

The 'Art of Editing': Creative Practice and Pedagogy

By Jillian Holt

Submitted in fulfillment for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy, Swinburne University of Technology, 2015

Abstract

The topic of my doctorate studies, *The 'Art of Editing': creative practice and pedagogy*, has been undertaken as practice-led/practice-based research, and leads to new insights into creativity in editing and the teaching of editing practice. The artifact is designed as an educational resource, structured around a series of interviews with prominent Australian screen editors who discuss the creative attributes of editing in reference to their practice, and in terms of defining editing as a craft or an *art*. The exegesis supports the artifact in reflecting on my practice as a film editor, and also opens up a scholarly debate on theoretical, historical and contemporary notions of the creative editing practice through investigating integrated theory and praxis pedagogy, contemporary teaching practice and strategies including studio-based learning and visual-aided learning in teaching creativity.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to acknowledge my primary supervisor Dr Josie Arnold and sincerely thank her for her ongoing academic support, encouragement and positive affirmation for my project throughout the tenure of my doctoral studies. I would also like to acknowledge my secondary supervisor Dr Jason Bainbridge, and scholarly film-editing advisor Dr Karen Pearlman, for their support and in acknowledging my topic as significant in terms of current industry practice and the pedagogy of editing practice.

I would like to thank my academic editors Joan Howard and Carol Goudie for casting a discerning eye over my exegesis.

In reference to the production of the artifact, I would like to thank the cinematographers Edward Goldner and Andrew Hickinbotham for recording the interviews, designer Sarah Davies for the DVD cover, and editor Sioux Currie for DVD authoring.

Most importantly I would like to acknowledge and thank the editors I interviewed for the artifact – Mark Atkin, Jason Ballantine, Jill Bilcock, Dany Cooper, Luke Doolan, Jack Hutchings, Ken Sallows – who were so generous in offering me their time, enthusiasm for the project, and their illustrious knowledge and experience in speaking so passionately about their practice and all things related to creativity in editing.

Finally I would like to thank my family for all their support throughout my years of study and most notably my sons Morgan and Sacha for their patience and companionship.

Declaration by Candidate

I declare that the content for examinable outcome submitted as a PhD by artifact and dissertation contains: no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome; to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome; where the work is based on joint research or publications, discloses the relative contributions of the respective workers or authors.

The content of the exegesis was proof-read by professional editors Joan Howard and Carol Goudie. The work undertaken was in accordance with Current Australian Standards for Editing Practice and restricted to Standard D (Language and Illustrations) and Standard E (Completeness and Consistency). No advice was given on Standard C (Substance and Structure).

Signed:

Dated:

Table of Contents

Contents

Section 1: An introduction to the project and the development of the artifact.....	1
The Artifact	1
Background for the project	2
The production of the artifact.....	6
Creative challenges in shooting and editing the interviews.....	7
The Exegesis.....	14
In Summary	16
Section 2: Practice-Led/ Based Research: a reflection on practice based learning, practice theory and intuition	17
What Practice Led/ Based Research it offers me as a practitioner/ researcher?.....	18
Autoethnography and self as research.....	20
Making a research film	22
Reflective practice, practice theory and intuition	24
Intuition in editing	26
In Summary: a reflection on practice-based learning and teaching creativity.....	30
Section 3: The Art of Editing	31
Editing - the hidden art	31
A Brief History of Editing	33
Montage and mis-en-scene	40
The rise of the auteur and the impact on filmmaking today.....	42
Film editing today	44
How editors view their work in terms of art or craft	46
In summary: good film, good editing	50
Section 4: Looking at film editing through the prism of film theory.....	51
Where does editing sit as a 'concept' in terms of film theory?	52
There is no one predominant film theory	54

Where does film theory sit in terms of filmic investigation and analysis in practice-based studies?	57
What insights did the early film theorist-practitioners bring to academic discourse as relevant to the practice of editing today?.....	60
Film Theory opens up the scholarly discussion on filmic investigation and representation of space, time, vision and meaning in cinematic text.	62
In summary: investigating editing through the prism of film theory	67
Section 5: Insights into teaching creative editing practice	71
Creativity, can it be taught?	74
How editors learn their craft	79
Film schools are not a new concept	82
The new film school.....	86
Film schools in Australia.....	87
In Summary: the challenge of teaching creative editing.....	88
Section 6: The nexus of theory and practice in teaching creativity in editing.....	91
The nexus of theory and practice	91
Studio-based learning and collaboration in creativity	93
Visual Aided Learning	96
In Summary: teaching creativity in editing	99
Section 7: In conclusion - The Art of Editing: creative practice and pedagogy	100
References / Bibliography.....	104
Appendices	110
Interview 1 – Ken Sallows	110
Interview 2 – Mark Atkin	121
Interview 3 – Dany Cooper.....	137
Interview 4 – Luke Doolan.....	145
Interview 5 – Jack Hutchings.....	157
Interview 6 – Jill Bilcock	174
Interview 7 – Jason Ballantine.....	189

Section 1: An introduction to the project and the development of the artifact

Although much has been written on the history of film, there is a significant gap in the knowledge of the practice of editing as “a seminal factor in the craft of filmmaking and the evolution of film as an art form” (Dancyger 2011, p. xvii). As an educator and film practitioner, I have elected to frame my PhD as practice-led/practice-based research, investigating ‘the art of editing’ and best practice in teaching creativity in editing through the production of the artifact and the supporting exegesis.

The artifact has an educational focus, delivering first-hand insights into the creative practice of editing from a series of interviews with prominent Australian screen editors. The interviews focus on the key themes of my research topic: the editor as co-creator of a film; an investigation of editing terminologies – such as intuition, rhythm and pacing – and their contribution to creative outcomes; storytelling and stylistic conventions in editing; and the impact of digital technology on editing processes and style.

This exegesis reflects on my practice as an editor and reviews the process of making the artifact, examines the pedagogy of teaching creative editing practice, and investigates historical, theoretical and practical attributes of editing practice that will lead to further debate and discussion, enhancing knowledge in new and significant ways.

The artifact

As a film practitioner, I see my artifact as a creative work in its own right that contributes to new knowledge, as acquired through the content of the interviews reflecting on the ‘art of editing’. As an educational resource, it will also offer new insights into teaching the creative practice of editing.

Through an emerging network of editors’ guilds, forums and online resources, editors have become more vocal in speaking about their work. In an introduction to the Asia-Pacific Symposium on Creative Post-Production, *Revealing the Hidden Art*, Roger Crittenden said: “Until recently it has been extremely unusual for editors and others involved in post-production to meet to celebrate their craft and share experiences, except in the closed world of their own society or craft organization” (Crittenden 2012). My artifact contributes to this debate by investigating the art of editing through a series of interviews with prominent Australian screen editors. These interviews are the

primary source of my data collection, and in developing the artifact as an educational resource I intend to open up the conversation on editing to a wider audience, demystify the practice and celebrate the role of the editor as a key creative in filmmaking practice.

My approach to conducting the interviews was to scope a cross-section of professional editors currently working in the film industry, and make my selection according to age, experience and gender. Further to this and in preparation for the interviews, I developed a series of key themes that address the research topic, which I then sent to the editors to ascertain their interest and aptitude to participate in the research investigation. I also sent them some reading material around the key themes of the research topic in the form of a series of quotes I had gathered from editors' anthologies, journals and online resources, to assist them in formulating their own opinions and responses; this would allow me to go straight into the interviews without too much preamble.

Background to the project

Australia has a rich history in film production and has produced a large number of internationally acclaimed film practitioners, including editors. Although many of these editors are known within the film community, very few are recognised or acknowledged in the same way other film creatives, such as directors and cinematographers, are. As has been the case throughout the history of film, editors have had little opportunity to elaborate on their craft, or on what may be acknowledged as the 'art of editing'. The editor's work is subsumed within the filmmaking process and often not visible as a major contributor to the creative outcome of a film:

We all know that it is expressive, but it is more difficult, uncomfortable even, to explain why and how. The expressiveness of lighting, camera movements, colour and sound and so forth have been explored to a large extent. Editing is far more elusive (Orpen 2003, p. 3).

Although there are a number of books that expand on the history, theory and practice of editing, there are few that analyse the more expressive elements of film editing technique. In *Film Art – An Introduction to Film*, film theorist and historian David Bordwell examines the dimensions of film editing and acknowledges, "We can see why editing has exercised such an enormous fascination for film aesthetics, for as a technique, it is very powerful", and pays tribute to "the role of editing within an entire film's stylistic system" (Bordwell & Thompson 2010, p. 223). Bordwell goes on to dissect editing practice by example, examining the dominant styles of editing and

phenomena such as rhythmic, graphic and spatial relations of the cut. Although from a technical perspective this may be of interest, it offers little insight into the creative decisions behind the practice. As Don Fairservice explains: “A work that sets out to explore the history, theory and practice of editing must also be prepared to explain how current practice accommodates to those conventional editing forms that have been historically determined” (2001, p. 4).

In contrast, Roger Crittenden’s insights into the practice of editing are derived from the perspective of a film practitioner/film historian, as is evident in his appreciation of the editor’s role as a key creative in the production of a film:

The film that emerges from the cutting room has never existed before, neither in someone’s head nor on paper. It is only through the editing process that the material is translated into a form that can communicate its narrative and meaning to the audience. (Crittenden 1995, p. 83)

The concept of interviewing the editor is a recent one and in fact up until the 1960s “editors were seldom invited to speak about their role and their art” (Orpen 2003, p. 11). To some degree this was a political decision made so as to not deflect the creative accolades from the director, but it was also in response to the historical context that the editor was considered more a technician than a creative collaborator. In his autobiographical book *When the Shooting Stops ... The Cutting Begins*, American editor Ralph Rosenblum observes the lack of interest on the part of directors in promoting the work of the editor: “Although few directors I worked with were dramatically unpleasant, even fewer demonstrated a desire or willingness to make the best of their collaborator’s talents” (Rosenblum & Karen 1979, p. 233).

In the Hollywood studio system editors were considered to work ‘behind the scenes’, assigned to the studio ‘back lots’ which was in many ways a clear demarcation of their status. As a young East Coast editor Rosenblum dreamed of working in Hollywood, but later reflected on how shocked he was the first time he saw the working conditions of the editors in what he called “the factory atmosphere in Hollywood” (Rosenblum & Karen 1979, p.190). On his first tour of Fox Studios in 1959 he observed: “The barren corridors were lined with twenty or thirty cubicles, small windowless rooms, almost like cell blocks ... and in the eyes and smile of the cutters, the men who had made it to the top of my profession, I saw fear and servility” (Rosenblum & Karen 1979, p.137).

Richard Crittenden acknowledged Rosenblum as a precursor in being outspoken about the editor’s role: “Rosenblum claimed that he had saved a number of films in the

cutting room. He is definitely the exception that proves the rule since most editors realise that you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear: poor rushes might be improved but never turned into a masterpiece" (Crittenden 2012). The 'Hollywood factory' analogy may be extreme, but it only added to the anonymity of the editor and the mystique that surrounded their work. This was compounded by the tendency "for editors to be modest people disinclined to take too much credit for their work" (Crittenden 2012). It goes without saying that without editing there would be no continuity of story or structure; in fact there would be no film as we know it today. Editor Robert Dalva defines the editor's role as a "story mover" (Dalva, cited in Gross 2009, p. 16), but moving story generally entails not bringing attention to the edit. As Crittenden observes, "What is visible and audible in the finished product necessarily obscures the work done to reach that point" (2008, p. 87). In her book, *Film Editing – The Art of the Expressive*, Valerie Orpen concedes that this sense of ambiguity in terms of the editor's contribution is an "obstacle for the film scholar":

[it is a] paradox that many effective cuts are effective precisely *because* they are not noticeable. Moreover, we are faced with the problem of limited knowledge: we do not know the extent of the coverage, namely the material that was shot, and what the editor discarded. Did the editing 'save' the film or was there minimal coverage which limited the editor's choices? (Orpen 2003, p.4).

