alone knows best what his idea of the final product is, but this can paradoxically represent the greatest obstacle. In pursuit of a certain visual or ideological pattern, one may become blind to the narratological or for example, logical needs of the editing structure. The editor should function as a rectifier who knows perfectly the intentions and requirements of the director and simultaneously searches for the most feasible path to serve it to the audience. Quentin Tarantino once commented that in terms of his own editor, he was seeking for a “nurturing” relationship. He considers it the main reason, why he chose a female one (The Cutting Edge 2004). Sometimes, in case of extremely challenging or time-limited production, even the editor may get one or more editing assistants to help with some routine work.

Even though I have mentioned before that editing takes part in post-production (which it technically does), abstractly, the role of the editor often starts right on the set. This is a subject of personal preferences. Walter Murch swears never to attend the filming phase so that his mind would not be distracted by the image of actors out of their roles and thus be able to see the material from the audience’s point of view (The Cutting Edge 2004). Others like to be present at the filming in order to consult the potential editing structure with the director and to create its imaginary layout in advance. This early interaction may contribute to the emergence of interesting ideas about the setting of scenes, which might later be useful for smoother cutting.

It is a common practice that sound and image are usually cut separately by different editors; however, the term “film editor” (apart from “sound editor” or “sound designer”) generally refers to the one who processes the visual content. “Typically, the editor receives the processed footage from the laboratory as quickly as possible. This footage is known as the *dailies*. The editor examines these and informs the director of how the footage looks. Since retaking shots is costly and troublesome, constant checking of the dailies is important for spotting any problems with focus, exposure, framing or other visual factors (Bordwell and Thompson 2009, 23).” The following step to be executed in the cutting room is to choose the material that will be used in the final version of the story. At this stage, the editor has an abundance of various takes of a single scene. The unwanted footage will be eliminated, usually discarding all but the best take. From the selected material, superfluous frames, such as those showing the clapboard or the filming staff, are cut out (Bordwell and Thompson

2009, 223). However, this is not the only type of correction the editor must perform. There is a multitude of other visual blemishes counting from the more overt ones to tiny faults, which do not have to even be recognizable to the audience. That does not mean these could be left out of the adjustments, otherwise it could be marked as a sign of editing amateurism. The most striking are usually images revealing time discontinuity of individual shots (as the movie is seldom filmed chronologically). Daylight mismatches, mismatches of costumes and make-up or unintended relocation of an object is a popular subject for analysis of the Internet forums. There is not always an option to substitute thus spoiled material. Then comes the moment when the editors count on the viewer's attention being attracted to something else. The least apparent flaws include mismatches of characters' movement, such as different view directions or body parts motion.

Studying the Hollywood cinematography is almost equivalent to studying one universal cinema all the world is familiar with. Therefore, it might seem unnecessary to describe the narrative style that every moviegoer is used to. However, it is important to keep in mind that the *continuity editing*, as we know it, really has its origin in the American production and was later adopted by the majority of the others. Analyzing its signs may help the reader being more "immune" to the game the filmmakers are playing with us and to become more accessible to other, more independent or avant-garde forms of narration. "As its name implies, the basic purpose of the continuity system is to allow space, time, and action flow over a series of shots. Graphic qualities are usually kept roughly continuous from shot to shot. The figures are balanced and symmetrically deployed in the frame; the overall lighting tonality remains constant; the action occupies the central zone of the screen. The rhythm of the cutting is made dependent on the camera distance of the shot. Long shots last longer on the screen than medium shots, and medium shots usually last longer than close-ups. The assumption is that the spectator needs more time to take in the shots containing more details. In scenes of physical action, accelerated editing rhythms may be present, but in general, shorter shots will tend to be closer views. Since the continuity style seeks to present a story, it is chiefly through the handling of space and time that editing furthers narrative continuity (Bordwell and Thompson 2009, 236)." The continuity style operates exclusively with the techniques listed in the chapter on terminology and could basically be described as the most asymptomatic form of editing, which does not distract our narrative experience.

Bringing us back to the editing room; when all the modifications are complete, the story is finally assembled into a so-called *editor's cut*. This primary version of the movie is

composed of shots loosely strung in a sequence, without sound effects or music and tends to run very long (Bordwell and Thompson 2009, 24). The editor's cut is usually followed by the *director's cut* – the version which best corresponds with the director's vision. In most cases, the director's cut is longer than the final version because it contains some extra scenes, which were originally considered redundant and therefore, left out. In fact, this version often is screened (particularly in case of cult films) some time after the original release and usually enjoys big popularity among the fans. The resulting, official version is called the *final cut* and constitutes a positive agreement between the editor, the director and the production studio.

From the technical point of view, film editing has come a long way. Since its beginnings to the nineties, it was wholly a matter of mechanics. Originally, shots were actually being cut with scissors and attached together with glue or tape. “In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the film editor's room was a quiet place, equipped only with a rewind bench, a pair of scissors, a magnifying glass, and the knowledge that the distance from the tip of one's nose to the fingers of the outstretched hand represented about three seconds (Murch 2001, 75).” In fact, this contributed to the dominance of female cutters in that period, because, as Walter Murch observes: “The job was something like knitting, it was something like tapestry, sewing. It was when sound came in that the men began to infiltrate the ranks of the editors, because sound was somehow electrical...it was no longer knitting (The Cutting Edge 2004).” As the decades went by, several devices had been developed to make the cutting easier, quicker and more comfortable. However, it has never been so physically undemanding, cheap and widely available before the coming of the digital era. Its greatest advantage is undoubtedly the *non-linearity* of the process. With linear editing, the cutting must have been made gradually, piece by piece, whereas non-linear editing enables immediate access to a random area without any changes being made on the rest of the material. The film is digitalized and safely stored on a hard drive, always ready for instant adjustments. The digital editing also brings us to the subject of the next chapter.

