



## **Editing –**

What the story was and what the film is

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Degree Thesis

Film & TV

2017

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DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
Degree Programme:	Film & TV
Identification number:	
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Abstract:	
<p>The aim of this study was to determine how and why an audiovisual story changes or does not change in the editing phase. This study was done through conducting a literature review of existing writings on the topic and through the study of different philosophical approaches to film and editing. The paper was limited to the assumption that the editor and director are two separate people.</p> <p>According to Murch (2001) emotion should determine over 50 % of the editor's editing decision and this paper studied four elements and stages of production that influence this emotion. The elements included in this paper were the screenplay, the material, the editing skills of the editor and the collaboration between the director and editor. The underlying reason for studying the editing decision from a production stage perspective was the notion that this emotion, affecting the editing decision, is first and foremost born in the screenplay and transmitted through the writer as described by Tolstoy (2014).</p> <p>The findings in this paper suggest that the degree of story modification and the success of the editor are actually often linked to and stretch back to the very first stage of production, the screenplay. It seems that when the screenplay works the three other elements that influence the editor's success become less crucial. Furthermore, these findings suggest that it is the emotion, originally born in the screenplay that mainly governs the editing decisions. When, on the other hand, the screenplay does not achieve to transmit a strong true emotion, then it seems that the editing stage becomes, not one of polishing gold, but one of seeking compromises with the director and doing the writer's rewriting with limited possibilities to achieve a true strong emotion in the final film.</p> <p>As emotion seems to be the key to art and editing these findings suggest that the story changes from what it was, to what it eventually is, mostly due to the search of the strongest emotional work, not the strongest story points, twists or resolutions. Hence it can perhaps be said that the editor, as well as the other stages of production after the screenplay, can do a great deal and at the same time only do so much.</p>	

Keywords:	Editing, story, emotion, film
Number of pages:	26
Language:	English
Date of acceptance:	

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

When working within an audiovisual context of storytelling or more precisely with filmmaking and editing everything starts from the screenplay. Whether it is a documentary or a fictional narrative there is always a script, a story. The notion that people go out shooting e.g. documentaries and even fiction films without a script might be true to the extent that there might not exist anything on paper, but there is always a story. And whether the story is printed in hard copy or whether it simply is in somebody's head, the story is always being continuously modified throughout production.

As the final ultimate modification of the audiovisual story or film is done in the editing phase this is naturally a breaking point for the film and story. The story works or it does not work, but after the final edit there are no more changes; the story it is what it is. However, the degree of modification of the story obviously varies greatly based on what was planned, what was written in the screenplay, or simply what was filmed on a more intuitive basis and finally how much the editor decides to cut or not cut and to show or not show. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the editor has a massive impact on the outcome of the story and film no matter how it was shot or planned. Or putting it differently; editing is a very powerful tool in bringing emotions and stories to life.

Any art form whether it is music, painting, dancing, acting or writing, deals with emotion, with life and with truth. Hence the editor's task, as any artist's, is to search for truth, emotion, simplicity and goodness. This is obviously more easily said than done and this paper will try to investigate how one can come closer to achieving this.

## **1.2 Problem are**

The editor is always in a pickle jar of some form, because the editor will only have so much to work with or too much to work with. And it is not how much you have to work with as the editor, but rather how much quality material you have to work with.

*“The truth is obtained like gold, not by letting it grow bigger, but by washing off from it everything that isn't gold.”*

- Tolstoy, Leo, 1985, *Tolstoy's Diaries*, edited and translated by R. F. Christian. London: Athlone Press, Vol 2, p. 512

In many ways Tolstoy's take on how to obtain truth in any form is very true for the editor's task, whose work is to cut down and rearrange material, to decide what to include, what is necessary to show and how to show it in the most effective and truthful manner. As the editor is the last link before sound in the polishing process of bringing the film to life and bringing out its truthful essence, this paper will investigate how the story has come to change from what it was before shooting to what it eventually is.<sup>1</sup> To do this, this paper will first determine the larger scope that sets the blueprint for editor's work, which includes the screenplay, the quality of the material, the editorial skills of the editor and the collaboration between the editor and the director.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to identify why and how the story changes in the editing phase from what the story was before and during shooting to what it eventually is.

### **1.4 Research question**

Why and how does the story change in the editing phase?

### **1.5 Limitations**

This study is limited to a literature review of existing literature on the topic and to the assumption that the editor and the director are two separate people.

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<sup>1</sup> Bearing in mind that this paper only focuses on films that to a great extent follow the scenes and events as they unfold in a pre written screenplay.



## 1.6 Definitions

Throughout this paper, especially in the discussion part the “Rule of Six” will be referred to as a key concept. The “Rule of Six” is a concept of editing guidelines set forth by the legendary editor and sound designer Walter Murch in “The blink of an eye” 2001 (pp. 17-20). The “Rule of Six” is a hierarchical editing-decision making concept that consists of six components to consider when making or not making a cut (Murch, 2001)<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.7 Method and theory

Filmmaking is about seeing the whole picture and paying attention to detail. Here, however lies a dilemma; too much focus on detail can distract one from seeing the bigger picture and not paying attention to detail can distort the bigger picture.

Now while choosing the method for this paper a more practical approach like a case study at first felt like the most appropriate method. This was probably due to the notion that filmmaking in its nature is not academic. It is actually quite the contrary to academia, as film deals with emotion and subjectivity and academia deals with the assessment of information, observation and objectivity. The reason to change the method from a case study, to a literature review based study, came from the one denominator that academia and filmmaking share, philosophy.