Another reason for the editor's obscurity is that their contribution is most often subsumed by other key creatives in the filmmaking process, namely the director and cinematographer, who lay claim to the final look of the film. However, during the postproduction stage the importance of the editor–director relationship is vital to the success of the film: "The director is exposed in the cutting room ... hence the depth of the relationship" (Dalva, cited in Gross 2009, p. 21). Once the film is finished the editor generally takes a step back: "Ambition, however, is usually rendered meaningless for a film editor when his or her work on a film is heading towards completion, and other people's ambitions begin to enter into the equation" (Gross 2009, p.16).

Although in recent years there has been a much greater focus on the editor and their contribution to film through the emergence of industry guilds, film awards and online exposure, there is still a degree of anonymity as to exactly *what editors do* in terms of their creative process. Orpen observed that the literature on editing "can be divided into three categories: textbooks or general studies on film, either solely on editing or books with a section on editing; editors' handbooks; and interviews with editors" (2003, p.10). In reviewing the more expressive aspects of editing she comments, "Very often, critical

scholarship on individual films can prove more useful than works on editing in general” (2003, p.10).

Although the recent proliferation of anthologies of interviews with editors and personal anecdotes written by editors themselves have become popular reading among the film fraternity, the contribution of the editor is by and large still an unknown quantity to a film audience: “Of all the various craft skills that come together for the purpose of making a film, the work of the film editor is generally the least-well understood” (Fairservice 2001, p. 4). Editor and academic Karen Pearlman acknowledged the creative contribution of editing in saying, “Editing is the art aspect of cinema” (Pearlman 2011). Pearlman believes that while the cuts may not be visible, the movement of images and sound that go into making the story and emotional journey of the film are “all editing”. She argues that the concept that editing is an invisible art is not true: “when you’re seeing a good film, you’re seeing good editing” (Pearlman 2011).

Even today editors are more often identified as ‘collaborators’ with directors than known in their own right. In a tribute to editor Sally Menke at the LA EditFest 2011, writer and film historian Bobbie O’Steen made reference to Quentin Tarantino and how outspoken he had been in his praise for Menke: “they had an amazing collaboration. And the thing that I liked about just observing it, I really liked how vocal Quentin was about it, and how much he let people know how important her role was” (O’Steen 2011). It is unusual for a director to wax lyrical in praise of their editor, even though a director–editor relationship spans the career of many well known directors, such as Quentin Tarantino or Martin Scorsese.

In terms of films on the topic of editing, with the exception of the American production *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (2004), which expounds on the history of editing and on the job of the editor, there is no anthology of interviews with screen editors that deals specifically with the ‘art of editing’. Most notably, there is no film anthology of Australian screen editors talking about their work, even though many are internationally acclaimed practitioners with major film credits and awards to their names. My artifact fills this gap as both a film archive and an educational resource.

As a lecturer in editing and postproduction, it has always been a challenge to know how to teach creativity in editing. I believe the best way is by example, a combination of drawing from my own experience as an editor, reviewing other editors’ techniques, and in creating a supportive, studio-based environment for students to consult and collaborate in editing their films. The physical application of editing shots together is but a small component of what is a very complex process. As much as the choice of where

to cut and how to manipulate the material may be deemed 'intuitive', much of that intuition is learnt through experience. As editor and educator Norman Hollyn, who has strong views on training his students to 'think' like an editor, puts it:

I firmly believe that you can teach editing, but that (as a student) you can't really *learn* it unless you're predisposed to it...But, having said that, I find that what you *can* teach (aside from the technology, which really isn't even worth talking much about – it's just a bunch of tools to get your creative work done) is how to *think* like an editor: how to approach a written scene, or a ton of footage, and figure out how best to tell the story that the film wants to tell" (Hollyn, cited in Wood 2007).

David Mamet concurs on the importance of storytelling in teaching editing: "What should film schools teach? An understanding of the technique of juxtaposition of uninflected images to create in the mind of the viewer the progression of the story" (1991, p. 5).

In my experience in teaching editing, there is limited opportunity to engage directly with professional editors in the classroom/studio-based environment other than inviting the occasional guest lecturer to present, or by attending industry forums. For this reason, and in reference to the production of my artifact, I have chosen to film a series of interviews with a select group of Australian screen editors, which will facilitate my teaching practice by bringing their knowledge into the learning environment. I chose to present the artifact in an experiential learning environment so that the students have the opportunity to gain new insights into editing practice, to learn by example, and then to apply those concepts in finding their own creative solutions in editing their films.

The production of the artifact

As previously stated, integral to my practice-led/practice-based research was the production of the artifact itself, designed around a series of seven interviews with leading Australian screen editors. As such, the first challenge was to come up with a list of editors who would potentially make a valuable contribution to my research study. In addressing the key themes of my topic, I had to determine the demographic of the interviewees in terms of age, work history and areas of expertise, as well as their ability to respond to the questions effectively on camera. In terms of researching the appropriate candidates, I reviewed interviews with Australian screen editors via editors' forums, websites and podcasts, film magazines and journals, and sought recommendations from editing colleagues, including my PhD advisor, Dr Karen

Pearlman. Once a short-list was determined, I then approached the editors via email giving them a brief overview of the study, and requesting an interview.

In what I took to be positive affirmation of my research study, all seven editors who I approached to participate in my research study agreed to be interviewed. Once confirmed, I took on the role of producer in scheduling and budgeting for the interviews. I applied for funding to cover costs such as employing a cameraman, travel (local and interstate), and the purchase of digital drives for backup and editing purposes. Given the editors are all currently working in industry, and the fact I had to negotiate shooting dates between Melbourne and Sydney, availability was always going to be an issue, consequently extending the production over a period of eighteen months. However, once dates and locations were confirmed with each of the editors, recording the interviews was reasonably straightforward. The benefit of having a cameraman meant I could concentrate on the interview process itself, by engaging directly with the editors in asking questions and initiating responses in line with the key themes of the research topic.

After the filming was complete, I transferred all digital media files to external hard-drives for the purpose of editing, archiving and backing up. In terms of editing the footage, I ingested the interview material into the digital editing program Final Cut Pro, and then assembled each interview into a timeline. In the first iteration of the edit, the interviews are presented in full, intercut with the key themes/questions as title cards. This served the purpose of breaking the interviews up into viewable screen grabs, which made it easy to revisit the material in editing the artifact. The interviews were then transcribed in full for the purpose of data collection, and to assist with the process of scripting the content for the next stage of the edit.

In the final iteration, the interviews were intercut around the key themes of the topic, with cutaway footage of the editor's work in reference to their responses, and to elaborate on technique. Finally, the themed interview segments were grouped into 20–30 minute sequences to be viewed via an interactive DVD menu or potentially online.

Creative challenges in shooting and editing the interviews

The most challenging aspect of shooting the interviews was to prepare a comprehensive list of questions that would address the key themes of my research topic and at the same time initiate a discussion with the editors. I was also aware that the editors I chose to interview are all highly respected practitioners within the film industry, and as such I wanted to be confident in my knowledge and preparation in

respect of their personal histories, and that the line of questioning would be clear and concise.

In reference to academic discourse on the subject of creativity and whether it can be taught, discussion around creative practice in editing is central to my line of questioning in the interviews. From a theoretical perspective, creativity can be “associated with intuition, inspiration, imagination, ingenuity and insight” (Byron 2007), which has direct synergies with editing practice. Although descriptors such as ‘intuition’ are identified with creativity in editing, this doesn’t make it easier to de-mystify the more intangible aspects of the editing process:

Few outsiders to the film industry can appreciate how difficult it can be to properly express ideas through professional film editing; there is a multitude of personal, interpersonal, and artistic challenges to be considered ... there could easily be lingering doubt concerning the influences that lay behind the film’s editing, as well as how a paying audience or film critic might potentially respond (Gross 2009, p.10).

The interviews also address the advent of digital technology in the early 1990s, which irrevocably changed the practice of editing, as well as audience expectation in terms of stylistic and emotional impact. Digital technology has given the editor greater creative freedom to experiment with the storytelling process and the medium in general, particularly in the area of special effects and compositing: “More than ever, films are *made* in postproduction: the craft and techniques of cutting film have never been more appreciated in the context of filmmaking as a whole” (Cohen 2004, p. 106). Digital production also signaled a dramatic increase in shooting ratios and consequently the number of shots in a film: “Today’s typical Hollywood film contains between 1000 and 2000 shots; an action-based movie can have 3000 or more. This fact alone suggests that editing strongly shapes the viewers’ experiences, even if they aren’t aware of it” (Bordwell 2010, p. 223).

As well addressing the more elusive aspects of creativity in editing, I am also aware of the difficulty for editors to communicate their practice in terms of how and why they make the editorial decisions: “I think editors don’t get a lot written about them because it’s not easy to explain what we do. It’s what we feel. An instinct” (Coates, cited in Crittenden 1995, p. 154). For this reason, prior to conducting the interviews I sent the editors a list of the key themes of my research topic, together with a series of quotes sourced from editors’ anthologies, including Gabriella Oldham’s *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* (1992) and Richard Crittenden’s *Finecuts: The Art of*

European Film Editing (2006), as well as film publications, online interviews and blogs. In doing so, I hoped to incite each editor's personal responses to the topic and also invite them to elaborate on any other areas related to their practice as relevant to the discussion. All the editors responded in a very positive way to this process. As much as they enjoyed the reading material, I believe it made them more relaxed about participating in the interviews by giving them time to consider the topic and start formulating their own opinions. In addition and prior to recording the interviews, I reviewed the line of questioning as appropriate to each of the editors in reference to their backgrounds and experience.

On a personal level, I found the job of conducting the interviews quite challenging. There were two major concerns: firstly, that I would have time to cover the list of questions (as scripted) and at the same time be open to responding to any points raised during the course of the interview; and secondly, to leave enough room for the interviewees to improvise without deviating too much from the question at hand. Although it is desirable to allow for some flexibility, the interviewer must be mindful of sticking to the topic and eliciting concise answers within the limited time frame available for recording the interview. Furthermore, when it comes to the edit, economy of scale is always preferable. Long uninterrupted dialogue sequences are difficult to cut and to maintain a level of focus, whereby losing the thread of the story and subsequently the attention of the audience.

There is also the question of ethics in reference to 'narrative-based' research enquiry. The purpose of recording interviews with Australian screen editors was to "identify the ways in which creative people do their studio practicum in an industry setting", and with the educational directive to "ascertain how learning settings for studio practice might be established to meet both academic and industry criteria" (Arnold 2011, p. 14). In reference to the interviewees' editing processes, I have specifically attempted to unpack "how creativity works in practice" (Edmonds, cited in Arnold 2011, p. 14). In terms of ethics, I was aware that as the author/interviewer, how I chose to present the narrative would impact on interpretation. Robin Mello notes that with narrative enquiry, whilst the interviewee tells their story, "the researcher is currently situated as the author of the culture" (2002, p. 232). In presenting the key themes of the research topic to the editors prior to the interviews, I hoped to establish "frameworks that help ground final conclusions within the broader narrative environment and context" (Mello 2002, p. 231). My intention was not to inform the enquiry but to incite new knowledge and concepts on the 'art of editing' through "interpreting and story-telling personal experience" (Mello 2002, p. 232):

Narrative enquiry acts to draw reality and representation together, showing the text always to be made of multiple individual stories. The researcher is no longer 'other', but looks at how the researcher can use these data both reflectively *and* analytically (Mello 2002, p. 233).