### ***1.3 The feminine creative power in hobby editing***

There is one feature about editing that impresses me the most. It is the power. The power the editor has over the material, the power over the whole environment featured in it. This includes temporal, local and of course relational data. Directing a film is one thing but if the



director fails to uphold his conception in the editing room, the resultant product might emerge as something completely different from the original idea.

Being creative in film editing, thus constructing a motion picture from the raw pieces of filmed material is something I would call a primary process (for the purpose of this paper only). However, what interests me at this point is a very popular practice that utilizes pop culture and is spread through the world wide web. Since the origin of the Internet phenomenon of You Tube, everyone can become a small director himself. To be precise – become a director by becoming an editor. As this is usually realized by exploiting a work that has already been produced and released, I have unofficially called it a secondary creative process.

All you need to do to practice this “secondary creative process” is taking a piece of a picture (a feature film, a soap opera, a music video...), create a new vision, a whole new interpretation in your head and be capable in video editing. Since digital editing has quite overpowered the analogue one and made the craft available to much wider scale of people, the basic essentials are a powerful computer, a proper software, a zeal and a bit of talent. Then the limits no longer exist. You can take your favorite filmic character and put him or her into a whole new context via careful editing. Music videos are especially popular. A lot of creators in this sphere like to complete their concepts with a fitting piece of music. Sometimes even the music itself can produce new meanings, and it depends on the viewer how he perceives the fusion of the visual and the auditory components.

Nevertheless, the intention of this short chapter was to review the role of women in this “secondary editing creativity” which, in my opinion, is major. I perceive this kind of creative process as sort of a prolonging of the viewer’s experience of a certain piece of art. An intensification of the emotional impact. By extracting a particular constituent of something you like and implanting it into the new surroundings accustomed to your imagination, one participates on an unrestrained continuation of somebody else’s work. It is a creative process, perhaps not quite original but definitely exhilarating. Since women are generally considered more sensitive, it comes as no surprise that the majority of You Tube music videos were created by female authors. These videos usually celebrate either a romantic relationship as portrayed in the picture (and making it even more romantic depending on the author’s fancy) or display a possibility of new relationships, which does not exist in the original work but is realized through resourceful editing.

Female authors of music videos are also very active in producing the so-called slash fiction. Slash fiction<sup>5</sup> can appear in various forms such as prose, poetry, graphic and of course video editing.

Since we have explored the ways how film editing is practised, both on professional and leisure-time basis, the time has finally come for us to move to its specific female performers. How did Hollywood women of editing pave their path to the job over the century, will be charted in the next section.

## **2. History of female film editing in Hollywood**

One would expect the Hollywood movie industry to be pioneering in this object, but still if we make an observation on gender representation (excluding the actresses), we will see women working as assistants, make-up artists, clapperboard operators, ... and substantially lesser amount of females in spheres where decision makes a major impact on the film's final form. However, apart from several influential female directors (f.e. Kathryn Bigelow), editing is probably the most women-occupied field. Unfortunately, not so publicly exposed. At least until women have started collecting awards for their work. The following names belong to those who managed to "get visible."

### ***2.1 Female editors and collaborations***

#### **2.1.1 Verna Fields**

Verna Fields (1918-1982) was one of the most notorious, influential and pioneering female film, television and sound editor in the history of Hollywood. She maintained professional and friendly relationships with prominent directors, such as Peter Bogdanovich, George Lucas and particularly Steven Spielberg, whose blockbuster *Jaws* (1975) earned her an Academy Award for Film Editing. Since she had participated on commercially extremely successful

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<sup>5</sup> "Slash fiction" or "slash" is a kind of romance fiction, usually but not always very sexually graphic, in which both of the lovers are male. Catherine Salmon and Don Symons, "Slash Fiction and Human Mating Psychology," *Journal of Sex Research* 41/1 (2004): 94.

pictures, Universal Pictures made her vice president of feature films which she remained until death. However, this fame and power at the end of her long career only served to remind how few women ever accumulated a measure of true power in the American Film Industry. The beginning of Field's work consisted of low-budget independent films. She married editor Sam Fields and started editing for television after his death. Fields then accepted teaching the craft at the University of Southern California. The door into mainstream Hollywood soon opened, and her influence raised. Based on Field's persuasion, Universal Pictures distributed George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973). Even the quote that editing should be invisible probably comes from Verna Fields. Despite her unprecedented power, she had always preferred to suppress her influence and let the director dictate the terms. This approach made her convenient to work on a variety of projects equally well—from melodrama to comedy to classic genre films (Gomery 1999, 140-42).

### **2.1.2 Dede Allen**

Dede Allen (1923-2010) is considered one of the best-known names in Hollywood feature film editing. She was born into a family of theater enthusiasts, and during childhood grew into a solid movie fan. In 1943, Allen traveled to California with a dream of becoming a film director. At that time, grandfather gave her an advice to get into the cutting room first. "Well, I didn't know what cutting meant. I went to the studios and tried to get into the cutting rooms. I couldn't get in. In those days, women were not considered as hireable as men because they didn't support families (LoBrutto 1991, 74-75)." Her way to the job was long and slow, working initially as a messenger for Columbia Pictures, sound effects editor and later editor of graphic and commercials. Moving to editing of TV series, Allen was finally recommended for a feature film. She remarked that in Hollywood, women of her generation did not get to feature cutting until they were well into their middle life. During her career, she participated on projects by famous directors Robert Wise, Elia Kazan, Arthur Penn, George Roy Hill or Sidney Lumet and won two Academy Award nominations for *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975, dir. Sidney Lumet) and alongside Craig McKay for *Reds* (1981, dir. Warren Beatty). Allen's innovative work on Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) has been unofficially marked as a landmark in film editing. Its rugged-like style which gave the movie energy and velocity equivalent to the life of its heroes. According to Allen's words, the film did not acquire Academy Award nomination for editing simply because the jury thought it was badly cut.