Tarkovskij (1989) argues that film should be a poetic work of art that is an expression of the artist’s soul and at its core a work of emotion. Werner Herzog further argues that film is poetic and should be un-scholarly Pragrer (2007). Herzog, however, is known for the use of his voice over in numerous films (e.g. *Dreams* (1982), *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) and *Grizzly Man* (2005)) and the voice over in Herzog’s films is not detached nor does it hide its philosophical content. The philosophy presented in Herzog’s films might not follow any other philosophy than Herzog’s own, but it is still a philosophy with strong ties to e.g. German philosophy Pragrer (2007).

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<sup>2</sup> “The Rule of Six” is further discussed and explained in chapter 2.4.3 Placing the cut – emotion the core of art and editing

Philosophy is not poetic, but any film, whether poetic or linear, always presents some type of a philosophy, as every film is a snippet of life and the world. Ingmar Bergman said “*Tarkovsky for me is the greatest [director], the one who invented a new language*”<sup>3</sup> and even in Tarkovskij’s extremely poetic and sometimes even abstract films there is still a underlying philosophy. Film philosophy does not mean a framework on how to live life, as it simply shows how the creators see life and it can be as simple and yet as abstract as seeing life as merely emotion.

For the editor the philosophy of the film and director’s philosophical views are very important to understand and so a method focused more on the philosophical aspect of filmmaking also felt like the most appropriate method for this paper. Writing an academic paper on something so tangible and yet so intangible as editing is probably approachable from both the more practical perspective and the more philosophical perspective. The more philosophical method in form of a literature review, did however, feel as the more appropriate approach for this paper. Boote & Beile (2005) acknowledge that the importance of a literature review and conducting one lays in really thoroughly understanding the material presented and from here developing a back and fourth discussion that gives insight into both the readings included in the paper, as well as an understanding of the author’s gained insight in the paper eventually presented (Boote & Beile, 2005). It was on the basis of these thoughts that the literature review method was chosen and the literature for the paper carefully chosen.

## **1.8 Structure**

# **2 THE STORY CHANGES**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The editor is always in a pickle jar of some sort, as the he or she always has to work within limits not set by the editor, but set by the material the editor receives. At times,

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<sup>3</sup> Title quote of 2003 Tarkovsky Festival Program, Pacific Film Archive”

when the material works and is great, a limited amount of material can actually be very liberating for the editor and help the editor find the core and the gold in the film. However, and unfortunately, there are more times that this is not the case, than there are times when this is the case. Or putting it more simply; there are a lot more times it goes wrong than times it goes right. On the other hand this is also the beauty of editing. To work within limits and to occasionally look at a great outcome and to realize and feel that the film works and that is true to life.

It is also important to point out that the editor does not work in a vacuum and this chapter will therefore discuss the main elements that influence the success of the editing. There are naturally millions of things that influence the editing from what the editor ate in the morning to what possible jokes the editor med with the director while drinking coffee. As these details are difficult to pin point or to generalize this paper will focus on the more tangible elements that influence the editing success; namely the screenplay, the material, the editor's skills and the collaboration between the director and the editor.

*Table 1. Elements of a successful edit*

### **ELEMENTS OF A SUCCSESFUL EDIT**

- 1) The screenplay; the story the editor wokrs with
- 2) The material; the footage the editor recieves
- 3) The editor's editing skills; how well the editor can read the material and find the gold or truth in it
- 4) The collaboration between the director and the editor

The four elments listed in Table 1 (the screenplay, the material, the editorial skills and the collaboration between the director and editor) are all elements of any film production and all elements of a succsesful edit. All the elemnts are all linked and every element influences the other. Murch (2015) puts this very well in the following sentence:

*“Good editing makes the director look good, great editing makes the film look like it wasn’t directed at all.”*

- Walter Murch 2015. Camerimage: Walter Murch on Editing, Cinematography and the Change to Digital, NOVEMBER 17, 2015 | 03:02PM P

This quote by Murch (2015) beautifully shows how everything in filmmaking is linked and how every element affects and influences the other. It could just as well have said that a great director makes the film look like the film was not edited at all or that a great editor can make a weak script seem great.

## **2.2 The screenplay**

The screenplay is the blueprint for any film and the spinal cord that the film is built upon. It will to a great extent determine the film's success and naturally have a great influence on the editor and the final edit. Therefore when discussing the editor's work it is a natural starting point to discuss the relationship between the screenplay and the editor.

### **2.2.1 The art of storytelling - the writer and the editor**

*“Theater exists to deal with problems of the soul, with the mysteries of human life, not with its quotidian calamities”*

- David Mamet, 1998, *Three Uses of the Knife: On the Nature and Purpose of Drama*, pp. 27

Storytelling is a human way of sharing experiences and understanding. It is present in art and everyday life. Storytelling, like science and religion, aims at finding meaningful ways to express, question and provide. It is a way of providing understanding about us human beings and our world around us. Some people are by nature more gifted than others at telling stories. (McKee, 1997).

In their work both the writer and the editor are interested in knowing what the film is about and yet both continuously find themselves asking this precise question. What

should they include and what should they leave out. Or simply what is the film or story about and how and when do they know that they have found it?

The constant search for the heart of the story is in many ways the same process in editing and writing, because both editing and writing include elements of structuring and rewriting (or in editing terms editing/cutting). There is, however, a fundamental difference between editing and writing; the one exists without the other. Writing exists without editing, but editing does not exist without writing. This is obvious, but an important thing to consider when discussing the editor's work and the process of bringing the film to life. The writer can be said to be the major editor, because the writer chooses what to write or gets assigned to write something. As the writer could basically write about anything (if the writer is not assigned to write about something specific) the writer makes a massive edit in choosing "the story" to write about among all the other stories that could exist or be born. In a sense the writer edits the world and the editor the film.