This line of enquiry is pertinent to my role as the researcher/practitioner-academic in that my knowledge is integral to eliciting 'narrative as data' that is at once factual but also true to the interviewee's life/work experience. Furthermore, in electing to intercut the interviews around the key themes of my research enquiry, I am all too aware not to construct narratives that do not comply with the interviewee's intention, but at the same time acknowledge the need to construct a story. Mello infers that as researchers we 'collocate' data with the intention to 'carefully place the narratives and perspectives of others alongside our own':

We can accomplish this, or at least attempt it, through connecting and collocating data. In doing so, the researcher becomes the storyteller, a bridge-builder working to link the use and production of stories in the field together with the analytical discourse of research literature (Mello 2002, p. 241).

As established in the interviews, the job of the editor is as 'storyteller' in that editing is about constructing narratives through the manipulation of the material: "It's the editing process. As soon as you make a cut, it's an interpretation" (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011). My artifact presents 'narrative as data', and although the content is broken down into 'data bites' that are then "reorganized according to perceived connections or overarching themes" (Mello 2002, p. 235), I was aware of my ethical responsibility to minimise the risk of misinterpretation or misappropriation, without detracting from delivery of content and engagement.

The style of filming was something that also needed to be discussed with the editors prior to recording the interviews. I chose not to record the questions or have myself as the 'interviewer' on camera as I wanted to focus on the editors themselves. This meant I often had to stop the interviewee mid-sentence and ask them to frame the question within their response. However, the benefit of this approach was that it delivered concise statements, which assisted in the editing process of cutting from one response to another around the key themes of the research topic. There was also the consideration for the interviewer (myself) to not respond 'on camera' or engage in conversation and talk over the interviewees. This was for the purpose of recording 'clean dialogue tracks' and the ability to intercut the responses without any extraneous dialogue.

The creative challenge in editing the artifact was how best to present the seven interviews that would do justice to the content of the material but at the same time address the key themes of my research enquiry. The options were to either profile each of the seven editors independently responding to the interview questions, or to intercut the editors' interviews around the key themes of the research topic. I decided to go with the latter as I believe intercutting the interviews presents a more comprehensive and objective response to each of the major themes, whereby the editors appear to 'talk to each other' in their shared or differing responses to the questions. Also, as an editor, intercutting the content was a personal challenge to 'practise what I preach' in terms of scripting and editing the interviews into a viewable format that is both engaging and delivers as an educational resource in the context of teaching editing practice.

The process in writing postproduction scripts was to review the transcripts and find the best material in terms of how each editor responded to the key themes of the research enquiry, and then develop the script in a way that would creatively link one comment to another and, at the same time, deliver on the quality of information. The first stage of editing the artifact, in moving from the postproduction scripts to a first assembly of each section, was a time-consuming process, as all first-cuts are. However, the job of sourcing the various interview grabs for each of the key themes/questions, accessing for quality of delivery and then intercutting with the other responses, was ultimately a rewarding experience as I could see the potential in the material as it came together. This was also evident at the scripting stage, but in revisiting the footage and cutting the clips together, the content came to life and the editors' stories started to unfold.

In the second cut, I revised the interview segments in terms of content and sequencing. Some material was lost because of quality of delivery, repetition or cutting for time, and on other occasions I had to source new material. At this stage I also started adding cutaway film footage to illustrate editing concepts and techniques. For the purpose of editing, I sourced the film clips from whatever means possible to gauge exactly what film footage/durations I required before proceeding to the next step of seeking clearances and broadcast quality content. Given the artifact is designed as an educational resource, I am not required to seek clearances for third-party content (film clips) to screen in class. However, once the artifact enters the public domain in terms of library acquisition and possible online distribution, I will need to submit signed clearances from filmmakers/producers for use of all third-party film footage.

The film clips I have used in the artifact not only used to illustrate the editors' responses, but are also an important addition to the 'Backgrounds' section to identify the editors in reference to their work. It is interesting to note that the intended audience will more readily identify the films these editors have cut and possibly the directors, than they will the editors themselves, who are generally unknown.

As an editor, the prospect of intercutting seven interviews was a daunting task. Even with the assistance of transcripts, keeping track of that amount of dialogue is challenging, not only in selecting the most appropriate material for each theme, but in intercutting the various responses to get the best out of the material. As Ken Sallows said: "The weird thing about editing is that there is a huge librarian aspect to it, which is actually learning the footage and putting it in your head" (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011). Through their practice, editors train themselves in this aspect of 'instant recall', particularly useful in documentary editing, which is generally unscripted and can run into hundreds of hours of footage. In this case, taking time to immerse myself in the footage meant I could access interview clips from memory, which greatly assisted the editing process, and in doing so determine how to best structure the film.

On reflection, it has been an interesting experience editing interviews with editors, as I find myself taking 'a leaf out of their book' in manipulating content and performance to achieve best possible outcomes. Furthermore, in the process of fine-cutting the dialogue I made the creative decision to use jump-cuts to compress the content and to cut out extraneous material, such as bumbles and repetition. In doing so, I tried to make these cuts as smooth as possible so as not to draw attention to the edit. I also decided not to overlay the jump-cuts with cutaway material because I wanted to keep the focus on the content of the interviews, and then use the film footage to best effect in illustrating the editors' responses to the questions.

In the final cut of the artifact I continued to refine and re-order the interview material for quality of information and story. I was also challenged by how long the cutaway film clips should run, but at the same time do justice to the footage. However, what came as a revelation was the quality of the film clips in showcasing Australian content. As an educational resource, this in itself is positive affirmation not only of the editors' work, but also in promoting Australian film to a student audience. The cutaway footage ranges from big budget feature films to independent features, short films, television drama and commercials. Again, this endorses the breadth of editing technique and style as relevant to the contribution of the editor to filmmaking.

The final task was to break down the themed interview segments into approximately 20–30 minute blocks, which would be suitable for a classroom delivery. I assessed the content in reference to the key themes, and blocked together sections that had synchronicity in moving from one topic to the next. As a result there are seven segments that can be viewed in no particular order, but according to interest of the viewer or the focus of the editing class.

As an educational resource, the aim of the project is not only to expand the students' insights into the 'art of editing', but also to inspire them to construct creative solutions in finding their films through the edit. By integrating these concepts with regular consultations, the students will identify the impact of story, structure and performance in finding the emotional arc of their films. Obviously a student's technical proficiency with cutting picture and sound comes into play, but identifying the subtle influence of timing and precision in the storytelling process is something that can only be identified through engaging in the editing process itself. In the same way, Norman Hollyn supports his students in 'finding story' through the edit: "That's the core of what we're doing at USC, helping people to find ways to tell the stories that they're burning to tell. Can we help them to see how thinking like an editor can do that for them? You bet. I've seen it time and time again" (Wood 2007).

In its final iteration the artifact is a mix of practical insights and personal anecdotes on the art of editing intercut with samples of the editors' work. The key themes embrace the 'art of editing' with reference to the 'creative challenge of editing', the editor as 'co-creator of the film', and the impact of digital editing on current practice and style with a focus on 'visible editing' and the future of editing as prevalent to the changing expectations of the screen industries.

In terms of delivery, I intend to screen the various sections of the artifact in a studio-based learning environment, inciting discussions on the theory and practice of editing with a focus on practical applications. As an educational resource, the artifact functions as a 'visual teaching aid' by extending the learning beyond the confines of the teaching/studio environment to a broader industry-based learning experience and in doing so it will "encourage students to think, understand the specific subject matter and construct their own knowledge with regards to the different perspectives and representations of the content in a meaningful way" (Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 171). Apart from unpacking creative editing processes, the fundamental purpose of the artifact is to get inside the editors' heads – to find out what motivates and inspires them to achieve best possible outcomes for the films they work on and, at the same time,

sustain a passion for their work. In response, this will incite the students to reflect on their own practice: “the learning process builds on what the student already knows, because it provides thinking and understanding of subject matter knowledge” (Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 170).

In producing the artifact as a visual teaching aid, I also had to be mindful of my audience – film and television students – as highly analytical and discerning when it comes to evaluating visual content. The advent of digital and web technologies has transformed the educational environment into becoming ‘a visually literate and vibrant academic community’ and with it the expectation to deliver high-quality content:

New, visually rich journalistic forms such as digital photography, audio and video podcasts, and e-documentaries allow novices along with professionals to be content creators” (Metros & Woolsey 2006, p. 81).

In this context, academics need to be aware that quality of content impacts greatly on student engagement and consequently their learning. As previously stated, this was something I was very aware of during the production of my artifact, in creating quality content that has the ability to engage a visually literate, film-savvy audience that in effect ‘practises what I teach’.

The Exegesis

In undertaking practice-led/practice-based research, the exegesis supports the artifact in opening up a scholarly discussion on theoretical and practical notions of contemporary editing practice, with a focus on the pedagogy of teaching creativity in editing. The exegesis also reflects on my practice as an editor by embedding the production of the artifact as central to my research investigation, and takes my research outcomes into the privileged academic discourse on how practice contributes to academic knowledge. The exegesis is composed of four main sections:

Practice-led/practice-based research

This section is a reflection on practice-based learning and teaching creativity in reference to investigating the creative practice of editing and how that relates to my practice as an editor and educator. I review what practice-led/practice-based research offers me as a researcher in reference to reflective practice, practice theory and intuition, autoethnography and self as research, and in making a research film (the artifact itself). Donald Schon’s presentation of reflection appears to have much in common with intuition (Furlong 2003, p. 22). Rather than seeing professional practice as based on rational decision-making, he characterises it as

a form of 'artistry'. These concepts have direct synergies with the practice of editing and teaching creativity in terms of 'learning by doing' and 'reflection on practice', the inspiration behind the development of my artifact as a teaching resource.

The Art of Editing

As an introduction to the inaugural CILECT Asia-Pacific Symposium on Creative Postproduction (Griffith University, Brisbane 2011), Roger Crittenden referenced Kevin Brownlow's description of editing as 'the hidden art' in proclaiming: "it remains true that good editing tends to be the art that conceals art". An accurate observation and one that hasn't much changed over the years. However, what has changed is how editors see themselves in terms of their creative contribution to the final outcome of a film. In this section I investigate how editors view their work in terms of *craft* or *art*, and in the production of the artifact I asked the questions: Where does the editor fit in terms of the conceptual realisation of a film?; What is the editor's contribution to the creative outcome of a film?; What is the importance of the editor-director relationship to the final outcome of a film?; What impact has digital technology had on the creative outcomes of editing?

Furthermore, in revealing the 'hidden art' of the editor, I cover a brief history of editing, the place of montage and mise-en-scène in developing editing technique, and the concept of the auteur as relevant to filmmaking today. In the most part, I attempt to de-mystify the process of editing, which as a professional craft has for many years remained unnecessarily obscure (Fairservice 2001, p. 4).

Looking at film editing through the prism of film theory

Where does editing sit as a 'concept' in terms of film theory? "No one theory predominates in film studies today. What is more, different approaches no longer seem to vie for hegemony but instead seem to accept a peaceful coexistence" (McGowan 2003, p. 27). Film theory opens up the scholarly discussion on filmic investigation and representation of space, time, vision and meaning in cinematic text. In aligning practitioners and non-practitioner theorists, it's interesting to observe similarities in their theories on the phenomena of cinema, on one hand practice informing theory, and on the other hand, theory investigating practice.