However, the style had since been frequently imitated. Same as Littleton, Allen highlighted the essence of storytelling in film editing, giving an example from cutting *The Hustler* (1961, dir. Robert Rossen): “We threw out a scene Paul Newman always said cost him the Academy Award. It was one of his speeches in the pool room, very impassioned scene, an absolutely brilliant performance. It was exactly like another scene that couldn’t be gotten rid of because it was tied to the plot at both ends. Almost at the very end, we finally had to say, ‘It has to go.’ That’s very painful. It didn’t move the story. We had to throw out a scene that was probably the greatest part of his performance (LoBrutto 1991, 77).” Despite her undisputed achievement in film editing, Allen considered the contribution of cutters to the picture as a part of team effort. “The minute the personality takes over, you’ve lost it (LoBrutto 1991, 86).”

### **2.1.3 Thelma Schoonmaker**

Born 1940, Schoonmaker is likely the most famous female film editor of the present, renowned for her long-time teamwork with Martin Scorsese. Scorsese’s films have won her three Academy Awards for best editing (*Raging Bull*, 1980; *The Aviator*, 2004; *The Departed*, 2006) out of the total of seven nominations (only one for a picture by another director). Her editing style is often called “postmodern,” as she incorporates both classical continuity editing and more independent forms, such as music-video editing, various montages, jump cuts, temporal ellipses, etc. All these unusual devices successfully employed into a narrative movie. Schoonmaker’s technique is generally referred to as very innovative, complex and continually evolving (Faller 1999, 376). “People intuitively understand what directors, actors and cinematographers do, but not so much the job of an editor,” says Thelma Schoonmaker. That is one of the reasons she has been trying to get out of the editing room and spend as much time in classrooms as possible. Concerning her successful career, she rather attributes the merit to Scorsese. Since a substantial part of the editor’s job is choosing the scenes that best capture the actors’ performance, the result is proportional to how respectfully he manages to treat them. Schoonmaker acknowledges that filmography of her late husband, director Michael Powell is a great source of inspiration to her and Scorsese’s work. However, they always put emphasis on portraying the truth without any manipulation, no matter what it takes. “Editing is a lot about patience and discipline and just banging away at something,

turning off the machine and going home at night because you're frustrated and depressed, and then coming back in the morning to try again (Debruge 2007, A34).”

#### **2.1.4 Carol Littleton**

Carol Littleton (\*1942) considers cinema an “extraordinary cocktail” of all the arts. Having studied literature, language and music, she considers these as major influences on her editing. Based on broad arts background, Littleton does not specialize exclusively on feature films. She also has experience with cutting sound, music, documentaries, commercials or television production. During her university studies in Paris, she first started understanding film as more than just entertainment, analyzing the filmmaking style and most importantly the emotion it provokes. Since that, she knew she wanted to pursue a career in movies. In feature film editing, Littleton acknowledges the importance of storytelling and considers her job a quest for the essence that will progress the story. Everything that is not structurally important in some way, should be put away. Littleton favors the effect of film to those of literature and music as it renders both musical and narrative values at once. That is making film an extraordinary art, a twentieth-century art form. At present, Littleton is a member of American Cinema Editors (ACE)<sup>6</sup> and a wife of cinematographer John Bailey. The record of her work counts titles such as *Body Heat* (1981, dir. Lawrence Kasdan), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982, dir. Steven Spielberg) which earned her an Academy Award nomination, or *Wyatt Earp* (1994, dir. Lawrence Kasdan). Littleton won an Emmy for a TV film *Tuesdays with Morrie* (1999, dir. Mick Jackson). Concerning her job she states: “I work in Hollywood and there’s no denying that it’s a business; a film is very, very expensive. We have to answer to the demands of a business, but also the demands of art (Oldham 1995, 63-66).”

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<sup>6</sup> ACE, the American Cinema Editors, is an honorary society of motion picture editors founded in 1950. Film editors are voted into membership on the basis of their professional achievements, their dedication to the education of others and their commitment to the craft of editing. “About ACE,” American Cinema Editors, accessed April 26, 2012, <http://ace-filmeditors.org/about-2/>.

### 2.1.5 Susan E. Morse

Susan E. Morse (\*1952), a member of ACE and five times BAFTA Award nominee for Best Editing, is known especially for her twenty-year collaboration with Woody Allen. During this period, she was awarded an Academy Award nomination for *Hannah and her Sisters* (1986). Morse attended the New York University Graduate Film School and launched her editing career simultaneously as an apprentice of Allen's editor Ralph Rosenblum. Morse mentions that Rosenblum taught her to think of the narrative film as "raw documentary footage crying out for coherence rather than strictly as a linear script (LoBrutto 1991, 210)." She became a full-time editor to Allen from his next film *Manhattan* (1979). As most of her colleagues, Morse sees the teamwork as the building block of her work: "A film has the greatest chance of succeeding if everyone is working for the good of the film rather than for his own glory. On Woody's films, we have been lucky enough to hold together essentially the same team for years. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses and help each other so the end result hopefully shows everyone off well (LoBrutto 1991, 208)." After collaboration with Allen, Morse continues her career for various Hollywood directors.