If the writer's and editor's task can be argued to be the search for the heart of the story then the question arises; what is the heart of the story, or more precisely; what is the art of storytelling. Tolstoy (2014) gives a quite good explanation of what the art of storytelling is, when he describes how art is an expression of the artist's soul and an emotion that the artist transmits. Tolstoy (2014) argues that the more personal the emotion the artist transmits is, and the less affected the emotion is of what people think, the truer and stronger the emotion that the artist transmits will be felt.

*"If a man is infected by the author's condition of soul, if he feels this emotion and this union with others, then the object which has effected this is art; but if there be no such infection, if there be not this union with the author and with others who are moved by the same work — then it is not art. And not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art."*

- Tolstoy, Leo, *What is art?*, Brass Rabbit Classics, 2014, Los Angeles, California, pp. 105

The story springs originally from the writer and the underlying art and truth or not art and not truth, which Tolstoy (2014) refers to, is originally transmitted or not transmitted though the writer. One therefore sees the massive impact the screenplay has on the edi-

tor's work. If a genuine strong transmission of emotion has occurred already in the screenplay stage then this feeling should have been transmitted to everyone working on the film and especially to the director. Eventually then the editor should also be looking at material that transmits this emotion and put together the story that in the most strongest and most truest way transmits the feeling originally transmitted through the writer. This is, however, not always the case and the editor might also be looking at footage from a screenplay that did not transmit this emotion. If this is the case then the editor's task becomes much more difficult as the editor in a sense is put in the shoes of the writer and now needs to transmit emotion through the material. The problem for the editor is that he or she can only write from the material that he or she was given when the writer had the world to choose from. So when it works or does not work it more than often comes back to where it all started from, the screenplay.

### **2.2.2 The screenplay and editor – the relation**

Writing is writing and rewriting. Rewriting is rearranging, adding new and erasing old. Editing is the final rewriting.

McKee (1997) argues that a good writer will write, rewrite and rewrite, for the sake of finding the weaknesses in the script and bringing out the heart of the story. The writing and rewriting happen in chronological order, you can obviously not rewrite without something to rewrite from and you cannot edit if you have no material. So the importance will lie just as much in how the screenwriter begins and with what mindset the screenwriter writes, as how the rewriting and editing happen to find the true core of the story Berne (2011). One must remember that ideas and stories compete for the writer's attention and too often we are looking at a screenplay with a story full of events that don't correlate and tell different stories that might even tell conflicting messages. So the editor's task changes depending on the film he or she is working on. Sometimes the editor is polishing a film to bring out the essence and the truth in the film and some times the editor and director are doing the writer's rewriting and first finding the story, before they can move on to polishing it. Needless to say the two situations are quite different and the later demands a great deal more effort and work to get it right than the first scenario.

## **2.3 The material**

### **2.3.1 People are interested in people, in life**

People are interested in people. The editor is interested in finding the heart of the material and the heart of the material is in the characters, portrayed by the actors.

The final film should speak to the audience and the material should speak to the editor. The editor being a listener, a questioner an emotional and empathic human being should be able to feel what the material transmits. The audience being listeners, questioners, emotional and empathic human beings should be able to feel what the film transmits. It is always about life so the material needs to be alive. When the film is alive the actors are alive. When actors are alive they are not simply acting by putting on an act they are acting though living and breathing the character (Tarkovskij, 1989). When the characters come alive the material comes alive and when the material is alive the editor has a good shot at getting it right.

### **2.3.2 The heart of the material – the actors**

Wetson (2003), Tarkovskij (1989) and Lumet (2004) all argue that acting might be the most important thing for the experience, impact and emotion of the film. The performance of the actor will therefore naturally be of great importance for the film to work and the editor naturally bears a great responsibility to show the material and the characters portrayed by the actors as truthfully as possible. The editor is, in a sense, acting upon the actor's acting, as the editor will put together what he or she feels is true in the acting and overall the most truthful portrayal of life. When the material is alive and the actor is living then the editor's task becomes one of polishing gold, but when the material is weak the editor is in a tough spot.

Perhaps the editor's dilemma and relation to weak material can be seen as a surgeon working on a patient close to dying. The surgeon can still save the patient if the patient is not completely dead. But, no human has ever woken up the dead and no editor has ever made material come alive that had no pulse, no life.

## 2.4 Editing skills

Editing is a handcraft and an art form. Editing skills is the artistic value the editor achieves through his or her handcraft.

### 2.4.1 Editing – there are no rules

*“no work of art can really be called such if it has not been created by an artist who believes in irregularity and rejects any set form. Regularity, order, desire for perfection (which is always a false perfection) destroy art.”*

- Sergei Eisenstein - Film Form: Essays in Film Theory, 1949 - Harcourt Brace Javanovich New York pp. 4

In editing and film there are several conventions, but no rules. The fairly young art form is constantly changing and conventions are continuously challenged and modified. There are, however, strong notions of story structure that stretch back thousands of years and even surviving work on the three-act structure and dramatic theory by Aristotle in Poetics (McKee, 1997). In this sense story structure and conventions live on and are a part of life and our understanding of stories and life. In the rapidly changing world and field of film every editor and human being, though continuously growing and changing, has also been subconsciously thought to read audiovisual content and stories in ways that, weather we like it or not, to a great extent influence the editor’s work.

