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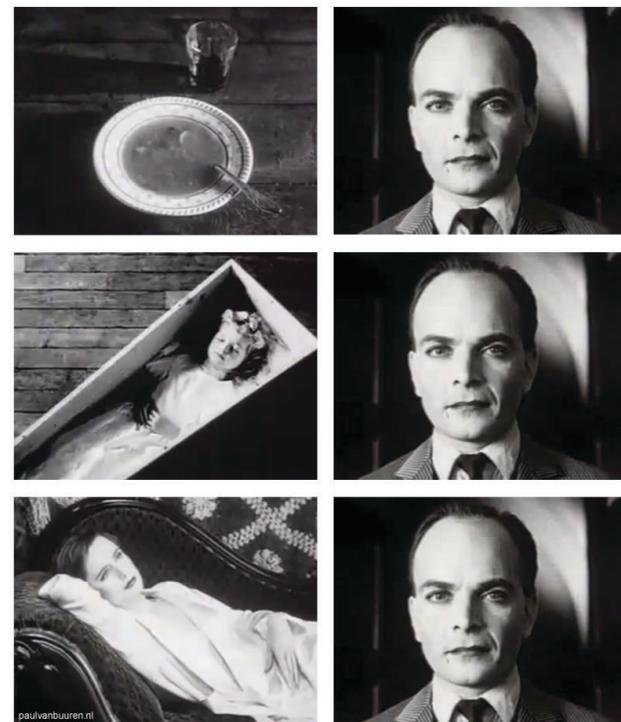
The Wonderful WIZARDs OF OZ

organized by Amanda Durett Cercone
November 2 - December 23, 2017

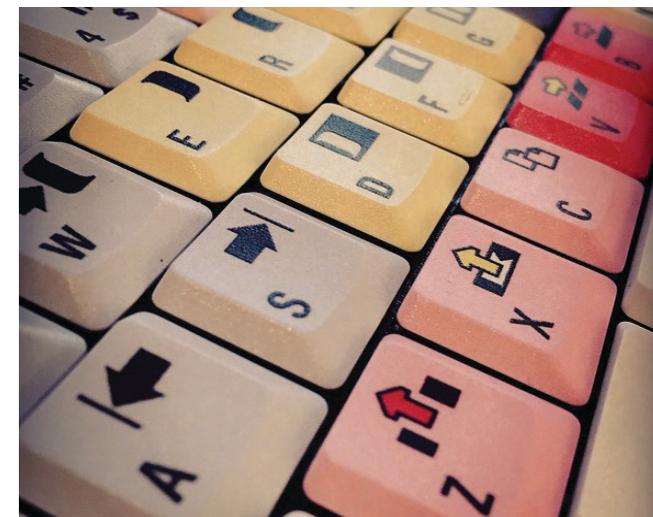
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Cut. Splice. Dissolve. To most people, these are just words. To an editor, those words are the necessary terminology to craft a story. A common ideology of the work of an editor is that we simply "cut out the bad stuff." This notion is false, as the work of an editor transcends over many levels and dynamics of storytelling. The work of an editor begins after the cameras have stopped rolling, the set is broken down, and the talent has moved on to the next project. Editing is far from a glamorous position. Often, rooms are dark and cramped with only the hum of the equipment and the clicks of the keyboard as accompaniment. There are often hours upon hours of footage to organize and screen. Customarily, a script will be provided as a guideline, but for a reality-style show, there is often only a rundown of the day's events. It is up to the producer and the team of editors to craft the best story that can be told using interviews, sound-ups, and field footage. Adding music and graphics further enhances any piece, allowing story arcs, tension, and fun to transpire.



The Kuleshov Effect, ca. 1918, Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov demonstrated how a sequence of shots can manipulate the emotions of an audience. Actor Ivan Mosjoukine's same steady expression was intercut with a bowl of soup, an old woman in a casket, and a young woman. Mosjoukine was then praised on his portrayal of realistic pains of hunger, grief for a loss, and desire for a young woman, depending on the sequence of shots.



"I still recall how my mind was blown when I realized not only could I combine my love of music and storytelling into a career, but I would be able to push a lot of colorful buttons as well!"

The technique of editing wasn't discovered until a few years after motion pictures were invented. The first films were composed using a single lock-off shot. Movies were as long as a roll of film in a camera, which was usually minutes. Soon, filmmakers began to realize that multiple scenes could be shot to create a sense of continuity. Editing was still done "in camera," until filmmakers realized they could literally cut pieces of film and splice them back together to create context and manipulate emotions. The famous Kuleshov experiment involved a Russian filmmaker using old footage of an actor's face. The actor held the same steady expression, but when the footage of the actor was intercut with a bowl of soup, a young woman, or an old woman in a casket, the audience praised the actor on his realistic pains of hunger, desire for the young woman, and grief for a loss, depending on the sequence of shots. Early editor positions were held by women, as men dominated the "creative" positions in filmmaking. Editing was considered time-consuming, difficult, intricate, and far from creative. Men shunned this position, but women saw the editor position as an opportunity to break into filmmaking.

Early editors were most often uncredited, but as filmmaking began to grow and develop, women continued to excel as editors. Some of the most loved and praised films have been edited by women; *The Birth of a Nation*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Raging Bull*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Pulp Fiction*, and the foundation for this exhibition, *The Wizard of Oz*.

The allure of editing happened suddenly for me. I had always been drawn towards the arts, be it fine arts or storytelling or performing arts, but never realized behind-the-scenes work was even an option until I happened upon a brochure at my high school's guidance office advertising the Art Institute of Philadelphia. As I began the program, I was introduced to the inner workings of film and television, but then.... editing came into the picture. Resembling the moment when you realize you found "the one," a choir of angels descended the heavens and my soul cried for joy. I still recall how my mind was blown when I realized not only could I combine my love of music and storytelling into a career, but I would be able to push a lot of colorful buttons as well! "I want to do THAT," I insisted.