### 2.1.6 Sally Menke

Together with Quentin Tarantino, Sally Menke (1953-2010) was representing a parallel tandem to Thelma Schoonmaker and Martin Scorsese. Having cut all of Tarantino's films, their mutual teamwork and devoted friendship were suddenly disrupted by her unexpected death. The collaboration with Tarantino earned her two Academy Award nominations for the editing of *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). Menke graduated from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and initiated editing career in television. Later, inspired by Martin Scorsese's choice for a female editor, Menke decided to audition for Tarantino's debut *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) as she immediately liked the script (New Beverly Cinema). Tarantino gave her the job and probably never regretted the decision. The functionality of their connection has been a general object of interest, some explaining it that "Menke and Tarantino have developed that coveted association between an editor and a director where there is a refined shorthand built out of trust and understanding each other's artistic sensibility (Fernandez Jr. 2009, 31)." When asked to comment back on her work, Menke expressed the uncertain feelings of a proper creator: "The soul is something you're

always looking for even after it's locked, projected and put in theaters. I'm always thinking, that scene could have been a little faster or that character could have been stronger. Such is the nature of an artist. It's not so much second-guessing, as it is the ways of perfectionism. The need to always be learning and mastering is infinite and often feels haunting for those who work creatively (Fernandez Jr. 2009, 31).”

### **2.1.7 Mary Sweeney**

Born 1953, Mary Sweeney is a feature film and television editor and producer, most notable for her collaboration with director David Lynch. While working with Lynch, she participated on cult projects, such as the TV series *Twin Peaks* (1990-91) and won BAFTA Award for Best Editing of *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Apart from editing and producing, Sweney co-wrote the script of Lynch's *The Straight Story* (1999) and directed her own authorial debut in 2009. Sweeney has a Master's Degree in Cinema Studies from New York University, and actively serves the independent film making community in Los Angeles (USC Cinematic Arts).

## **III ANALYTICAL PART**

### ***1. Analysis of John Wright's editing of The Passion of the Christ***

#### Production data:

Directed by: Mel Gibson

Screenplay by: Benedict Fitzgerald, Mel Gibson, William Fulco (based on *Passion*)

Cinematography: Caleb Deschanel

Music by: John Debney

Edited by: John Wright

Starring: Jim Caviezel, Maya Morgenstern, Monica Bellucci, Hristo Shopov

Country: United States

Release ear: 2004

Running ime: 126 minutes

## **1.1 Plot synopsis**

It is not quite clear, whether we can refer to the story of Mel Gibson's film as a regular "plot." Presumably, it would appear more accurate to describe it as a faithful and naturalistic portrayal of the last days of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible. Therefore, the picture lacks some dramatic attributes typical for cinematic expression, such as the development of characters. These serve, predominantly as witnesses and reflectors of Christ's suffering and also as emotional intensifiers for the viewers. The audience is thrown directly in the middle of action, and will mostly not learn anything about the reasons and circumstances. In order to orientate in the movie, at least a brief acquaintance with New Testament Gospels is a prerequisite. However, yet without this knowledge, *The Passion* functions quite well in its audio-visual quality which I consider being its utmost forte.

## **1.2 Audio-visual characteristics of the work**

*The Passion* is undoubtedly a film built on strict visuality and mediation of Jesus' suffering in pictures. It is that Gibson puts such an emphasis on recurring expressivity that it makes the movie rather over the top. The extreme I consider being the constant exposure of emotionally affected faces from the crowd. Apart from this quirk, Caleb Deschanel's cinematography is very picturesque with precisely fitting lighting. In the initial night sequence taking place in the Gethsemane Garden, the moonlit misty picture is colored light blue, during the scenes in the Pharisaic palace; it takes the form of soft warm candle light. Nevertheless, what I found the most attractive attribute of the film is the use of contemporary languages – the picture is completely voiced in Aramaic, Latin and Hebrew. Moreover, such archaic speech matches very well with John Debney's ethnic and chant soundtrack. Thanks to the prominent imagery and its effective interconnection with the music, the film has a distinct "music-video" character, but unfortunately at the expense of a proper narrative.

## **1.3 Analysis of the editing structure**

John Wright's cutting of the film is very lively, dynamic and quite gripping. The idea emerges that such an approach does not fit to the historical genre, the more with a biblical theme. However, it is a style of the contemporary Hollywood and serves well to the expressive



character of the movie. I am afraid that with the mentioned absence of intellectual dimension, the film would fail in its purpose be it edited in a different manner. It is uncertain, whether Wright's work on Mel Gibson's picture can be pronounced as continuity editing. As we said before, continuity editing maintains a fluent narrative, whereas in this case, editing is more of a tool of external attractiveness, providing us with a consecutive set of scenic images.

The action initiates with a shot on full moon in the Gethsemane; we are watching Jesus and his disciples before Jesus is arrested. Wright uses the moon to create a shape match with a parallel action of one of the Pharisees watching it before Judas executes the betrayal. The moon is employed repeatedly to switch before the action in the palace and the one in the garden. Other shape matches are used to show us Jesus' past life in flashbacks. For example, we see a man hammering, there is a close-up on the tool and a cut is made to a close-up of Jesus' own hammer as he works at home. A similar type of cut – the sound match is applied later when Jesus is being hit in prison. We hear the blow and with that sound, a cut is executed to wake Jesus' mother from a dream. When the Pharisees pay Judas out, we are watching the purse flying in the air towards Judas in slow motion. Incorporating this element, Wright emphasizes the fatality of the deed and its ominous character. It is a rare place in the film where the effect has full justification without functioning merely as a visual enhancement.

To return to the action in the garden, Wright adjusts the rhythm of cutting to its meditative character. We see Jesus in a conversation with personified Satan, which is cut as a classic dialogue in the system of cut - reverse cut. Wright alternates medium close-ups and close-ups, mainly to accentuate the internal state of both figures – Jesus' stirred emotions and the Satan's cold-blooded self-control. Unfortunately, from this point on, the character of the editing was downgraded to a mere aesthetic function. When the soldiers come to the garden to arrest Jesus and fight the disciples, the action was slow-motioned probably just to make the conflict more attractive and suspenseful. Many faces in close-ups are displayed slowly changing expression due to combat effort but to no apparent narrative purpose. The music was also made louder during the scene which basically confirms the prominent accent on the stylistic value.