### 2.4.2 Editing – structure and the intuitive mind

Tarkovskij, who by Bergman, was considered to be the best film director at the time, said the following of his fellow filmmaker Tarkovskij:

*“Tarkovsky for me is the greatest [director], the one who invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream.”*

- Title quote of 2003 Tarkovsky Festival Program, Pacific Film Archive

McKee (1997) states that for everything there are already set rules and conventions, but that following or trying to copying them is no foolproof system, but rather something



that often leads to simply recycling age-old clichés (McKee, 1997). Murch (2001), furthermore, argues that the editor should not try to make a movie what is not. If the movie is a straightforward no-brainer then trying to make it intelligent in the edit will not only reinforce its stupidity, but also make it confusing (Murch, 2001). Tarkovskij (1989) again states something important in saying that his fellow iconic filmmakers Bergman, Fellini, Kurosawa amongst many others, all have one thing in common; they make their films, they don't make genre films. Tarkovskij (1989) further explains that genre should not really exist in film and mentions Chaplin as an example of this. Chaplin, according to Tarkovskij (1989), should not be categorized as a comedy, as it is and should be categorized as Chaplin, as it is as unique as the creation itself (Tarkovskij, 1989).

A story is in many ways structure, because if something is connected as e.g. scenes and the scenes together form something bigger; then there is a story, and then there is structure. The editor is in a special position, as he or she, with a few quick moves, can try things around and play with the whole structure and story. And in contrast to the writer and director, the editor also immediately sees the results and the outcome of the changes, as they would appear in the final film. The modification of the story and the structure in the edit might, however, change the very nature and emotion of the story. One thing might work better, but at the same time the overall essence and truth of the story might go lost (Murch, 2001).

For the editor's work structure is of great importance as the very nature of the editor's work is to structure material, to structure the project, to structure the story, to structure cuts, structure new versions and so forth. Murch (2001), however, points out that before structure or anything else the editor should always consider emotion. The editor and the intuitive mid is in this sense always faced with a dilemma in editing; the story needs structure, but above all emotion Berne (2011). So perhaps the structuring in the editor's work should refer more to the editor's workflow and to analyzing what the intuitive mid has accomplished. As McKee (1997), states it, maybe structure should be seen more as a tool for seeing what the film is, rather than structuring for the sake of what something should be.

### 2.4.3 Placing the cut – emotion the core of art and editing

*“The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man’s expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it.”*

- Tolstoy, Leo, *What is art?*, Brass Rabbit Classics, 2014, Los Angeles, California, pp. 38

Kuleshov put forward in the beginning of the 20th century the idea that a combination of two shots changes the overall perceived meaning of the separate shots, the montage. According to Kuleshov the montage combination of shots changes the interpretation of a single shot so that separate shots are interpreted differently depending on what they are connected to. Eisenstein further developed this meaning in the sense that not only do the shots follow an order, but that a collision between the shots takes place (Maclean, 2012).

*“montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots-shots even opposite to one another”*

- Sergei Eisenstein - *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, 1949 - Harcourt Brace Javanovich New York pp. 4

In a sense shots are not seen side by side according to Eisenstein (1949), but instead on top of each other; each shot or cut adding or building upon the meaning or interpretation. Kuleshov (1974), however, also brings forward the greater problem with relying too heavily on the effect or impact of the montage. According to Kuleshov (1974) it is important to be aware of what one wants to achieve with the montage and that one should be aware that there are other, maybe more effective ways, to achieve this than the editing montage. Kuleshov (1974) returns to, what Wetson (2003), Tarkovskij (1989) and Lumet (2004) also acknowledge as the strongest element in the film, the acting.

Kuleshov (1974) notes that if one treats the actor as simply an expressionless dull face containing no emotion, then the montage or cut will to a great extent determine the overall impression that the audience gives a certain montage. E.g. if an expressionless

face is shown next to a meal then people read the face or person as hungry. Kuleshov (1974), however, notes the misleading impacts on filmmaking this can have, as he acknowledges, not only the importance of the editing montage, but also the importance of the internal montage of the actor, the actor's expressions and inner life. The expressionless face is in reality hardly ever so expressionless, as Tarkovskij (1989) notes that the actor is displaying an inner life. Kuleshov (1974), furthermore, points out that it more often becomes a choice of position and timing than only presenting two pieces of information. The art comes from what one shows, when and how (Kuleshov, 1974) and as with any art form, at the heart of it, lays emotion (Murch, 2001). According to Murch (2001) there are mainly six things that the editor should consider when making a cut; 1) emotion, 2) story, 3) rhythm, 4) eye-trace, 5) Two-dimensional plane of screen and 6) three-dimensional space of action.

*Table 2. Murch, Walter (2001), In the Blink of an Eye, pp. 18.*

<b>RULE OF SIX</b>	<b>IMPORTANCE IN %</b>
1) EMOTION	51 %
2) STORY	23 %
3) RYTHM	10 %
4) EYE - TRACE	7 %
5) TWO – DIMENSIONAL PLANE OF SCREEN	5 %
6) THREE – DIMENSIONAL SPACE OF ACTION	4 %

As seen in Table 2, emotion is, according to Murch (2001), the key thing to consider when placing a cut, making up over 50 % of the overall editing decision. An important thing to point out is also that, according to Murch (2001), the editor should never sacri-

face something that appears above it in the hierarchical Rule of six decision-making process of editing. E.g. an editor should not sacrifice loss of emoting in editing for the sake of story and one should not sacrifice story to gain better rhythm in the edit end so forth.