The pedagogy of creative editing practice in reference to 'creativity' and whether it can it be taught

In the final section I focus on the pedagogy of editing practice with a focus on teaching creativity, and the more elusive attributes of editing associated with the

'expressive', such as intuition and the internal rhythm of a film. I also investigate how editors learn their craft, and the shift from an industry-based learning environment to film schools as the new training ground for film practitioners.

In Summary

In response to my research investigation, *The 'art of editing': creative practice and pedagogy*, and in electing to frame my topic as practice-led/practice-based research, I have produced an artifact in the form of a series of interviews with Australian screen editors that delivers as an educational resource in teaching creative editing practice, and as an academic resource in bringing 'new knowledge' to the academy.

The recorded interviews inform the major content of the artifact, and the editing process itself determines the final form of the artifact:

Editors are responsible for the final draft of the film, the script. The first one is writing it, the second one is directing it and the third one is the collaboration of the director and the editor re-writing it again ... (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

From an educational perspective, the artifact fulfills its intended purpose, which is to enlighten students on the 'art of editing', to expand their knowledge on creative editing processes, and to make them aware of the creative contribution of the editor to the final outcome of the film, whatever form that takes.

Section 2: Practice-led/practice-based research: a reflection on practice-based learning and teaching creativity

In this section I discuss practice-led/practice-based research with reference to my research topic, which investigates the creative practice of editing and how that relates to my practice as an editor and an educator. I will discuss what practice-led/practice-based research offers me as a researcher and in doing so will investigate: reflective practice, practice theory and intuition; autoethnography and self as research; the making of a research film; and intuition in editing.

A motivating factor for framing my PhD studies as practice-led/practice-based research came from the assumption that this type of research is usually initiated by the artist or designer in response to their own particular studio or design practice (de Freitas 2002). In this case, I have chosen to investigate my own creative practice as a screen editor and as an educator in that field, with the challenge of mining editors' knowledge of what constitutes creative editing practice, and how to teach creativity in editing in an educational environment. Donald Schon's presentation of 'reflection' appears to have much in common with 'intuition' (Furlong, 2003, p.22). Rather than seeing professional practice as based on rational decision-making, he characterises it as a form of 'artistry'. These concepts have direct synergies with the practice of editing and teaching creativity in terms of 'learning by doing' and 'reflection on practice', the premise for the production of my artifact as a teaching tool.

I believe my knowledge as a practitioner and academic is instrumental to the challenge in bringing creative activity together with academic debate and intellectual rigour, which in turn informs my teaching processes. The idea to "conceptualize my practice theoretically" (Garfield, 2007, p.222) is what lies at the core of my investigation into creative editing practice. In the process of gathering the data in the form of a series of interviews with Australian screen editors, I have invested my own expertise as a filmmaker and editor to create the artifact, which also feeds into my reflective practice and helps shape the methodology employed in developing my research.

As a 'practitioner-academic', I bring new knowledge to the academy through a non-traditional output in the form of an artifact and an exegesis, as I believe the concept of integrating practice and theory is the best way to investigate my topic. In this case, the artifact serves the purpose of being both a creative output, and a disseminator of new knowledge. As much as the exegesis serves to support and legitimise the creative output (the artifact), it also offers "new models of knowledge to the academy and [will]

enrich the artistic practices of the practitioners themselves” (Arnold 2012, p. 9). In gauging the level of enthusiasm from the editors I interviewed for my research project, I believe the knowledge gleaned from the artifact/exegesis model will not only be of immense significance as an educational resource, but also of great interest to the editing fraternity itself.

What practice-led/practice-based research offers me as a practitioner-researcher

The concept of ‘practice-led’ and ‘practice-based’ research has grown exponentially over the course of the past ten years, from being “a very unexpected phenomenon called PhD by practice” (Lebow 2008, p. 201) to one that has “come to dominate the discussion and practice of research in the university-based creative arts” (Brook & Magee 2012). Another reason for growth of creative art- and design-based research has been attributed to “the merger of universities with polytechnics, as was evidenced in the UK in 1992” (Biggs & Büchler 2007), and in Australia in the same year (including Swinburne Institute of Technology which became Swinburne University of Technology). The merger of practice-based studies with theory established opportunities for conducting research and doctoral studies in areas such as Fine Arts and Design that had “hitherto been unrepresented in the academic context” (Biggs & Büchler 2007).

If we first consider the way in which a certain notion of film theory came to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s (Haeffner 2008, p.173), it will give some insight into the teaching of theory in media and cultural studies, and offer a background to the emergence of practice-led PhDs and the juncture between theory, creativity and practice. The type of ‘high theory’ “whose dominance was established in the 1970s has become institutionalised and a brake on change”, ultimately lead to a “downgrading of the importance of creativity, a narrow definition of skill and an insufficiently strong awareness of the underling economics of media practices” (Haeffner 2008, p. 173). Although practice-led/based research is now a part of the research landscape, even today the “flurry of questions relating to practical work in higher studies” (Haeffner 2008, p. 173), although better understood, still creates room for criticism. In bringing together the Cartesian binary of the personal and the intellectual (Arnold 2012. p. 9), criticisms of self-investigatory, self-directed, self-observational, self-reflective and self-analytical research designs tend to concentrate on the reliability and reproducibility of research generated from a subjective research position (Lynch 2000).

In an introduction to a special TEXT edition, *Beyond Practice-led Research*, Scott Brook and Paul Magee point to serious questions raised as to the viability of practice-

led research: “even after decades of institutional commitment, ‘the field has not developed any generally known classics and no stars’” (Søren Kjørup, cited in Brook & Magee, 2012). Similarly, Michael Biggs and Daniela Büchler argue, “[a]lthough these actions conform to the conventions of academic research, they do not result in a significant research activity” (Biggs & Büchler 2011, p.89). However, as a champion of practice-led/practice-based research, Josie Arnold supports the concept of the artifact and exegesis in that it brings “new models of knowledge to the academy, and enrich[es] the artistic practices of the practitioners themselves” (2012, p.9). Although there is some differing in naming conventions around research in the arts as being either ‘practice-led’ or ‘practice-based’, in both cases there is a focus on “person-centered theories of creativity” (Kerrigan 2013, p. 111). Nancy de Freitas refers to practice-based research in art and design as “those projects in which creative practice plays the most the most important role in the cluster of research methods used [and ‘practice-led’ as] usually initiated by the artist or designer in response to their own particular studio or design practice” (2002, p. 1). In literal terms, the concept of practice-led infers the practice comes first, whereas practice-based infers the practice is integral to the research investigation. In evaluating my own research practice, the descriptor of ‘practice-led/practice-based research’ would seem more appropriate in that the practice of screen editing is leading my research enquiry, but my knowledge is grounded as a practitioner, which informs my enquiry and which I explore further through developing my artifact as an audio-visual medium.

Kerrigan takes a more personal approach by placing the researcher as central to the enquiry, and believes practitioner-based enquiry focuses on “exposing the subjective agency of the practitioner as researcher” (Murray & Lawrence, cited in Kerrigan 2013, p. 115). As a practitioner-academic, this is highly relevant to my research enquiry in that I am putting my practice as an editor under the microscope to investigate the more elusive attributes of editing such as intuition and rhythm, storytelling verses style, and cutting for emotion. As Kerrigan acknowledges: “Unearthing the subjective voice exposes the practitioner/researcher to the processes of creation applicable to their chosen medium ...” (2013, p. 115). In reference to my research question, practice-led/practice-based enquiry gives me the opportunity to reflect on creative editing practice through my own work and through the voices of my editing colleagues (as interviewed), who contribute to disseminating ‘new knowledge’ in this field. On a personal level, practice-based enquiry enables me to “move towards the acquisition of intellectual autonomy, improved judgment making and enhanced technical competence” (Murray & Lawrence, cited in Kerrigan 2013, p. 115).

A large number of Australian universities that deliver screen and media programs have seized upon practice-led and practice-based research by engaging students across a broad range of audio-visual disciplines from film and television production to music, dance and drama. At Queensland University of Technology, academic Helen Yeates (2009) surveyed over forty projects by PhD and Masters graduates from the Creative Industries Faculty to find that “theoretical seams often lie deeply embedded in complex latent and manifest ways within the practice-led research undertaken by creative practitioner students” (2009, p. 139). This is a positive indicator that through practice-led and practice-based research, practitioner-academics such as myself will seize upon the opportunity not only to investigate our own creative practices, but gain a deeper understanding of the source of our creativity and what it pertains to in terms of evaluating creative outcomes.

Autoethnography and self as research

Autoethnography sits comfortably within a practice-led/practice-based research context in terms of building on familiar qualitative research with the aim to:

Awaken and inspire researchers to make contact with and respect their own questions and problems, to suggest a process that affirms imagination, intuition, self-reflection, and the tacit dimension as valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding (Douglass & Moustakas 1985, p.40).

This statement has a direct correlation to how I came to my research topic investigating the creative practice of film editing as embedded in my own practice and teaching. Sarah Wall examines the autoethnographic phenomenon as grounded in postmodern philosophy, and examines the varied forms of autoethnography as “an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon” (2006, p. 146). Wall situates the place of reflexivity and voice in social research and acknowledges “the inextricable link between the personal and the cultural, in making room for non-traditional forms of enquiry and expression” (Wall 2006, p. 146).

Autoethnography is a method of enquiry that authorises the researcher to use “self-observation as part of the situation studied to self-introspection or self-ethnography as a legitimate focus of study in and of itself” (Ellis 1991, p. 30). In this context, I see myself as central to my research enquiry in that my knowledge as a professional editor is inexplicably linked to the practice and relevant knowledge of the Australian screen editors who were interviewed for the artifact: “to mingle his or her experience with the

experience of those studied is precisely what is needed to move inquiry and knowledge further along” (Wall 2006, p. 148). As such, my professional experience is vital in moving the themes of my enquiry into a research context, and at the same time adds a level of legitimacy to the project. If the researcher’s voice is omitted from a text, “the writing is reduced to a mere summary and interpretation of the works of others, with nothing new added” (Clandin & Connelly 1994, cited in Wall 2006, p. 148). Through interpreting and analysing the data as presented by others, my observations “allow for the production of new knowledge by a unique, and uniquely situated researcher, and offer small scale knowledge that can inform specific problems and specific situations” (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, cited in Wall 2006, p.149).

Although Ellis and Bochner (2000) have promoted autobiographical research as ‘autoethnography’ and situated the personal voice of the researcher firmly within the social sciences, researchers before them had different labels for the concept of personal narrative as embedded in research enquiry. In relation to my research methodology, I find the concept of autobiographical research weighted in terms of infusing “social science with the emotions and the person of the researcher” (Ellis & Bochner 2000, cited in Walls 2006, p.151). In drawing on my own experience as a practitioner-researcher, my position is more interpretative in terms of evaluating and contextualising the content of the data collection. I found assimilation with an earlier form of narrative-based research, labeled ‘heuristic enquiry’, which identifies the “deep exploration of the researcher’s tacit knowledge of the topic” (Wall 2006, p. 150). The six steps cited in heuristic research are: “initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the creative synthesis” (Moustakas, cited in Wall 2006, p. 150). I find this research methodology an exciting challenge in terms of personalising my research, and at the same time being open to the possibility of new realisations and explanations specific to my field. The ‘illumination’ appears to be a mysterious phase in which something completely new is seen in something familiar (Wall 2006, p. 150). In reference to my own research enquiry, the heuristic research model fits perfectly within the framework of my topic, and is instrumental in creating a research environment that is an open to new and unique possibilities:

In explication, the researcher develops a comprehensive depiction of the core themes. The major components of the phenomenon are explicated through the researcher’s self-awareness as well as through conversations with others. In the final stage, creative synthesis takes place, in which the researcher presents the meanings and themes associated with the question in the form of a narrative

(with verbatim material and examples), poem, drawing, painting, or other creative form (Wall 2006, p. 150).