What could be marked as a typical editing feature of this film is employing action-reaction cutting. This feature takes part almost during the whole footage and starts getting really annoying towards the end. Basically, Wright continuously alternates shots showing Jesus' torture with shots of the onlookers. Especially those of virgin Mary and Mary

Magdalene's pathetic cries tend to get very cheap at times. It also seems quite unreal that the reaction shots are always filled with an apparent emotion, either laugh or compassion but never show us one indifferent face. On the other hand, it is true that scenes with such periodic interchange of shots get into a nice regular rhythm which is undoubtedly pleasant for the viewer.

Nevertheless, the most formalistic lapse is combining the slow motion scenes of suffering (that practically means the whole film) with a "heartbreaking" music. There really is no narrative value to this device, and it exists for one demeaning purpose – to move the audience. Even more brought to absurdity is showing one and the same slow motioned action (of suffering Jesus) from multiple angles.

Overall, the editing is very regular, rhythmical, sustaining the viewer in an engaged position. Some more severe changes of tempo are employed in scenes from subjective point of view, such as experiencing Judas' final frenzy. An agile rhythm is surprisingly maintained even within a shot displaying one figure – Wright changes the framing distance without a cut-away which is a more common procedure unless the editor wants to deliver some extra information by it. During the scenes of crucifixion, again the bigger the impact on the audience, the better. Multiple close-ups with various Jesus' bloody body parts are intercutted with mourning women and bestial grins of Roman soldiers almost in a triangular regularity. The pathos reaches the top in a montage sequence of Jesus' tormented face that dissolves into shots of sinister stormy clouds.

To conclude, I would say that John Wright did very well in the aspect of maintaining the action captivating; however, most of his cuts have no ideological substantiation, and thus the whole editing structure seems quite superficial, formalistic and pathetic.

## ***2. Analysis of Thelma Schoonmaker's editing of The Last Temptation of Christ***

### Production data:

Directed by: Martin Scorsese

Screenplay by: Paul Schrader, Martin Scorsese, Jay Cocks (based on the novel *The Last Temptation of Christ* by Nikos Kazantzakis)

Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus

Music by: Peter Gabriel

Edited by: Thelma Schoonmaker

Starring: Willem Dafoe, Harvey Keitel, Barbara Hershey, Harry Dean Stanton, David Bowie

Country: United States / Canada

Release year: 1988

Running ime: 164 minutes

## **2.1 Plot synopsis**

One of Martin Scorsese's most controversial pictures is an adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis' eponymous novel. In contrast to Gibson's *Passion*, which is a bare pictorial composition of Jesus' physical torture, Scorsese shows us the human side of Jesus, his life as a young craftsman who starts realizing his spiritual vocation and the anxiety it brings to his soul. The constant struggle between the human and the godlike side settles inside of him and worldly temptations emerge. The biggest of the temptations is about to take place – the possibility to choose between dying as the Messiah who gave up all humane desires to redeem those ours, or dying as an ordinary man who succumbed to the lure but tasted the secular pleasures.

## **2.2 Audio-visual characteristics of the work**

When Compared to *The Passion*, Scorsese's *Temptation* is a considerably better balanced movie, where no effects stand unfounded, just for "the look." While the dynamics of *The Passion* is performed largely in the editing sphere, *The Last Temptation* has its visual base in the photography. The camera is significantly more mobile, the scenes last longer; the cut is executed predominantly when it is narratologically necessary. Michael Ballhaus got renowned for his tracking shots<sup>7</sup>, but these are not the only ones refreshing the movie. The picture gets very raw when he places the camera on the back side of Jesus' cross while being erected. There are also some interesting camera angles implemented in the scene. The eminent hypnotic and esoteric character of the movie draws primarily on Ballhaus' mastery of composition and its organic fusion with Peter Gabriel's soundtrack that (as well as Debney)

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<sup>7</sup> One uninterrupted take of a camera which is placed on a special carriage (called the "dolly") that moves either on wheels or on rails. Such device enables to record a wide area in a small amount of time.

works with world music, though mixed with some more modern features. It is also due to the richly saturated audio, where music and noises are complemented by Jesus' inner monologue, revealing his thoughts, doubts and pleads to God.

### **2.3 Analysis of the editing structure**

An interesting fact is that Thelma Schoonmaker employs some quite similar devices as John Wright did in *The Passion*, however, always with a reason. I dare say no "empty" cut can be found in the movie. Despite *The Last Temptation* not being precisely a mainstream production, her work is an example of continuity editing - every cut has a benefit for the narrative and naturally advances the story. Right at the first cut, Schoonmaker changes the framing distance from a long shot to a close-up without a cut-away. However, the image is complemented by Jesus' inner soliloquy, and thus it creates a notion of the audience getting closer to the source of the voice, as though in order to eavesdrop.

Otherwise, apart from effects like slow motion, the editing structure is conceptually different from the one applied in *The Passion*, which is directly proportional to the formal character of the film. It has much more dialogue; therefore, the cutting is not so dynamic and playful (apart from looser montage sequences) while more narrative supporting than just visually attractive. A cut is executed less often; the shots are longer while the camera movement is dominant (which is a trademark of Scorsese's cooperation with Ballhaus).