In general talks about film and even in the most respected critical film reviews, three things seem most frequently discussed; the story, the director and the actors. Yet it seems emotion is what ties all these things together and when people feel the story works it is maybe more so because the emotion holds. The audience does not feel a disconnected from what they are looking at, but rather they feel included (Murch, 2001). Holding the emotion alive is everyone's task working on the film, but it is eventually the editor who ties it all together in the edit. When successful in holding the emotion the story will appear to work, the acting will seem great and that the director will have made a good film.

## **2.5 The collaboration**

A good director makes a song his or her own; as if he or she wrote it from their soul. A bad director sings karaoke and makes the audience squeal. A good editor makes an edit his or her own as if they directed it. A bad editor should not be let into the editing room.

### **2.5.1 The director**

The director is the captain, the overall visionary and the eventual soul behind the film. The director's tasks are endless and so are the director's responsibilities. The main objective of the director is, however, or at least should be, to make a good film.

The role of the director has changed a bit over time. The most noticeable change in the director's work and role in a production is perhaps today's collective process of filmmaking, which starts already in the screenplay stage. The iconic art-house filmmakers wrote most of their scripts themselves, which is still common today, but the auteur or auteurs as the old iconic filmmakers are often referred to, have the important notion of writing, directing and often also editing their films themselves. Therefore it is not surprising that film often is studied through its directors rather than the screenplays or per-

haps even editors. However, the auteur mentality and way of working is not what represents Hollywood today or even European film as the process of filmmaking has become much more of a collective process than e.g. in the days of Charlie Chaplin and even Ingmar Bergman. (Sarris, 1963)

### **2.5.2 The director and the editor – vision, inspiration and control**

*“Good editing makes the director look good, great editing makes the film look like it wasn’t directed at all.”*

- Murch, Walter. *Camerimage: Walter Murch on Editing, Cinematography and the Change to Digital*. 17.11.2015 <http://variety.com/2015/film/global/walter-murch-on-editing-cinematography-change-to-digital-1201642921/>

Arnheim (1957) states that film must be considered art, as the film is the artist’s unique way of seeing and hearing life. This means recognizing art in every aspect of filmmaking from sound, cinematography to editing and the actual story. It is the artists’ way of seeing life and the film reality that is presented through their visions (Arnheim, 1957).

As the director is the overall artistic visionary of the film, it is important to note where the work of the director is most noticeable and how the director’s work is seen in and affects the editor’s work. As mentioned earlier the screenplay is the foundation and blueprint of the film and the artistic work in the screenplay should transmit an emotion to the reader and especially to the director. Needless to say the director should understand the film better than anyone, stay true to the feeling of the work and blow life into the film.

Some director’s are said to be more visually talented, some more sound focused, some great editors and some great storytellers. The editor will surely benefit from an experienced director with knowhow of all aspects of filmmaking and especially editing. But having a director, who is a great editor, can also be a pitfall and cause problems for the editor down the road. Vice versa having a great director as an editor can also be problematic for the director. When searching for the balance and harmony in the relationship between the editor and director it naturally comes down to a personal relationship,

which is unique for everyone and every situation. There are, however, three things that affect every director-editor relation; vision, inspiration and control.

The director needs to have, and should always have, a vision, but a vision locked in stone can lead to control. Control itself is not a bad thing; it is in the very essence and nature of filmmaking in order to get things forward and to maintain a level of order and structure in the production and artistic work of the director Manet (1992). However, if the very notion of life can be argued to be the opposite of control, then control might also suffocate a story that tries to express itself (Berne, 2011).

In the auteur days of filmmaking, which are not over yet, but certainly not the norm of filmmaking today, the role of the overall visionary, the director, and the focus of the overall vision was perhaps more easily maintained, as the director was also the writer and the editor. When the director and the editor are separate people it becomes a process of transmitting a vision and a back and fourth dialogue between the director and editor. The director needs to be able to explain their vision and the editor needs to be able to listen to the vision and emotion that the director transmits. Tarkovskij (1989) argues that the director's task is to blow life into the actor and so it can surely be argued that the director's task is also to blow life into the editor.

The vision or "controlling idea", as McKee (1997) calls it, is born in the screenplay and Tolstoy (2014) argues that it is here an emotion should be transmitted to the reader. The director's task is then to polish this vision and to explain and transmit this overall vision to everyone working on the film and to the editor. The editor should also explain their vision and take on the film to the director. In a back and fourth dialogue between the director and editor the vision should become clearer to both the editor and director.

Throughout the production the director needs to maintain a level of control in both production and in the artistic work. This control will affect the level of freedom the editor has in his or her work. Too much control can kill the inspiration of the editor and suffocate the film and no control can lead to an unfocused outcome. What McKee (1997) calls "controlling idea" can perhaps be said to be misleading in the context of inspiring as control can very easily be associated with suffocation of inspiration. Perhaps it is simply best to talk about a process of a back and fourth inspiring of each other between the editor and director. And eventually it is in this dilemma between vision, inspiration

and control that lays the foundation of a good and fruitful collaboration between the director and editor.

### **3 DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1.1 Findings and conclusions**

The aim of this study was to identify why and how the story changes in the editing phase from what the story was before and during shooting to what it eventually is. To do this this paper focused on namely four things; the screenplay, the material, the editor's skills and the collaboration between the director and the editor.

The method for identifying how and why the story changes was done according to a literature review. Boote & Beile (2005) acknowledge that, the importance of a literature review and conducting one, lays in developing a back and fourth discussion between the author and the literature included. This creates the foundation for gaining insight and understanding of how and why things turn out or may turn out in different ways (Boote & Beile, 2005).