Autoethnography, whatever form it takes, places the researcher as central to the research enquiry, and their tacit knowledge as instrumental in the acquisition of new knowledge. In reference to the validity of the use of self in research, Ellis posed the question “Who would make a better subject than a researcher consumed by wanting to figure it all out?” (1991, p. 30). Ellis and Bochner acknowledge that there is a direct link between the personal and the cultural in placing the researcher as central to the acquisition of new knowledge. As Sarah Wall concludes: “rich meaning, culturally relevant personal experience, and intense motivation to know are what typify and strengthen autoethnography” (Wall 2006, p.155).

Making a research film

The concept of audio-visual research is still relatively new to the academy (Lebow 2008), but what is of particular relevance to my research output is that the production of the artifact in itself is integral to my investigation into editing practice.

The concept of ‘research films’ has become accepted both inside and outside design- and art-based practice as an effective means of communication: “A potential method for disseminating the information other than the traditional academic is through film, but this means tailoring the material to this medium and in many cases collaborating with people who have the necessary skills” (Thieme 2012, p. 1). In his paper *Behind the Scenes: Making Research Films in Sociology*, Radhamany Sooryamoorthy states, “Making research films is as rigorous as writing a research paper or a book” (2007, p. 547). However, this newfound freedom in producing visual research outcomes has only become prevalent since the advent of digital technology. Most notably, researchers in the humanities and social sciences make use of digital video in the study of social situations, events and phenomena in being able to “widen the knowledge horizon of the discipline and to supplement one’s research output through visual imagery” (Sooryamoorthy 2007, p. 550). Sociologist and researcher Susan Thieme concurs: “The film was much more than just an extension of the ongoing multi-site qualitative research. The shooting not only provided new insights into people’s lives but also forced me to think much harder about my research and ‘the fieldwork’” (2012, p. 1).

In the context of utilising audio-visual technology in the acquisition of new knowledge, it is important to make the distinction here between research films and ethnographic films. Research films can be defined as “the type of films made to contain undisturbed processes and behavior to develop information [as relevant to the researcher’s body of

knowledge], whereas ‘ethnographic films’ create a narrative selected by the filmmaker-producer” (Collier & Collier, cited in Sooryamoorthy 2007, p. 549–50). This would place the ethnographic film closer to the documentary film, historically defined as “the creative treatment of actuality” (Grierson, cited in Kerrigan 2013, p. 112).

The idea that research films are a record of ‘undisturbed factual content’, to be distinguished from documentary films which “are constructed more freely” (Sooryamoorthy 2007, p. 550), to some degree undervalues documentary filmmaking in terms of research, content gathering and authenticity. The fact that research films are “designed for specific research purposes and for a specialized audience” (Crawford, cited in Sooryamoorthy 2007, p. 550) supports the value of content as scientifically and culturally significant, but at the same time infers research films are less accessible to an audience than documentary films. Sooryamoorthy concedes “The creative part, and the challenge to the researcher, is to make it a viewable film” (2007, p. 550), but this in itself implies that a level of professionalism needs to be employed in the production of the research film. As a product of in-depth research, documentaries push the same boundaries as research films, but the filmmakers themselves are very aware that it’s also vital to engage with the audience in terms of content and storytelling.

Another consideration is that researchers and academia engaged in the production of audio-visual content need to be aware they are presenting to what is now a very sophisticated, visually literate audience, from casual browsers to researchers: “‘Screen time’ – with its non-linear ‘clickability’ and elements of image, color, sequence and motion – has been added to the once privileged ‘paper space’ as a primary organizing format for expressing and exchanging knowledge” (Metros & Woolsey, 2006, p. 80). Which leads to the question, do low-quality productions reflect badly on content, or do they reflect badly on those who produced them? While I admire the tenacity of researchers like Sooryamoorthy who embrace digital video technology as a “powerful medium for the communication and production of knowledge” (2007, p. 559), the level of expertise that is required to produce meaningful content needs to be considered:

Faculty who bravely choose to use visuals in teaching or research face another set of daunting challenges. They have difficulty locating the professional resources and the support services required to produce high-quality visuals. And they have even more difficulty finding the time to learn, and the consultants to teach them, how to create their own solutions (Metros & Woolsey 2006, p. 80).

There is no doubt that digital technology does make it easier for the researcher-filmmaker “to capture the video images and sound on the computer, to edit, output and copy the final product” (Shrum et al., cited in Sooryamoorthy 2007, p. 556). However, as an experienced filmmaker I would not assume competency across all areas of production and as such would seek assistance in areas of expertise outside my own. Although Sooryamoorthy acknowledges that the researcher-filmmaker has to address “both the intellectual and technical components of the movie”, and acknowledges that editing is “a very creative phase in the whole filmmaking process” (2007, p. 557–58), he somewhat undervalues the level of competency required to make professional content in saying: “The editing suite and studio have lost their sanctity, slipping from the hands of technicians and traditional equipment to desktop computers and laptops, making things more accessible to anyone who is interested” (2007, p. 556).

Where I stand apart from the sociologist-researcher-filmmaker is in my ability as an academic-filmmaker and editor to capture quality content and shape it in a meaningful way that is accessible to both an academic and educational audience, for which it is intended. The other consideration is that in presenting my research film as an audio-visual resource to students who are highly skilled in the areas of visual literacy and film production, I am all too aware that the quality of the artifact needs to be of a professional standard in terms of the presentation of content and engagement. Furthermore, given my topic is aligned with the production of the research film itself, the opportunity to reflect on my own practice as an editor provides a valuable insight into creative editing processes and practice.

Reflective practice, practice theory and intuition

In reviewing case studies of film-practitioner–researchers at work, what is prevalent is their enthusiasm to embrace the concept of ‘reflexive practice’ and ‘reflective learning’ and how that pertains to understanding how and why we do things, both as practitioners and educators. “Teaching, researching and leading in the classroom and school community is largely an intuitive action”, and although there is an element of detailed planning, it is in the act of teaching “when unpredictability and reflection surfaces” (Ryan 2005, p. 1). This extends to the process of learning whereby, “the need to reflect on self as a means of self-development is widely endorsed in schools of education globally” (Ryan 2005, p. 1). However, the notion to *reflect on practice* is also critical to growth and learning as endorsed by Donald Schon in saying, “any reflective practicum [requires] that they plunge into the doing, and try to educate themselves before they know what it is that they’re trying to learn (Schon, 1987, p.1).

For the professional practitioner/artist, the concept of 'knowledge is in the making' is accepted practice, but the dismantling of creative processes through reflection on learning is more complex. Schon's presentation of reflection "appears to have much in common with intuition" (Furlong 2003, p. 22), in that rather than seeing professional practice as based on rational decision-making he characterises it as a form of 'artistry'. Furlong shares Schon's opinion that the difficulty with terms such as 'artistry', 'wisdom' and indeed 'intuition' is that they "elude conventional strategies of explanation" (Schon 1983, p. 32). In response, Schon opened up a new enquiry of research-based knowledge of what professionals *actually do*, and subsequently developed a threefold definition of professional practice involving 'levels' of consciousness or 'explicit thinking' (Furlong 2003, p. 22). These are: 'knowing-in-action', where thinking is entirely implicit in the action; 'reflection-in-action', where due to a level of difficulty we seek to interpret our actions in the process of doing; and 'reflection-on-action', where we attempt to articulate the process after the event. In terms of editing practice, all three levels of consciousness are at play where intuition is central to the editor's ability to respond to the footage in terms of: gauging their emotional response to the original footage/rushes in the first cut (knowing-in-action), in evaluating their actions in the process of making revisions (reflection-in-action), and evaluating their work in response to the final resolution of the film (reflection-on-action). At all stages the editor has to trust their intuition as integral to their working practice: "I do think editing is very intuitive and maybe later you realise what it is you've learnt" (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

Schon believes artistry is an essential component of professional competence: "We can learn from a careful examination of artistry, that is, the competence by which practitioners actually handle indeterminate zones of practice – however that competence may relate to technical rationality" (Schon 1987, p. 13). In questioning the editors I interviewed as to whether they believe editing is an art or a craft, the notion of evaluating competence in their ability to reinterpret story (the script) in vision and sound through the process of editing is precisely the art:

I see editing as art, definitely, when it's done well. And it's choices, good choices are made that visually create a tapestry of imagery and sound. I think it's extraordinary if you can get content with all those things working beautifully with a rhythm that's comfortable for your audience. I think it's brilliant (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

Intuition in editing

To a perceptible degree, Guy Claxton's work on *The Anatomy of Intuition* (2003) unlocks the creative process of the editor. His detailed investigation into the nature of intuition has direct synergies with how editors talk about their work, and the part intuition plays in their creative response to the footage and editorial decision-making.

As a concept intuition has always been something of an enigma and in terms of editing, reason it is so hard for editors to determine where exactly this fountain of knowledge comes from. By definition, intuition is associated with 'truth', as something "both 'higher' and mysterious – knowledge that claims to be true, but which cannot substantiate it's claim except by appeal to divine authority" (Claxton, 2003, p.33). By all accounts, dictionary definitions encapsulate intuition as something beyond explanation, verging on the supernatural – 'the truth of things without reasoning or analysis' (*Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary*), and 'the immediate knowledge ascribed to angelic and spiritual beings' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The notion of intuition as something "beyond the bounds of scientific explanation" (Claxton, 2003, p.33) casts a shadow of uncertainty as to its validity and as such, hard to qualify as a legitimate form of knowledge, or skill.

For this reason, Claxton challenged conventional or 'unconventional' notions of intuition, and took a more practical approach by investigating the source of intuition as aligned with professional practice and development. He discovered new meaning in defining intuition in reference to more explicit behaviors such as expertise, learning, judgment, sensitivity, creative problem solving and rumination, which converge as 'ways of knowing' (Claxton, 2003, p.40). In deviating from the 'mystical' and taking a more intellectual approach, lends itself to explaining intuition in terms of acquiring and utilising skills associated with practical knowledge in the creative fields. In his book, *Educating the Professional Practitioner*, Donald Schon was of the same mind-set in looking to the attributes of outstanding practitioners who are "not said to have more professional knowledge than others but more "wisdom", "talent", "intuition" or "artistry" (Schon, 1987, p.13). It is specifically these traits that "we distance ourselves from the kinds of performance we most need to understand" (Schon, 1987, p.13). Sentiments such as these segue into my investigation into creativity in editing where the concept of intuition lies at the core of much of what editors do. Claxton and Schon align artistry with competence, emotional intelligence and knowledge, and agree that the acquisition of artistry as "a kind of knowledge" (Schon, 1987, p.13) is not easily explained in terms of, "being able to 'do it', and being able to articulate what you are doing" (Claxton, 2003, p.35).