Dialogues are practically the most rhythmical parts. Schoonmaker incorporates a classic shot/reverse shot system and adjusts the tempo of cutting to the tempo of speech. In comparison to Gibson's film, Schoonmaker works more progressively with temporal planes. The narration is chronological; however, the time flow is sometimes featured in a montage sequence. For example, as the number of Jesus' followers increases, we see them walking through the desert to the tunes of Gabriel's exhilarating track and Schoonmaker multiplies their number via gradual apparition of individual bodies with use of dissolves. The passing of time is also indicated by a fade-out. When subjective time takes place, hallucinations are demarcated by an unfocused picture or slow motion to accentuate the distorted perception. When denoting an esoteric moment, Schoonmaker uses jump cut and makes it synchronized with a threatening drum beats. To express the fatal power which has taken over Jesus, a cut to a shot displaying his figure from above, is implemented.

Due to Ballhaus' breathtaking compositions, Schoonmaker does not over cut and lets the image linger on the faces of the actors. During the way to Golgotha, similarly to *The Passion*, the editing lets us look into the faces of the onlookers. However, the scale of their emotions is by no means analogically contradictory, some giving quite an impenetrable expression. The element of voyeurism is emphasized by slow motion.

Overall, it is apparent that Schoonmaker does not make an exhibition and puts maximal effort to support the narrative while at the same time noninvasively highlights the stylistic potential of the film.

## IV CONCLUSION

It is needless to say that the studio, and the director's position is always dominant and the editor usually has to make the best possible compromise between functionality and the default requirements. Therefore, his or her free will is subject to considerable limits, and it is never quite conceivable to mark certain stylistic features as "typically female." Plus, the editing style always differs with the nature of a specific film, the genre in particular.

Simultaneously, I do not state that the observations made in my analyses are generally valid and applicable to each case. However, if we established a theory on these particular films (ignoring the restrictions that the editor must meet), it could be said that male film editing seemed more prone to form, stylistic garnish and the effort to engage the audience. A lot of effects were obviously implemented to boost the visual impact of the picture which I see as somewhat counterproductive. In contrast, female film editing basically appeared quite moderate, rather asymptomatic and always in service to the narrative. More expressive style was implemented in montage sequences or subjective time.

I dare say that the outcome surprisingly did not prove what perhaps might have been expected. Women are usually referred to as the "emotional gender," while men as the more rational one. The results do not reflect anything of that kind. It is the work executed by the male editor, John Wright, that aims strictly to induce emotion by incorporating a large amount of painful images complemented by grievous music.

On the opposite, Wright's female counterpart, Thelma Schoonmaker, does not disregard emotion, however, implements it more soberly, usually as a product of previously escalated events, not barely as a product of itself. The resultant complex is a well balanced amalgam of, we might say, sense and sensibility.

## SUMMARY

Cílem této práce bylo prozkoumat a zhodnotit stav ženského filmého střihu v Hollywoodu od počátků kinematografie po současnost, tak, aby bylo možno ženský způsob práce porovnat s mužským a pokusit se vysledovat určité distinktivní prvky. Předmětem výzkumu bylo také následně vztáhnout tyto prvky k „typicky ženským“, nebo naopak „mužským“ povahovým vlastnostem, jak jsou obecně chápány v moderní společnosti.

V úvodní, teoretické části, bylo třeba nejprve seznámit čtenáře s obecnou teorií filmového střihu, tedy jaké jsou technické náležitosti oboru a jakými způsoby je rutinně aplikován v mainstreamové (tzn. hollywoodské) kinematografii. Popsala jsem také interferenci střihové skladby s konkrétními žánry a diváckou obcí. Dále jsem představila období počátků a inkorporace střihové skladby do hollywoodského narativního (tzn. fikčního) filmu a prozkoumala měnící se postavení žen v oboru v průběhu století.

V kapitolách věnujících se pracovní náplni filmového střihače jsem se zabývala psychologickými předpoklady vhodného kandidáta na pozici a stručně přiblížila metodiku práce.

Následující historická sekce obsahuje portréty významných hollywoodských filmových střihaček, které jsou, nebo byly významně aktivní a dosáhly mimořádného úspěchu v oboru.

Praktická část práce měla za úkol analyzovat dvě filmová díla po střihové stránce a popsat, jakým způsobem se od sebe zásadně liší. Jelikož ústředním tématem tohoto pojednání je problematika genderu, výchozí podmínkou samozřejmě bylo, aby jeden zkoumaný objekt představovala práce muže a druhý práce ženy. K analýze jsem si vybrala tematicky podobné snímky. I přes skutečnost, že novější z nich vykazuje poněkud silnější příslušnost ke střednímu proudu, oba jsou díly režisérů působících dlouhodobě v Hollywoodu a byly editovány střihači s téměř výhradní působností v této sféře.

Před samotným rozbořením střihové skladby každého z filmů jsem provedla zběžné audiovizuální hodnocení pro představu o formálních kvalitách obou děl. Jednotlivé stylistické prvky jsem poté vztáhla na jejich případný přínos pro narativní výstavbu. Jak mělo vyplynout z dřívějších kapitol práce, střih má na stylistice filmu významný podíl.

Střihová skladba provedená Johnem Wrightem na snímku Mela Gibsona *Umučení Krista* se (i s přihlédnutím k silnějšímu zacílení filmu na masy) projevila jako převážně formalistní, až s tendencí ke kýči. *Poslední pokušení Krista* Martina Scorseseho je nesporně nezávislejší dílo, jeho autorem je nicméně režisér, který dnes patří k nejzavedenějším

hollywoodským veličinám, a jehož kvality coby vypravěče jsou významně ceněny. Jak jsme si řekli v úvodu práce, právě důraz na logickou a konsekutivní (systém příčiny a následku) výstavbu vyprávění je základní esencí hollywoodského stylu. Ačkoli by větší nezávislost tohoto filmu do určité míry tolerovala eventuální „rozvolněnost“ stříhové skladby, práce Thelmy Schoonmaker, Scorseseho dlouhodobé spolupracovnice, se projevila jako mnohem funkčnější v rámci vyprávění, než styl aplikovaný v *Umučení*.