This paper set out to investigate how and why the story changes in the editing phase. A case study approach would have allowed for seeing how one or a few films turned out compared to their original screenplays. Through the case study approach one could perhaps have identified concrete things that the editor did to make the films and stories work better, or at least hopefully better. This paper, however, focused more on the philosophical aspect of the editor's work and on the main factors that will influence how the editor comes to change the story in the film along the cores of editing.

A significant finding was that it is the overall emotion that determines almost everything in a film. The story or story arc and how it changes actually appears very secondary to preserving and refining the overall emotion. Furthermore, this paper found that it more often comes back to where it all starts from, the screenplay, or more precisely the emotion transmitted through the screenplay. As Tolstoy (2014) argues, the more personal the emotion the writer transmits the stronger the emotion will be felt by the reader.

This paper also found that working according to some model or story structure can actually get you in a world of trouble as McKee (1997) writes that that story is structure, but that there is no one fits all formula. A key concept for the editor to get it right actually seems to be what Murch (2001) explains as seeing each and every film for what they are and for what emotion they transmit, not trying to make a film what it is not. This should not be a surprising finding, as this is also what life is all about, to see each and everyone for what they are and not projecting onto people what one thinks, but what one sees and learns.

The findings also suggest that the editor's skills do not seem to refer to technique or tricks, though both techniques and tricks can be used to find and polish what Murch (2001) also identifies as the main priority of the editor's work, emotion. So when people feel the story works, it is maybe more so because the emotion holds than that the events follow some formulated logic. Perhaps Murch (2001) explains it best when he argues that the movie works when the audience does not feel disconnected from the emotional journey they are on, but rather they feel included.

Finally the findings suggest that the editor can only do so much; meaning that making something out of nothing in the editing phase seems to be more of a last resort. When the director and editor realize that the material does not transmit the emotion they were looking for, or even worse the director did not know what the film was about, then both the editor and the director are in trouble. So it seems the importance will lie just as much in how the screenwriter begins and with what mindset the screenwriter writes, as how the rewriting and editing happen to find the true core of the story Berne (2011). The harsh thing appears to be that when a screenplay does not work the, editor usually just has to realize that no matter how hard one works, no matter how many changes are made and no matter how good the director and the collaboration with the director is, you will never really get there.

When, however, the screenplay works in successfully transmitting a true emotion to the reader, the findings suggest that in the end the film itself will often also work. Perhaps it can be said that when a screenplay works and when it is in the hands of a capable director and quality actors the characters will come alive through the truth and emotion in the screenplay and thorough the emotion the director blows into everyone. The findings



suggest that the editor, then in collaboration with director, will need to polish off everything that is unnecessary. So how the story changes from what it was to what it eventually is in the final film seems to be more a question what is necessary to show, to bring out the strongest emotional work, not the strongest story points, twists or resolutions.

### **3.1.2 Future research - emotion and time**

Science and art are two ways for humans to make sense of our universe and the one tells something about the other and together they shape our understanding of the universe. When science deals with theories and observations of the world, art deals with emotion and observations of the world, but both deal with life and our existence.

Murch (2001) beautifully explains how the language of film and editing comes very natural to us, even though editing is a jump in time in any direction and even though time takes on a different meaning than in real life. Life as we perceive it happens in “real time”, while the film and editing presents “imaginary time”, a time without a direction running simultaneously to our real time. Murch (2001) means that film is like dreaming and like thinking; emotions and ideas linked together in a time that is not defined by a chronological real time, but by the unity of the emotions and ideas presented in the film. Interestingly in editing and film the perception of time is not fundamentally different from what scientists today refer to as imaginary time and real time.

*“In real time, the universe has a beginning and an end at the singularities that form a boundary to space-time and at which the laws of science break down. But in imaginary time, there are no singularities or boundaries. So maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea that we invent to help us describe what we think the universe is like.”*

- Hawking, Stephen, 1996, *A brief history of time* pp. 144

In Hawking’s (1996) very simplified explanation of imaginary time is not all that disconnected from the concept of time in film and editing. You cannot watch a film backwards and preserve its emotion, but you can jump backwards, forwards and break all

boundaries of linear real time in the film and editing, as long as you preserve its emotion and play it in linear real time.

*“If one can go north, one can turn around and head south; equally, if one can go forward in imaginary time, one ought to be able to turn around and go backward. This means that there can be no important difference between the forward and backward directions of imaginary time. On the other hand, when one looks at "real" time, there's a very big difference between the forward and backward directions, as we all know.”*

- Hawking, Stephen, 1996, *A brief history of time* pp. 147-148

We do not yet know how the universe or the human brain functions and we do not know what we can find out about ourselves, our brains and the universe, but what we are finding the whole time is that we can read and understand edited audiovisual content very well Murch (2001). Hawking (1996) points out that it is a shame how philosophy and science have drifted so far apart when they at a time used to be much more intact. Iconic figures like Aristotle, Newton, and Galileo were not simply one or the other, but a combination of scientists and philosophers and so philosophy and physics were on the same page. Today, however, as Hawking (1996) states, philosophy is lagging behind science, as only specialists know the latest advances in a specific scientific field. The same can be said for the relation between arts and science, as at a time artist like Leonardo da Vinci used to be both in science and in arts. Filmmakers with their incredible and unique opportunity to deal with time and emotion in film could surely also benefit from better understanding the latest scientific ideas about the universe and time, which can be seen in many recent failures in science fiction films. Also science could surely learn something from film as a unique place where space and time take on a different meaning and are bound together by emotion.