Every editor brings a unique vision to each individual film or a television program. Each possess certain strengths and skills that ultimately help build a story. Some have amazing timing and an extraordinary ear for music. Others are passionate storytellers and retain unprecedented comedic flair. Many have a knack for special effects and transitions. *The Wonderful Wizards of Post* is an attempt to showcase these variations in styles of editing. All of the editors were given very little direction for their contributions, other than a running time of two minutes. This encourages creativity, which is the best direction to give an editor. The decision to use *The Wizard of Oz* as the source footage was due to the cultural familiarity and nostalgic attraction of the movie. Most likely, we all have some sort of emotional connection to *The Wizard of Oz* and are familiar with Dorothy and



"Inside the Cyclone" The music shifts to a dangerous tone with a slight, dreamy sound effect, indicating Dorothy is hurt, but unaware as her dream takes over.

Toto's adventure. Using a film that is so familiar to the public will allow viewers of this exhibition to have a greater insight into the art of editing.



"If I Only Had a Brain" Sometimes an excellent performance doesn't make the final cut due to time or story restraints. The Scarecrow's extended dance scene was set to happen in the middle of "If I Only Had a Brain." The dance showcased Ray Bolger's flexibility and rubbery dance style.

A single track of music can immediately alter the mood of a piece. A single expression can cause the audience to react emotionally, whether positively or negatively. Adding a pause in dialogue can create a moment of tension. These techniques, when implemented correctly, are unnoticeable to the average viewer, but, for an editor, are the tools of the trade and the canvas to the art form. Let's look at the scene "Inside the Cyclone." Dorothy has just run home, worried for the fate of her Auntie Em. There is no music, only the roar of the wind from the cyclone. Dorothy is then hit by an exploding window and falls onto her bed. The music shifts to a dangerous tone with a slight, dreamy sound effect, indicating Dorothy is hurt, but unaware as her dream takes over. The music then turns a bit quirky as we realize Dorothy's house is flying inside the cyclone (how ridiculous!). Chickens and cows! Auntie Em knitting! Then...the music turns a bit sinister as we see the mean ole Miss Gulch. Then...a shift to a darker, frightening track as Miss Gulch transforms into a flying witch, complete with her villainous laugh. The music speeds up as the house twists faster and faster inside the cyclone, then shifts to danger again as Dorothy screams and is thrown around the room, holding onto Toto for dear life. The music then builds to a final crescendo as the house begins to fall to the ground. Finally, a sudden cut to silence as the house slams into the ground.

Sometimes the talent delivers an amazing performance, but that particular piece of information or emotion does not evolve the story or may propel the story in a direction that isn't appropriate for the audience. After Dorothy is captured by the Wicked Witch, she was to sing a reprise of "Over the Rainbow." Though the performance was emotional and perfectly captured Dorothy's feeling of abandonment and homesickness, it was likely too sorrowful for the intended audience of children. Another example of an excellent performance that didn't make the final cut was The Scarecrow's extended dance scene. Set to happen in the middle of "If I Only Had a Brain," the dance showcased Ray Bolger's flexibility and rubbery dance style. However, not only did it fail to move the story forward, but it ended up making the film too long. Thus, it was cut.

With extraordinary amounts of footage and time limits on lengths of films and television shows, hard decision have to be made. *The Wizard of Oz* had a total of five directors, resulting in a mountain of footage that was unusable due to makeup, costume, and actor changes. Once the costumes and actors had been finalized, there were still several scenes that never made it to the final picture. "The Jitterbug" scene is a prime example of how a scene can distract from a storyline. This show-stopping song and dance was to take place after Dorothy and her friends left the colorful Emerald City and entered the dark, shadowy Haunted Forest to hunt for the Wicked Witch. Before the Wicked Witch sent her Flying Monkeys, she sent in the warm-up act, a colorful, animated bug called a Jitterbug. When the Jitterbug bites,



"Haunted Forest" The show-stopping "Jitterbug" song and dance was to take place after Dorothy and her friends left the colorful Emerald City and entered the dark, shadowy, haunted forest to hunt for the Wicked Witch.



"Toto's Escape" After Dorothy is captured by the Wicked Witch, she was to sing a reprise of "Over the Rainbow." Though the performance was emotional and perfectly captured Dorothy's feeling of abandonment and homesickness, it was likely too sorrowful for the intended audience of children.

the recipient breaks into an uncontrollable dance. Having Dorothy and her friends break into an upbeat dance tune definitely seemed misplaced and ridiculous in such a gloomy scene where the characters were petrified of the unknown.

The world of editing is fast-paced and grueling. In its glory, it requires creativity, quick thinking, perfect timing, rhythm, and excellent problem-solving skills. In its darkness, it requires late nights and executives telling you "we're going in a different direction" and "can you make these changes before tomorrow?" Editing doesn't happen overnight. It takes months to craft the perfect vision. Editors pour their heart and soul into a piece, quite well aware of the fact that their voice is not the final say due to the fact that picture, sound, and story can change at a moment's notice. Despite the challenges and disappointments and constant alterations, the edit bay is where I feel most at home. It's where I can weave a story, experiment, and push myself creatively.

Oh, Auntie Em...There's no place like the edit.

Amanda Durett Cercone © 2017

The Wizard of Oz. Motion Picture. Directed by Victor Fleming, George Cukor, Mervyn LeRoy, Norman Taurog, and King Vidor. Edited by Blanche Sewell. Starring: Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley, Billie Burke, Margaret Hamilton, Charley Grapewin, Pat Walshe, Clare Blandick, Terry, and The Munchkins. USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), 1939.