When it comes to editing, Karen Pearlman aligns intuition with knowledge and looks at ways to “explore it, grow it and enhance it” (Art of The Guillotine, 2011 [online] Available from <http://www.aotg.com>). In the first chapter of her book, *Cutting Rhythms: Shaping the Film Edit*, Pearlman explores ‘rhythmic intuition’ as something that is developed through experience, “in other words, it is learnt” (2009, p.1). In terms of editing, experience is inextricably linked to intuition, which comes to the surface when the practitioner responds to a challenge or task. In contrast to Schon’s statement that “terms as these serve not to open up enquiry but to close it off” (Schon, 1987, p.13), Claxton and Pearlman embrace intuition as coming from a place of knowledge, and as such opens up new possibilities for learning. If intuition is assimilated with ‘expertise’, defined as “the smooth, unreflective mastery of complex but familiar domains” (Claxton 2003, p. 35), then ‘intuition’ is the act of doing or performing a task as an unpremeditated or unselfconscious action. Pearlman relates expertise to technical aptitude, for example “breathing with the Avid” (editing software), in terms of “knowing your gear of choice so expertly that its operation doesn’t require conscious thought” (2009, p. 4). But she also relates expertise to past experience and, with it, the knowledge of how to approach an edit which comes from “years of experience with the editing process ... an editor becomes an expert and can see a possible organization or flow very quickly and without conscious thought” (Pearlman 2009, p. 4). This sentiment is reflected in my interviews with Australian screen editors, who speak directly of intuition as coming from a place of knowledge:

The more I do it the more I learn and you see there are things that I’ve learnt just come in when I’m cutting now ... they’re there with you when you’re editing. Your experience is always there with versions straight away without having to try it? You know, I rarely do a cut twice. I just do it, and then move on. Because it’s not the actual joins that are important, it’s what’s between the joins. And the selection of what’s between the joins comes from all that life experience that you’ve had as to why would you choose that piece to put into that film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

What *is* acknowledged about intuition is that in the act of doing, the self-conscious thought process can be deleterious to the creative task at hand: “Intuitive virtuosity unrolls, for the most part, without help (or hindrance) of deliberation ... even in a reflective mood after the event, the virtuoso teacher, violinist or chess grand master are unable to articulate the basis of their skill” (Claxton 2003, p. 35). Again, the editor will often find it hard to articulate their practice, but what follows the first cut of a film is a process of reviewing and refining, which in itself is a form of reflective practice. In

essence, the editor's job is to bring the creative vision of the director to the screen, and finding the film through the edit is a challenging process:

And that's what I love about it. Because you are trying to put something on the table that they haven't thought of, and when you get those little wins and you do manage to it's like, wow! That's a great feeling, and the challenge is to do that. That's what sort of drives you to keep going and keep doing good work (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

In taking the role of a professional mentor/teacher, many experienced practitioners have been struck by the gap between being able to 'do it', and being able to articulate what you are doing (Claxton 2003, p. 35). This is particularly true of editing and the challenge that brought me to my research topic: how do you teach creative processes in editing and, specifically, how do you teach the abstract concepts of intuition and style? Like most forms of artistic practice, there are no hard and fast rules, only processes whereby the artist/practitioner develops a 'good practical knowledge', which will potentially take them to a place of 'expertise':

editing does not really have rules that are set in stone. There are prescriptive handbooks (for example, Roy Thompson's *Grammar of the Edit* (1993)) but general consensus is that if these rules were followed strictly, films would be somewhat predictable and dull (Orpen 2003, p. 9).

As Thompson concludes, "creativity overrules grammar" (1993, p. 72), and although the editors I interviewed all concede that a high level of technical proficiency is a requirement, it is the editor's intuitive response to the footage that primarily drives the edit:

You do have to apply yourself to the craft. You do need to learn how to do things in the physical world. You need to know how to manipulate those things, so that later when you are actually working, you are responding to the material in an emotional way (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

Claxton challenges the concept of articulation of expertise in that "mastery emerges well in advance of conscious understanding, and that orientating learners towards seeking such explicit comprehension can retard the development of expertise" (2003, p. 36). This principle is again validated in my interviews with editors' in their response to the question of intuition and the part it plays in the creative process. The editors are unanimous in saying that intuition is an acquired knowledge that they can trust in, and draw upon, in gauging their initial response to the content of a film and in finding the story:

Intuition is incredibly important ... your first response to something is very important (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

I'm very intuitive with what I do in all areas ... when it comes to the material I'm looking at I can instantly go, *Out, that's going out*. It's a fairly quick process (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

I kind of go by gut, intuition ... and then I try and look for truth in a performance (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

An editor's intuition is critical to their ability to derive a story ... editors require some level of emotional intelligence (personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2013).

Even to an experienced editor, the task of editing a film can seem an insurmountable challenge in terms of the thousands of editorial decisions it takes to construct a story that is at once engaging, and emotionally leads an audience. As such, the editing process fits perfectly within the concept of 'inarticulate implicit learning', which is not to say an editor's intuition is an inferior way of knowing, but it could be acknowledged as providing the "glue' that holds together our conscious intellect and our intelligent action" (Damasio 1994, cited in Claxton 2003, p. 36).

If people have given up the attempt to try to figure out what is going on, and simply interact with the situation in a 'mindless' but observant manner, they come to master it, at an intuitive level – they do the right thing without knowing why – faster than those who keep struggling for conscious comprehension (Claxton 2003, p. 36).

Other attributes such as judgment, taste, sensitivity and rumination all come into play in the unconscious decision-making process that is likened to intuition. Together, these are what Claxton describes as the 'ways of knowing' as ascribed to intuitive thinking, which vary according to application but have in common "a lack of clearly articulated comprehension or rationale"(2003, p. 40). In my experience as an editor, varying degrees of the aforementioned are responsible for shaping the film, the attributes associated with the craft or *art* of the editor. The editors that I interviewed all concede that their personal life experiences shape their work in terms of how they respond to a performance and in constructing story:

You very much respond to the footage from a personal point of view ... seeing the dailies for the first time, trying to retain that feeling you had, trying to retain that feeling when you first put something together and you cried when you were

cutting it. That's really important ... it sort of affects how you make choices all the time" (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

In looking further into the "facets of intuition" (Claxton 2003, p. 40) I am astonished at how much 'intuition and experience', 'intuition and emotional involvement' and 'intuition and confidence' are so closely aligned with the craft of editing. If editing is clustered as an artistic pursuit and "those who steep themselves in the study of a particular area and are able to draw on this well of experience in novel, flexible and integrative ways" (Claxton 2003, p. 41), then editors surely fit into this category as creative practitioners. Intuition in editing is a mode of thinking that includes creativity, expert judgment, sensitivity and "unreflective execution of intricate skilled performance" (Pearlman 2009, p. 21). This embodiment of the medium is intrinsic to all creative pursuits, but it also draws from a well of prior life experience, cultural sensitivity, implicit judgment and taste, and in knowing how to respond to a situation or task in an intuitive way that will open up new possibilities and, in turn, new knowledge.

In Summary: a reflection on practice-based learning and teaching creativity

As a film-practitioner–researcher, the practice-led/practice-based research model is the perfect way to frame my investigation into the creative practice of editing, and best practice in teaching creativity in editing. The artifact, in the form of a research film, gave me the opportunity to produce a creative work in it's own right that expands on my practice as an editor, investigates the notion of creativity in editing in reference to intuition as form of 'expertise', and how the concepts of 'reflexive practice' and 'reflective learning' feed the learning process and informs how and why we do things, both as practitioners and educators. This unique form of autoethnographic study places my practice as central to my investigation, and allows self-observation as a key ingredient in developing and responding to the content of the artifact.

The exegesis allowed me to conceptualize my practice theoretically (Garfield, 2007, p.222), and through this form of self-reflective methodology, I have been able to legitimise the study as qualitative research in bringing new knowledge and insights to my topic, 'the art of editing', that will in turn enrich my own artistic practice and inform my work as an educator in teaching creativity in editing.

Section 3: The Art of Editing

In this section I discuss editing in reference to the 'hidden art of editing', and how editors view their work in terms of 'craft' or 'art'. My investigation involves the exploration of a number of research questions that became key themes in the artifact, which include the editor's contribution to the creative outcome of a film, the importance of the editor–director relationship to the final outcome of a film, and finally the impact digital technology had on editing styles and practice today.

In investigating the 'art of editing', I make reference to a brief history of editing, the place of montage and mise-en-scène in terms of editing technique, and the concept of the 'auteur' and its impact on editing styles. In the most part, I will attempt to de-mystify the process of editing, which as a professional craft has for many years remained unnecessarily obscure (Fairservice 2001, p. 4).

Editing: the hidden art

In his introduction to the Asia-Pacific Symposium on Creative Post-Production, *Revealing the Hidden Art* (Brisbane, November 2012), Richard Crittenden cited film historian Kevin Brownlow who claimed film editing to be 'the hidden art': "Editors are passed over by film historians because their work, when successful, is virtually unnoticeable" (1968, p. 286). Crittenden himself concedes "that it remains true that good editing tends to be the art that conceals art" (2012).

The dichotomy for editors is that although they are respected as key collaborators in the filmmaking process, they are rarely acknowledged for their creative contribution to the final outcome of a film. Crittenden believes "this is compounded by the natural tendency, in my experience, for editors to be modest people disinclined to take too much credit for their work" (2012), but this anonymity is a response to the fact that much of the editor's work goes unseen:

When we watch a film, most of us have great difficulty in consciously perceiving the editing. Of course we know that every time there is a shift from one image to another, it is an edit, and we know that editing in general has to do with establishing rhythm in film (Wiedemann 1998, p. 21).

In general terms, it is very difficult to ascertain, let alone measure, how much editors contribute to the final look and feel of a film, and in bestowing awards to editors, it is hard to evaluate 'excellence in editing' when there is no defining factor that truly

represents the role of the editor in determining their creative contribution to the outcome of a film:

An annual Oscar is offered by Hollywood for Best Editing, and when one tries to pin down the qualities of a really well-edited mainstream film – one of Scorsese's movies, for example, cut by Thelma Schoonmaker (*Good Fellas*, maybe, or *Casino*) – one sees that the skill referred to is not so much montage, in the Russian sense of the orchestration or controlled dissonance of images, but rather *the ability to handle pace creatively*; more simply put, to imbue the film in question with a fine and vigorous rhythm (Le Fanu 1998, p. 7)

The editor has a huge input into shaping the performances, the overall rhythm and pacing of the action, and to a great degree the final structure or 'shape' of the film. How an audience responds to a film emotionally is very much determined by these factors, yet these key attributes of editing are the most difficult to define. Film editor and academic Karen Pearlman took the topic of rhythm as central to her research, and in her book *Cutting Rhythms: Shaping the Film Edit* she investigates rhythm as a bodily function inherent in shaping the emotion of a film: "in shaping the rhythm of a film, time, energy, and movement are the salient factors; they shape the qualitative experience of the story and information" (2009, p. 39). The question of rhythm is addressed in my artifact, and in response most of the editors I interviewed identified rhythm as a key factor in the editing process:

Editing is about rhythm. It's about creating many rhythms in a film. If it was all the same rhythm it would be pretty dull (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

It's been said many times that editors are the first audience of a film and, as such, they need to be attuned to how the audience will respond at any given time. How an editor responds to the raw footage will very much inform the edit, and the journey of the film takes shape through the editing process:

You have to choreograph the whole thing, and then you've got to maintain it ... For me movies start at the beginning and they end as one shot (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

A film to me is a shape that you're creating ... It can be an audio shape or a performance shape. It's many many different shapes. I mean basically our job is to harness light and sound and action, and story, and create a multilayered thing called a film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

However, the depth of the editor's contribution can only be appreciated by those closest to the film, and that comes with the knowledge of what was involved in taking the film from the raw footage/rushes to a finished film: "Editing is hard to analyze and evaluate. Only a movie's director, cinematographer and editor really know the quality of the original footage, and how much control the editor had over the final cut" (O'Steen 2009, p. vii). In editing a feature film, the task of moving from script to screen can take months in the making, and what was intended can undergo a complete transformation:

Editors are responsible for the final draft of the film, the script. The first one is writing it. The second one is directing it and the third one is the collaboration of the director and the editor re-writing it again after the fact that it may have rained in a shot that should have been sunny, or changing scenes around to create the story to work at its best (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

Actors openly acknowledge the role the editor plays in shaping and perfecting performance, but again, to what degree the editor manipulates the performance goes unseen by the audience. Jill Bilcock gives enormous attention to performance as crucial to the storytelling: "If an actor's not working and not helping the story, take the lines off them and give them to somebody else" (personal interview, 2012).