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## **SVENSKA SAMMANFATTNING**

### **1. Introduktion**

Klipparen befinner sig alltid i någon form av en knipa. Ibland har klipparen för litet material att jobba med och ibland för mycket. Och i slutändan är det inte mängden material som avgör vad klipparen har att jobba med, utan kvaliteten på materialet. Då klippet är det sista skedet före ljudarbetet i förädlingsprocessen från manus till färdig film är det också en brytningspunkt för filmen, antingen fungerar historien och filmen eller så fungerar den inte. Detta arbete undersöker därför varför och hur berättelsen änd-

ras i klippskedet. För att studera detta har arbetet delat in den större omfattningen som påverkar klipparens arbete till fyra delar av produktionsprocessen som alla påverkar klippares arbete; manuset, materialet, klipp färdigheterna och samarbetet mellan regissör och klippare.

## **1.1 Syfte**

Syftet med detta arbete är att identifiera varför och hur berättelsen ändras i klippskedet från vad berättelsen var före och efter inspelningsskedet till vad den är i den slutliga filmen.

## **1.2 Forskningsfråga**

Varför och hur ändras berättelsen i klippskedet?

## **1.3 Avgränsningar**

Detta arbete är begränsat till en litteraturöversikt och till antagandet att klipparen och regissören är två separata personer.

## **1.4 Metod**

Att en litteraturöversikt användes som metod för detta arbete har sina rötter i den filosofiska biten av skapande och filmmakande. Varje film vare sig poetisk eller linjär har en filosofi och en känsla (Murch, 2001). En case-studie kunde ha gett konkret insikt i en eller ett fåtal filmer och hur de ändras i klippskedet, men genom en case-studie tillåter detta arbete för en fram och tillbaka diskussion mellan skribenten av detta arbete och den inkluderade litteraturen (Boote & Beile, 2005).

## **2. Berättelsen lever**

### **2.1 Manus**

Tolstoy (2014) menar att det är graden av känsla som ett konstverk förmedlar till publiken som definierar det konstnärliga och emotionella värdet av verket. I film är det först och främst i manusskedet som denna känsla skapas och sedan förmedlas, eller inte förmedlas, till alla som jobbar på filmen. Därmed kommer denna känsla att till en hög grad också definiera klipparens möjligheter till att slutligen sätta ihop ett verk med konstnärligt och emotionellt värde.

McKee (1997) understryker vikten av att i manusskedet bearbeta texten. Det är enligt McKee (1997) i denna process av omskrivande som manusförfattaren hittar svagheter i manuset och kommer närmare arbetets kärna. Hur denna process av omskrivande går till är individuell och beror på hur manusförfattaren börjar (Berne, 2011). Omskrivningsprocessen sträcker sig i filmskapande ända till klippskedet, där klipparen slutligen tillsammans med regissören bestämmer vad som kommer med, vad som blir borta och hur materialet presenteras. I slutändan kan således klipparens roll variera mycket p.g.a. på manusets styrka. Ibland blir klipparens roll att tillsammans med regissören finlipa guld och ibland blir det en längre process av att skriva om berättelsen i klippskedet med det material man har. Att hitta en känsla som inte funnits i manusskedet är dock evident svårare än att hitta en känsla som genomgående penetrerat hela produktionen ända från manusskedet.

### **2.2 Materialet**

Människor är intresserade av människor och Wetson (2003), Tarkovskij (1989) och Lumet (2004), menar alla att det i slutändan är skådespelaren, eller livet som skådespelaren porträtterar, som gör det starkaste känslomässiga intrycket på publiken. Härmed är klipparens, liksom skådespelarens, roll att porträttera ett inre liv (Tarkovskij, 1989). Att porträttera ett inre liv ur en historia som från början saknar själ och känsla är dock både svårt för skådespelaren och regissören. Samma gäller sedan slutligen för klipparen.

En skicklig skådespelare, regissör och klippare kan föda ett inre liv, men liksom med klipparens relation till manuset gäller samma för klipparen i relation till materialet; klipparen kan väcka till liv det som ännu andas, men är materialet dött så är det inte mycket klipparen kan göra.

### **2.3 Klipp färdigheter**

Klipp är ett handarbete och en konstform. En klippares klippfärdigheter är det artistiska värdet klipparen kan skapa genom sitt handarbete.

Murch (2001) menar att det viktigaste och det som bäst definierar en klippares färdigheter är klipparens förmåga att bevara och förstärka känsla. Hur klipparen åtar sig att göra detta finns det en mängd olika metoder till. Man kan dock separera två klara riktlinjer som klipparen kan ta för att förstärka och förmedla känslor av en karaktär. Den ena är, som Kuleshov (1974) skriver, montage verktyget. Klipp i slutändan är ju ett montage av bilder. Kuleshov (1974) menar att den andra är att stanna på bilden utan att klippa, att t.ex. se skådespelarens ögon i en närbild, då ögonen förmedlar skådespelarens inre montage, ett inre liv. För att orientera sig fram i detta hav av möjligheter menar alltså Murch (2001) att klipparen framför allt skall tänka på känsla. Känsla skall enligt Murch (2001) dominera över såväl berättelsens handling, rytm, ögonriktning, filmens tvådimensionella plan och den tredimensionella film världen. I denna mening kommer man igen tillbaka till varifrån känslan som klipparen skall förmedla härstammar och hur klipparen väljer att bearbeta materialet.