Wrightovy postupy sice vykazují dobrou schopnost udržení pozornosti publika díky dynamickým, rytmickým stříhům, které nesporně přidávají každému dílu na vizuální atraktivitě, pokud bychom ho ale vzali jako obecného zástupce mužského přístupu k oboru, výsledkem je potlačení myšlenkového obsahu prázdnou formou. Místo logického postupného rozvíjení narativu Wright předkládá především emocionálně vypjaté obrazy, jež možná vyvolají u diváka emocionální, nikoli ale myšlenkovou odezvu.

Naproti tomu, metoda Thelmy Schoonmaker v *Poslednímu pokušení* naznačuje ženský přístup jako méně podbízivý nenáročnému publiku a kladoucí důraz na myšlenkovou výstavbu a funkčnost fikčního světa konkrétního díla. Rozvoj příběhu je zde primární, to ale neznamená, že by emoce chyběla úplně. Vždy je nicméně výsledkem přirozené gradace předchozích událostí. Navzdory této „střídmosti“ stříhové skladby je *Poslední pokušení* považováno za mimořádně vizuálně vyříbený film. Obrazové estetiky ale Scorsese nedosahuje stříhovými efekty, nýbrž konstrukcí prostoru v rámci pole. To už by ovšem bylo předmětem na samostatnou práci.

Výsledky obou analýz se projeví poměrně překvapivě. Muž, který je podle paušální společenské normy více racionální bytostí, pracoval převážně s emocemi. Žena, standardně považována za více emocionální, upřednostnila duchovní strukturu.

I když by se to ode mě jako zástupkyně ženského pohlaví dalo očekávat, záměrem analýz v žádném případě nebylo označit mužský přístup jako špatný, méně kvalitní, méně intelektuální, apod. Výsledky zde vyplývající určitě nejsou obecně a vždy platnými definicemi, na to je stříhová skladba ovlivňována příliš mnoha faktory. Nicméně vzhledem k příslušnosti obou snímků k naší cílové lokalitě a povaze dlouhodobější tvorby jejich režisérů, můžeme vliv genderu stříhače určitě považovat za nezanedbatelný. Doufám, že se mi také mimo jiné podařilo dokázat, že filmový stříh rozhodně není zkonstatěným, striktně mechanickým oborem, ale naopak prostorem, kde se pragmatismus střetává s duchovní individualitou a estetickými ideály jedince, které mohou být obohaceny o prominentní ženské nebo mužské preference.

## **ABSTRACT**

Práce se zabývá filmovým střihem v Hollywoodské kinematografii s ohledem na ženský element, který je v dané oblasti jedním z nejkonzentrovanejších ve filmovém průmyslu. Klade si za cíl zjistit, zda existují konkrétní stylové prvky, které by odlišovaly ženskou práci od mužské, a daly se tak označit za genderově příznačné. Na tuto otázku by nám měla odpovědět střihová analýza dvou filmových děl, na kterých pracovali zástupci obou pohlaví, a následné vyhodnocení formálních odlišností. Před samotnou analýzou text seznamuje čtenáře s obecnou charakteristikou filmového střihu, s náležitostmi pracovní pozice střihače a dává nahlédnout do historie i současnosti významných žen v oboru.

This work is concerned with film editing in Hollywood cinematography with respect to its feminine representatives, who seem abundantly centered in this locality of film industry. Its main aim is to reveal the existence of particular style elements that would make womanly work different from the one executed by males and whether these elements could be marked as somehow gender symptomatic. The answer should be provided by editing analyses of two motion pictures that has been edited by representatives of both genders and the consequent evaluation of formal discrepancies. Prior to these analyses, the text provides a general characteristic of film editing, introduces the working position of an editor and explores the history and present of eminent women in the field.



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## ANNEX

### **The terminology**

Explaining the principles of film editing would not be effective without introducing some of the elementary film studies terms. I am also going to be using the notions to construe the motion pictures in the analytical part of the thesis. Let us start from the general to the individual. Firstly, I am going to familiarize the reader with the basic building blocks of a motion picture as these play an important role in the overall composition.

SHOT = In the finished film, one uninterrupted image with a single static or mobile framing.

SCENE = A segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space or that uses crosscutting to show two or more simultaneous actions.

SEQUENCE = Term commonly used for a moderately large segment of film, involving one complete stretch of action. In a narrative film, often equivalent to a scene.

The constituents named above are an essential sub-elements of each movie, but to create such a full complex, they must be put together into a resourceful compilation by the editor. Below I list the terms concerning both physical and conceptual value of film editing and the important abstract units which are directly influenced by it.

CUT = 1. In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another.

EDITING = 1. In filmmaking, the task of selecting and joining camera takes. 2. In the finished film, the set of techniques that governs the relations among shots.

NARRATION = The process through which the plot conveys or withholds story information. The narration can be more or less restricted to character knowledge and more or less deep in presenting characters' mental perceptions and thoughts.

NARRATIVE FORM = A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through a series of causally related events taking place in time and space.

LINEARITY = In a narrative, the clear motivation of a series of causes and effects that progress without significant digressions, delays, or irrelevant actions.

RHYTHM = The perceived rate and regularity of sounds, series of shots, and movements within the shots. Rhythmic factors include beat (or pulse), accent (or stress), and tempo (or pace).

Concerning the narrative of a movie, there are various types of editing which either maintain a stable default condition or make an essential alteration of time and space (the two key constituents of each filmic reality):

CONTINUITY EDITING = A system of cutting to maintain continuous and clear narrative action. Continuity editing relies on matching screen direction, position, and temporal relations from shot to shot.