Most directors will attest to a good relationship with their editor as being vital to the success of their films, yet historically not many directors were vocal about the contribution of the editor and consequently editors remained 'behind the scenes'. This also speaks of the director's creative authorship of a film and not wanting to deflect the accolades to the editor who may well have salvaged the film: "The director, along with the screenwriter, cast and crew, all help set up the illusion, but ultimately the editor must pull the rabbit out of the hat and make us believe in movie magic" (O'Steen 2009, p. ix).

A brief history of editing

Theories of film editing cannot be considered outside the historical development of filmmaking because they are totally integrated within the practice. (Fairservice 2001, p. 3).

The practice of editing itself didn't exist before the advent of filmmaking, and consequently the history of editing is inextricably linked to the birth of cinema. As Richard Crittenden cited in the first edition of his book *Film and Video Editing* (1981), "No definitive history of this kind has been published in English and all we can do here is scratch the surface, knowing that our chief objective is to encourage an awareness

of some of the factors which affected the application of the craft of editing” (p. 9). Although there has been a renewed interest in the history of editing (Don Fairservice’s book *History, Theory and Practice* (2001) is a fine example), for the most part the advent of the practice of editing was subsumed within the realms of film theory and film style, as apparent in film texts such as Noel Burch’s *Theory of Film Practice* (1973) and David Bordwell’s *On the History of Film Style* (1997).

However, in reviewing a history of editing, it is important to revisit the invention of cinema and the many forms of the ‘moving image’ that emerged as popular entertainment in the late 19th century, “dominated by music hall, vaudeville, the circus and the various amusements and sideshows available at the fair” (Crittenden 1995, p. ix). At the turn of the century in France, “two paths along which film would develop were being pioneered” (Crittenden 1995, p. 1): the Lumière brothers, who shot events or *actualities*, and Georges Méliès, who manipulated images through multiple exposure for effect.

The first editing was done ‘in-camera’, whereby the camera was moved ‘mid-shot’ to a variety of viewpoints, which had the effect of ‘jump-cutting’ from one set up to the next. An early example was the Lumière brothers’ famous *La sortie des usines Lumière* (*Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*, 1895), in which a group of workers stream through the gates of the factory and the shots visibly jump within camera. The event was preconceived or ‘set up’, and as Fairservice points out, “in this, one of the first films to be made, there is a form of editing” (2001, p. 6). The Lumière brothers were also responsible for what was “by common consent the first significant program of projected films presented before an audience [which] occurred in Paris towards the end of 1895” (Fairservice 2001, p. 6). Within a year, this early form of cinema had spread throughout Europe to the United States, but for the most part these projections were held in music halls and fairgrounds and were considered a ‘cinema of spectacle’, more novelty than serious entertainment.

The concept of editing came into itself when these early filmmakers started to cut the film ‘outside the camera’. The ability to edit multiple shots together to extend the projected experience led to the birth of motion pictures as we know them today. The French filmmaker Georges Méliès made his first ‘multi-shot’ film in 1899, titled *L’Affaire Dreyfus*, which was a series of twelve one-shot films cut together to create an unprecedented 15-minute film. Méliès went on to direct the theatrical narrative *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), which was a series of thirty separate shots all staged as individual scenes and then connected by the use of dissolves into a 13-minute film.

Although this form of experimentation with motion pictures had been taking place in Europe and Britain since the turn of the 20th century, it was their American counterparts, most famously Edwin S. Porter and D. W. Griffith, who pushed the boundaries with editing technique as evident in Porter's early films *The Great Train Robbery* and *The Life of an American Fireman* (1903).

It was Porter who established that the intercutting of different shots not necessarily related to the same time and place could provide a basis for the structuring of narrative through editing (Crittenden 1995, p. 2).

The challenge was as to whether audiences would accept the use of close-ups, moving camera and the juxtaposition of images in this new form of motion picture storytelling. However, these concerns were unheeded due to the overwhelming enthusiasm and praise for what soon became known as 'cinema', which culminated in Griffith's masterful adaption of cinematic and editing technique in his two epic films *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916):

Griffith instinctively saw the coherence he could achieve on the screen even though his material was fragmentary, filmed at different times in different places with a variety of shots but all coming together to make one scene; Griffith succeeded in building up in the minds of the audience an association of ideas welded with such logic and charged with such emotional momentum that its truth was not questioned (Lindgren, cited in Crittenden 1995, p. 3).

However, it was the early Russian cinema of the 1920s and 1930s that had a huge impact on European and American filmmakers, and ultimately changed the direction of editing for decades to come. Most notably, the Soviet filmmakers Vsevolod Podovkin, Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein embraced Griffith's work as inspirational in developing a whole new era in cinematic experience. The concept of 'montage' was acknowledged as ubiquitous to their style, and one they developed into an art form: "The French word 'montage' – meaning 'putting up' – was elevated into a practice that was considered by some to be the apotheosis of cinematic art" (Fairservice 2001, p.189). This sentiment is shared by Danish academic Mark Le Fanu, who believes the beginning of editing is the beginning of cinema itself:

And if we are talking about magic, the magic of cinema is surely sensed to lie here: in the strange alchemy arising out of the juxtaposition of images – images that cut through, or rather dispense with, pages of theatrical dialogue to achieve their effect instantaneously (Le Fanu 1998, p. 6).

In film terms, 'montage' can be defined as "two images in conjunction convey[ing] more than the sum of their visual content" (Crittenden 1995, p. 4). Most famously the young Soviet film scholar turned director Lev Kuleshov experimented with this concept in what is known as the *Kuleshov Effect*, whereby he intercut the same close-up shot of a famous Russian actor, Ivan Mosjoukine, looking passively to camera with three separate shots: a bowl of soup, a dead woman in a coffin, and a little girl with a teddy-bear. The audience praised the depth of the actor's performance in his response to each scenario: his hunger for the soup, his grief for the woman and his tenderness for the child. In what could be described as "constructing an artificial geography through editing" (Fairservice 2001, p.183), Kuleshov's experiment confirmed the power of juxtaposition in creating the audience's perception of story.

However, film historians have since questioned the authenticity of these forms of experimentation by the early Soviet filmmakers who, "practised this sort of cinema ('the cinema of attractions', 'the cinema of shocks') and wrote about it extensively" (Le Fanu 1998, p. 6). Montage was at the height of its power when "cinema *had* no spoken word, that the juxtaposition of images in the way we are describing was sensed to be so fundamental" (Le Fanu 1998, p. 7). Interesting to note, due to the shortage of film stock in Russia at the time, film students including Kuleshov were encouraged to reconstruct archival footage as a class exercise: "It was within the context of this kind of experimentation that emphasis was given to the idea that became the basis of montage theory" (Fairservice 2001, p. 181).

Although Fairservice applauded "the motivation behind the experiment", he makes reference to their audience in terms of "preaching to the converted" in their eagerness to accept the fundamental principles being tested. Fairservice does not devalue this exploration into methods of montage, but at the same time admits: "I do not believe anything new was being discovered. The entire basis of film construction has, from the very beginning, been built on the idea that two consecutive shots will be accepted as having a relationship, actual or implied" (Fairservice 2001, p. 182).

The major political events leading up to the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the subsequent transition to Communism had a big impact on the early Russian filmmakers. The power of film as a revolutionary tool was seized upon as a way of spreading word of 'the new order' to the masses. Film studios in Moscow were nationalised, which ultimately created two factions among Russian filmmakers: those unsympathetic to political change moved to southern Russia and France, and the 'sympathisers' stayed on to make propaganda films in the form of documentary and

political dramas. It was at this time that Eisenstein made his groundbreaking films, including *Strike* in 1924 and *Battleship Potemkin* in 1925.

In *Battleship Potemkin*, and most famously in the 'Odessa Steps' scene, Eisenstein perfected his montage technique by using more than 150 shots in less than seven minutes to present "a terrible, brutal event, stylistically extended to make it not just cinematically true but psychologically true" (Fairservice 2001, p. 190). He depicted real people in great detail, such as: the close-up of a boot on a fallen child's arm, a man's knees buckling on the steps, a woman being shot in the stomach, and the iconic image of the runaway baby-carriage rolling down the steps. In his essay, *Methods of Montage* (1929) Eisenstein spoke of his use of 'rhythmic montage' in heightening the sense of conflict and drama in this sequence, by deliberately working against the natural rhythm of the scene in cutting the shots of the soldiers' feet marching down the steps out of sync with the drumming:

In this the rhythmic drum of the soldiers' feet as they descend the steps violates all *metrical* demands. Unsynchronized with the beat of the cutting, this drumming comes in *off-beat* each time, and the shot itself is entirely different in its solution with each of these appearances. The final pull of tension is supplied by the transfer from the rhythm of the descending feet to another rhythm - a new kind of downward movement - the next intensity level of the same activity - the baby-carriage rolling down the steps (Eisenstein, 1929, p.74)

In reflecting on the acute attention to detail and deliberation that went into editing the 'Odessa Steps', it is obvious that Eisenstein was always gauging the emotional impact each scene will have on his audience: "Eisenstein builds the suspense, editing with a sense of precision and care that would be hard to match in any film made ever since" (Fairservice 2001, p. 188). Likewise, David Bordwell praised Eisenstein for his use of "graphic discontinuities", which had a profound impact on the audience, who physically experience the emotional conflict through the editing: "To watch an Eisenstein film is to subject oneself to such percussive, pulsating graphic editing" (2012, p. 263). More than this, these films reinforced the power of editing to incite a heightened sense of emotional connection and ideology, all at the service of the nation:

Montage, after all, in the hands of the Russians, was, we shouldn't forget, a specifically honed tool, during the 1920s, for the furtherance of state ideology. The films of Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, Vertov etc. pressed you to take a view, "battered" you, cozened you ... in truth there was never any doubt that cutting, in

the hands of these practitioners, was designed to be partisan and polemical (Le Fanu 1998, p. 17).

Eisenstein believed that film was the greatest of all the arts and “considered editing to be the creative force of film and the foundation of film art” (Orpen 2003, p. 1). As an innovator in cinematic form, his films were received with enthusiasm throughout Europe and subsequently around the world. Most notably, the advent of the surrealist art movement in the late 1920s applauded Eisenstein’s style of montage, whereby experimental filmmakers such as Luis Buñuel in collaboration with Salvador Dali, fought against conventional narrative in favour of abstraction and non-narrative structure. The surrealists challenged the audience to create symbolic meaning through their somewhat disparate and disturbing imagery in films such as Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and *L’Age d’Or* (1931): “The radical artist, he would say, must consciously subvert the form” (Crittenden 1995, p. 10).