Genom montage effekten kan klipparen skapa en effekt som inte finns i enstaka bilder. Klipparen kan i montage kombinationen av bilder, som Kuleshov (1974) beskriver, skapa känslor som inte beror på de enstaka bilderna utan på deras kombination. Då hela den audiovisuella berättelsen är uppbyggd av ett montage av bilder, kan det dock bli svårt för även en skicklig klippare att behålla en stark känsla genom ett verk som inte har utstrålat en stark genomgående känsla i manusskedet. Därför blir klipparen alltid, då han eller hon jobbar med ett svagt manus eller svagt material, i en svår position eftersom en klippare kanske lyckas skapa en känsla av någonting genom montage möjlig-

heten och kombinationen av bilder, men samtidigt kanske dessa ändringar gör att helheten och den övergripande känslan går förlorad eller blir mera konfunderande (Murch, 2001).

## **2.4 Samarbetet**

De gamla auteurs dagarna av filmskapande som t.ex. Bergman och Chaplin representerade är inte döda, men började redan sedan årtionden bakåt lida mot sitt slut (Sarris, 1963). Således har filmskapandet gått och går hela tiden mot en mera kollektiv process. Detta har betytt stora förändringar i filmskapandet och klipparbetet. I och med denna utveckling har det kreativa arbetet för klipparen fått en ny och annan betydelse. Det fanns säkert en viss fördel med att auteursna själva brukade skriva, regissera och ofta också klippa sina filmer, med tanke på att behålla den övergripande visionen som regissören har. Murch (2001) poängterar dock att det idag är dialogen mellan klippare och regissör som gör att regissörens vision finns kvar och styr riktningen, men att klipparen som en aktiv och kreativ del av processen bjuder på idéer och sin kreativa input, som i slutändan borde tjäna filmens syfte.

Berne (2011) beskriver hur kontroll eller en fix idé kan döda kreativiteten och detta är en viktig aspekt då man tänker på regissörens och klipparens relation. Klipparens och regissörens förhållande är alltid unikt och olika, men samtidigt präglas förhållandet alltid av en balans mellan kontroll, vision och inspiration. Som McKee (1997) poängterar så är det viktigt med, en som han kallar kontrollerande idé som styr alla beslut. Denna kontrollerande idén kunde man kanske hellre kalla regissörens vision. För, som Berne (2011) argumenterar, kan kontroll döda kreativitet, men samtidigt kan en okontrollerad produktion och attityd från regissören leda till ett ofokuserat resultat. Tarkovskij (1989) menar att regissören också skall blåsa liv in i produktionen och skådespelarna. Det samma gäller för regissörens förhållande till klipparen. Regissören skall således blåsa liv i klipparen, liksom klipparen skall blåsa liv i regissören. I denna mening kunde man säga att nyckeln till ett givande samarbete mellan regissör och klippare ligger i balansen mellan inspiration, vision och kontroll.



### 3. Diskussion

Syftet med detta arbete var att identifiera varför och hur berättelsen ändrar i klippskedet. Metoden som användes för att studera detta var en litteraturöversikt. Litteraturöversikten användes för att skapa en fram och tillbaka diskussion kring ämnet mellan skribenten av detta arbete och den inkluderade litteraturen enligt principerna beskrivna av Boote & Beile (2005).

Ett märkbart fynd var, att det är den övergripande känslan av filmen som bestämmer nästan allting. Hur själva berättelsen framskrider eller hur den ändras verkar mycket sekundärt till att bevara och stärka den övergripande känslan i filmen. Utöver detta tyder resultaten på att oftast sträcker sig tillbaka till där det allt började, alltså manuset, eller närmare sagt känslan som förmedlats genom manuset. Tolstoy (2014) beskriver det som att ju personligare en känsla är i en skriven text desto starkare förmedlas den till läsaren.

Gällande materialets kvalitet verkar också manuset vara av de viktigaste om inte den viktigaste faktorn. McKee (1997) beskriver det som att manuset skall uttrycka en kontrollerande idé som sedan skall styra all beslut kring hur filmen utvecklas. Murch (2001) bygger vidare på detta då han säger att klipparen skall se varje film för vad den är och att klipparen i inget fall skall försöka göra någonting till vad det inte är. Detta borde dock inte vara ett överraskande fynd, då livet handlar om precis detta, att se människor för vad de är, var och en som en individ och att inte projicera på människor vad man tror, utan lyssna till vad man ser, hör och lär sig.

Resultanten tyder också på att klipparens färdigheter inte verkar ha så mycket att göra med tricks eller tekniker, även om både trick och tekniker kan användas för att finslipa det som Murch (2001) beskriver som klipparens prioritet nummer ett, känsla. Därmed verkar det som att känslan folk får av att berättelsen fungerar, mera tyder på att känslan i filmen fungerar än att händelser följer någon logisk eller pragmatisk modell. Kanske Murch (2001) beskriver det bäst då han menar att filmen fungerar bäst då publiken inte känner sig distanserad eller exkluderad från filmen, utan de känner sig inkluderade och investerade i filmen.

Slutligen tyder resultaten på att klipparen endast kan göra så mycket; vilket betyder att göra någonting av ingenting verkar vara det sista alternativet. Då manuset inte fungerar verkar det helt enkelt så att hur hårt regissören och klipparen än jobbar, så måste de som oftast bara inse att de endast kan komma så långt med filmen. När manuset däremot fungerar och förmedlar en stark sann känsla till läsaren, så tyder resultaten på att filmen också ofta i slutändan kommer att fungera. Så varför och hur berättelsen ändras i klippskedet verkar mest handla om vad man visar för att på det mest effektiva sättet föra fram det starkaste emotionella verket, inte de starkaste vändpunkterna, intellektuella poängerna eller lösningarna.