



# FILM EDITING TECHNIQUES



# Film Editing

The joining together of clips of film into a single filmstrip. The cut is a simple edit but there are many other possible ways to transition from one shot to another.

Motion pictures are constructed using editing techniques.

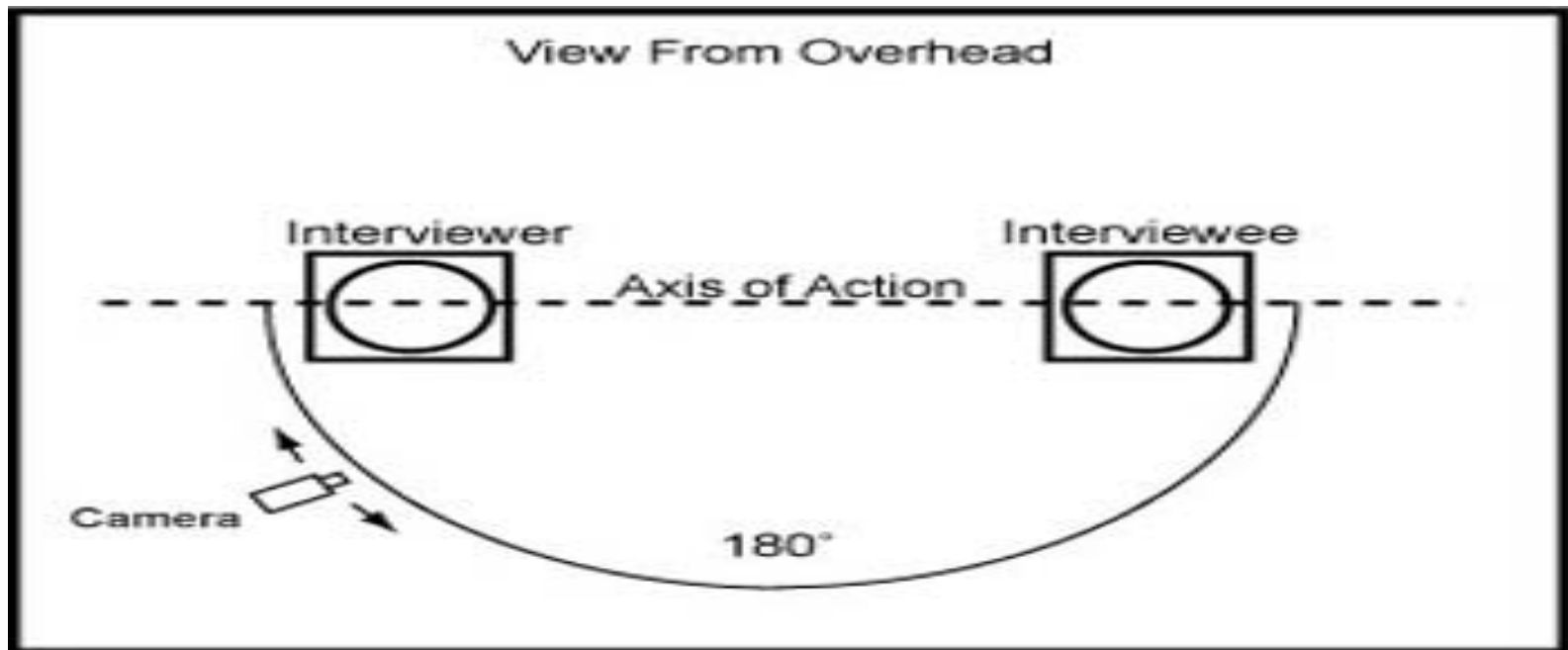
- 1. Shots build into scenes.*
- 2. Scenes build into sequences.*
- 3. Sequences build into complete films.*

# Film Editing Styles

- *Continuity* - A system of cutting to maintain continuous and clear narrative action. Continuity editing relies upon matching screen direction, position, and temporal relations from shot to shot. Also called Classical Hollywood editing.
- *Dynamic* - used for action rather than pure continuity and is faster than continuity editing.
- *Elliptical* - Shot transitions that omit parts of an event, causing an *ellipses* in plot and story duration. (for example: jump cuts)
- *Montage* - Emphasizes dynamic, often discontinuous, relationships between shots and the **juxtaposition** of images to create ideas not present in either shot by itself.

# Continuity Editing

- Often called invisible or seamless or Classical Hollywood editing
- Relies on standard shot patterns:
  - Two-shot, one-shot, over the shoulder
- 180 degree rule usually obeyed (Review video from New York Film School!)



# Dynamic Editing

- Impact is achieved in the cutting room rather than during the original shooting, typically through clever juxtaposition and rapid pacing.
- It has a visceral energy generated by using a large number of shots intercut rapidly to an emotional conclusion.

# Montage Editing

The combining of one or more images to create a different meaning. (Remember the Russian man and the bowl of soup?)

An offspring of Montage Editing is the Montage Sequence which consists of a series of short shots that are edited into a sequence to condense narrative. It is usually used to advance the story as a whole (often to suggest the passage of time), rather than to create symbolic meaning. (think the training scenes in films like “Rocky”)

# Film Editing Devices

- **Transitions:** The shot is defined by editing but editing also works to join shots together. There are many ways of effecting that transition, some more evident than others.
- **Matches:** Editing matches refer to those techniques that join as well as divide two shots by making some form of connection between them. That connection can be inferred from the situation portrayed in the scene (for example, eyeline match) or can be of a purely optical nature (graphic match).
- **Duration:** Editing can affect the experience of time in the cinema by creating a gap between screen time and diegetic time (Montage and overlapping editing) or by establishing a fast or slow rhythm for the scene.

# Transitions

Cross-cutting: Cutting back and forth quickly between two or more lines of action, indicating they are happening simultaneously. (aka parallel editing.)

Dissolve: A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears.



# More Transitions

**Fade:** A visual transition between shots or scenes that appears on screen as a brief interval with no picture. The editor fades one shot to black and then fades in the next. Often used to indicate a change in time and place.

**Cut-in, cut away:** An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion for the same space, and vice versa.

# Still More Transitions

- **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.
  
- **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.

# Matches

**Eye line match:** the alternation of two shots, the first showing a character looking off-screen, the second showing what the character's seeing.

**Graphic match:** Two successive shots joined so as to create a strong similarity of compositional elements.

# Duration

Editing gives a visual rhythm to a film. It develops the narrative sequence; it creates the mood and tempo and pacing and timing.

- **Long Take:** A shot that continues for an unusually lengthy time before the transition to the next shot.
- **Overlapping Editing** : Cuts that repeat part or all of an action, thus expanding its viewing time and plot duration. (Dynamic Editing)
- **Rhythm:** The perceived rate and regularity of sounds, series of shots, and movements within the shots. Rhythm is one of the essential features of a film, for it contributes to its mood and overall impression on the audience. It is also one of the most complex to analyze, since it is achieved through the combination of mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound and editing.