DISCONTINUITY EDITING = Any alternative system of joining shots together using techniques unacceptable within continuity editing principles. Possibilities would include mismatching of temporal and spatial relations, violations of the axis of action, and concentration on graphic relationships.

CROSCUTTING = Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously.

PARALLEL ACTION = Editing two (or more) independent lines of action together so that characters, settings, or subjects do not interact directly and are unaware of each other.

OVERLAPPING EDITING = Cuts that repeat part or all of an action, thus expanding its viewing time and plot duration.

ELLIPTICAL EDITING (ELLIPSIS) = Shot transitions that omit parts of an event, causing an ellipsis in plot and story duration.

JUMP CUT = An elliptical cut that appears to be an interruption of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant.

FLASHBACK = An alteration of story order in which the plot moves back to show events that have taken place earlier than ones already shown.

FLASHFORWARD = An alteration of story order in which the plot presentation moves forward to future events and then returns to the present.

When editing a particular film, the editor chooses from and mixes together various types of shots. These differ in the “distance of framing,” literally the distance between the camera and the object of filming while shooting. For example, in a shot, the viewer can see a whole body of the character, or he can see just the head. Each kind of framing distance delivers a distinct amount of information to the perceiver and plays a very important role in the narrative because of its effective ability to highlight what is significant and what is not. It also provides valuable hints to the viewers, especially when they have already acquired the skills to decode them. We will now take a look at each type of framing separately.

EXTREME LONG SHOT = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small; a building, landscape, or crowd of people will fill the screen.

LONG SHOT = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT = A framing at a distance that makes an object about four or five feet high appear to fill most of the screen vertically.

medium shot = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is of moderate size; a human figure seen from the waist up would fill most of the screen.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is fairly large; a human figure seen from the chest up would fill most of the screen.

CLOSE-UP = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP = A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very large; most commonly, a small object or a part of the body

Some of the framings named above usually have a constant informative function in a movie. For example, shots with long camera distance (such as extreme long shots or long shots) show a large portion of local dispositions, informing the viewer about the setting – the time and place of the action. Therefore, this kind of shot often serves as the so-called “establishing shot” which must be placed at the beginning of each scene, otherwise the viewer might get confused. A whole scene that provides us with the same contextual data (and is commenced with the establishing shot) is called “exposition.”

Now that we are familiar with the spatial relations inside of each image we can see in a cinema, let us now introduce the types of cuts, which are traditionally executed in the editing room.

ACTION MATCH = Matching the action (movement or motion) of characters or objects in one shot to the action in the next shot where the actions continues or completes.

ANGLE MATCH = Matching shots with similar angles (such as shots of the same size).

COLOR MATCH = Matching color and lighting between cuts.

CUT-AWAY = a shot that is usually of something other than the current action. It could be a different subject (eg. this cat when the main subject is its owner), a close-up of a different part of the subject (eg. the subject's hands), or just about anything else. The cutaway is used as a "buffer" between shots (to help the editing process), or to add interest/information.

CUT-IN = An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.

EYELINE MATCH = A cut obeying the axis of action principle, in which the first shot shows a person looking off in one direction and the second shows a nearby space containing what he or she sees. If the person looks left, the following shot should imply that the looker is off screen right.

FLASH CUT = Short cut that quickly and intensively gets inside a character's head.

FRAMING MATCH = Matching the space around the characters – how they are positioned and framed.

GRAPHIC MATCH = Two successive shots joined so as to create a strong similarity of compositional elements (e.g., color, shape).

IDEA MATCH = Two shots edited together that create an idea, insight emotion, or character trait. The sum of the edit is more than the two shots in themselves.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE = A segment of a film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images. Frequent dissolves, fades, superimpositions, and wipes are used to link the images in a montage sequence.

POINT-OF-VIEW SHOT (POV) = A shot taken with the camera placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking.

REACTION = A cut to a participant reacting to something that has just happened.

REVERSE CUT = A cut to the opposite (reverse) angle. The cut can be from the front of a character to the angle behind the character or vice versa. Or the cut can be from a character(s) to the character(s) they are facing.



SHAPE MATCH = Matching similarly shaped objects or forms.

SHOT/REVERSE SHOT = Two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation. In continuity editing, characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, right. Over-the-shoulder framings are common in shot/reverse-shot editing.

SOUND MATCH = Matching two similar sounds (voices, sound effects, natural sounds, rhythm or musical passages, etc.).

From the information given so far it may seem that editing is not a craft where much space would be left for imagination or individual productivity. The opposite is true. Despite the fact that the editor must obey (in case he is not working on some project of an experimental character) the settled rules that the viewers are (some even unconsciously) anticipating, enough creative space is provided in the sphere of simple effects. Under the term, I do not mean special effects like computer-generated images (CGI) used to enhance the action. Most of the effects done in the editing room includes transitions between shots, temporal bridges or uncommon scene openings and closings. Such effects are either supporting to the narrative, or of plain ornamental use. However, in the second case, the editor must beware of overuse, otherwise the form might become superior to the content. The most common effects are listed below.

DISSOLVE = A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears; for a moment, the two images blend in superimposition.

BLACK OUT = When a shot cuts to black.

FADE-IN = A dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears.

FADE-OUT = A shot gradually disappears as the screen darkens. Occasionally, fade-outs brighten to pure white or to a color.

SLOW MOTION = Effect where the pace of the action is decreased from what occurred in reality in front of the camera.

SPEED UP = Effect where the pace of the action is increased from what occurred in real time in front of the camera.

SUBJECTIVE TIME = Cutting to show time experienced from a character's point of view.

SUPERIMPOSITION = The exposure of more than one image on the same film strip.

WHITE OUT = When a shot cuts or dissolves to white.

WIPE = A transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, eliminating one shot as it goes and replacing it with the next one.