Buñuel and his predisposition with “deliberate irrationality rather than the logical development of narrative” (Crittenden 1995, p. 9), was also influenced by the early documentary work of Dziga Vertov, whose work is “more experimental and freeform than the work of his contemporaries” (Dancyger, 2011, p.24). Vertov describes his documentary film *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) as “an experiment in the cinematic transition of visual phenomena without the aid of intertitles (a film with no intertitles), script (a film with no script), theatre (a film with neither actors nor sets)” in creating, “the complete separation of cinema from theater and literature” (Michelson, 1984, cited in Dancyger, 2011, p.23). Even amongst his contemporaries, and in particular Eisenstein who practiced an intellectual style of montage, the radical Vertov repeatedly reminds the viewer of the “artificiality and non-realism of cinema” (Dancyger, 2011, p.24) with the use of artifice in his playful experimentation with non-narrative structure, fantasy and technical elements such as superimposition and special effects. In terms of editing, “Vertov is more closely aligned with experimental film than the history of documentary” (Dancyger, 2011, p.25).

These early artistic endeavors with film form were a segue to the *Le Nouvelle Vague* or New Wave movement in Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Filmmakers such as François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard and Claude Chabrol were acclaimed in Paris and throughout Europe for their experimentation in the form of the avant-garde. The New Wave also had a big impact on editing styles in that it challenged the convention of continuity editing which had become standard practice in Hollywood. Godard honed a form discontinuity in editing and owned the ‘jump-cut’ as an artistic device, whereby

two sections of the same shot are cut together creating a visible jump in time that had a jarring effect on the audience. According to Crittenden, Godard challenged the value of all continuity editing:

To create a truly radical cinema he believed that the audience must remain conscious of the artifice on the screen. Discontinuity in editing was a major weapon in his attempt to achieve this (Crittenden 1995, p. 26).

Godard took the technique of the jump-cut to the extreme by deliberately mismatching action shots, as perfected in his film *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960): "Rarely has so much effort been put into alienating the audience!" (Dancyger 2011, p. 121).

Godard's Russian counterpart Andrei Tarkovsky also practiced unconventional techniques in editing as evident in his first feature film, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962). Tarkovsky identified a connection between art, poetry and film in saying, "I find poetic links, the logic of poetry in cinema, extraordinarily pleasing. They seem to me perfectly appropriate to the potential of cinema as the most truthful and poetic of art forms" (Tarkovsky, 1986, p.18). Tarkovsky adapts the fragmentation of narrative structure in poetry to a more non-linear approach to storytelling in film:

That sort of fussily correct way of linking events usually involves arbitrarily forcing them into sequence in obedience to some abstract notion of order...But film material can be joined together in another way, which works above all to lay open the logic of a person's thought. This is the rationale that will dictate the sequence of events, and editing which forms them into a whole (Tarkovsky, 1986, p.20).

Tarkovsky's theories on film structure align perfectly with Godard's notion of physiologically taking his audience on a ride, which he did so effectively with his obtrusive use of the 'jump-cut' in *Breathless*. As Tarkovsky concedes, "Through poetic connections feeling is heightened and the spectator is made more active. He becomes a participant in the process of discovering life" (1986, p.20).

These early forays into filmmaking are an introduction to the 'art of film' and relevant to our perception of contemporary editing practice today. As Fairservice said, the so-called 'silent period' was a time of "experiment and discovery", a period when films were "unshackled from the real-time demands of synchronous sound" (2001, p. 2). Filmmakers had to find ways of communicating through framing and editing that stylistically were far more inventive than the formulaic editing conventions that became standard practice after the introduction of sound. The silent era laid the foundations of

film language as we know it today, and the technique of montage, some would say, was the birth of “cinematic art” (Fairservice 2001, p. 189). However, what ensued in the subsequent surrealist and avant-garde movements in Europe in the mid-20th century pushed editing to the forefront as fundamental to the art of cinema, as acknowledged by Jean-Luc Godard in his article on editing *Montage mon beau souci*: “To speak of directing is automatically to speak, yet and again, of editing” (*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 1956).

Montage and mis-en-scène

In reviewing a brief history of editing and its development as a key contributor to cinematic art, I will focus on two distinct schools of thought: *mise-en-scène* and montage. By definition, ‘*mise-en-scène*’ is the manipulation of all elements which contribute to the filming of a scene in terms of movement of camera and characters, framing, composition, set design and sound. This is more related to the direction of a film and as such *mise-en-scène*, as associated with ‘deep focus editing’ (extolled by André Bazin), implies minimal intervention given the action is played out within the frame. *Mise-en-scène* originated in the theatre and was adopted by early filmmakers such as Jean Renoir, who was a champion of this style of direction, substituting composition in depth for conventional cutting:

... staging in depth is to contain and emphasise meaning by choreographing camera and character action in such a way as to focus attention within the shots to allow the audience to see or perceive without the need to cut (Crittenden 1995, p.15).

However, the impetus to move the camera from a fixed position to what “became the basic grammar of motion pictures – long shot, medium shot and close shot,” (Brownlow 1968, p. 281), is what initiated the art of storytelling through editing. As Brownlow concedes, Griffith was the ‘master of editing’ and his film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was “the first feature film to exploit fully the extraordinary power of editing” (1968, p. 281). Griffiths moved editing beyond the formulaic, to a new level of storytelling through parallel editing, overlapping cuts and the use of the close-up, all at the service of story and dramatic effect. What is now known as ‘continuity editing’ was a progression from this style of filmmaking whereby, as the name suggests, the action is continuous in matching movement within the frame, thus rendering the edits invisible. This sense of polish and smoothness across the cuts became synonymous with the Hollywood style of editing, and is still prevalent in mainstream cinema and television today.

Although continuity editing can be appreciated as 'less is more' in that it allows the story to breathe and find its own rhythm, 'montage editing' stirred the establishment of filmmakers and artists alike. By definition, montage is the act of 'putting together', which in film terms translates as constructing a story or narrative out of a series of disparate shots that when cut together create new meaning. As established, montage editing (championed by D. W. Griffith and Sergei Eisenstein) was used to create meaning not immediately evident in the shots themselves: "the fact that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of juxtaposition" (Eisenstein, 1957, p.14). The realisation that the power of editing in creating story that could stir an audience into experiencing any range of emotion from patriotism to matters of the heart, was the spark that elevated it from being a 'connective process' to a creative medium. If Griffith was the 'master of editing', Eisenstein was the 'master of montage': "Eisenstein asserted the primacy of muscular metaphor reached by imaginative leaps across stark oppositions of images" (Andrew 2010, p. 35). Like Griffith, Eisenstein's editing incites a sense of power that traded on the "frenetic and uncontrolled" (Brownlow 1968, p. 23), which Eisenstein himself described as "the hammer blow to the solar plexus" (cited in Le Fanu 1998, p. 11).

This style of editing is still prevalent today but more so as a stylistic choice, as is evident in Jill Bilcock's interview in commenting on the 'MTV style' that was associated with her work on Baz Luhrmann's, *Romeo & Juliet* (1996):

The fact that I was criticised so much for my use of montage in *Romeo and Juliet* is really laughable because, you know, in 1925 Eisenstein invented it. It's not like it was new (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

Of course the editing style is directly related to the shooting style and how the director wants to tell their story. Bilcock radically changed her editing style when she worked with Sam Mendes on *Road to Perdition*:

Coming from the theatre he would put most of his actors from beginning of line to end of line on camera, like you were watching it on the stage almost (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

In the end, editing is about creative choices and responding to the footage in a way that will bring out the best in terms of the director's vision, and telling the story that was intended to be:

Cutting is more than just the convenient means by which discontinuity is rendered continuous. It is in *and for itself* – by the very force of its paradoxical suddenness – a positive influence on the creation of a film” (Murch 2001, p. 9).

In summation on the history of editing, Brownlow acknowledged: “No historian without knowing the problems, without knowing the director’s working methods or without being an editor himself, could possibly evaluate the editor’s contribution” (1968, p. 286).

Although historically the notion of editing as a practice may have slipped through the net, early filmmakers and editors alike openly acknowledge the place of editing in the evolution of cinema as we know it today:

With the director and cameraman, the editor is one of the three major contributors to the quality of a motion picture; he is capable of destroying a well-directed film and rescuing poorly directed material. But his efforts are never fully appreciated except by the director (Brownlow 1968, p. 280).

The rise of the auteur and filmmaking today

In the formative years of cinema, the director was the film’s primary ‘author’, and if not responsible for all aspects of the production process, they worked closely with a few key collaborators, namely the cinematographer and editor, in creating the film.

Although historically the concept of the ‘auteur’ has been attributed to French New Wave directors such as Godard and Truffaut, it is interesting to note that the term was adopted by French film critics to describe “Hollywood directors whom they felt had created a distinctive approach to filmmaking while working within the Hollywood studio system” (Bordwell & Thompson 2010, p. 33). One of the heroes of the New Wave was the Hollywood director Alfred Hitchcock, whose distinctive style was admired for “both his control of the medium and his ability to convey disjuncture in society that lies only just beneath the surface” (Crittenden 1995, p. 24). The ‘auteur theory’ was subsequently adopted up by American academics and later by the press to describe a well-respected director. Typically, American directors such as Orson Welles, John Huston and Alfred Hitchcock were respected for their trademark directorial qualities as much as their economic exposition and ability to manipulate the audience with their powerful stories of suspense and intrigue.

Historically, the practice of the early ‘auteur’ film pioneers became obsolete when motion pictures became an industry. The establishment of the ‘studio system’ in Europe and America in the early to mid-20th century introduced the concept of film ‘departments’ and with it an over-supply of technicians. Filmmaking became more of a production line, in what editor Ralph Rosenblum referred to as “the factory atmosphere

in Hollywood” (Rosenblum & Karen 1979, p. 190). In the American studio system, apart from the aforementioned hero directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles who demanded creative control over their films, for the most part a director’s job finished at the end of the shoot when the film was handed over to the editors, producers and studio heads to make the final call on the cut. In terms of editing this did little for personal creativity, and to a great degree set editors up to conform to a “very familiar set of realist, structural forms”, that was identified as “Classical Hollywood Cinema” (Fairservice 2001, p. 2). The shooting style of mise-en-scène was standard practice and continuity editing was, in effect, more functional than creative.

The resurgence of the ‘auteur’ gained momentum again in the mid-late 20th and early 21st century with the rise of the independent and low-budget filmmaking sector. Advances in film technology such as the Super16mm film camera, and subsequently video tape and digital technologies, gave filmmakers the power to have authorship over their films: “The introduction of consumer and prosumer digital cameras and affordable software for computer post-production has led to the rise of ‘do it yourself’ DIY filmmaking” (Bordwell & Thompson 2010, p. 32). From film financing to distribution, the freedom associated with digital filmmaking revolutionised the production process and put creativity back into the hands of the filmmaker. As film director Mike Figgis proclaimed, digital technology is “the biggest innovation since the beginning of cinema” (Trilling 2009, p. 42). For this reason, independent filmmakers and film students alike can compete with the best in producing work of industry standard that can be exhibited through a diversity of distribution channels, from international film festivals to mainstream cinema and broadcast networks.

The power of the filmmaker to produce and be seen has never been greater, but what does it mean for the future of the film industry and specifically for editing? As most practitioners agree, the tools are not the knowledge in the making of great art. They allow for a greater freedom of expression and economy of scale, but the question of quality comes with knowledge and practice. This is particularly true of editing, which – until the advent of digital technology – remained unchanged for the best part of seventy years. Although digital technology completely changed the editing process, of the editors I interviewed who started their careers editing on film, as much as they love the technology, they don’t credit it for creative solutions:

The impact of digital technology has altered the editing process dramatically. It's just totally radically changed it ... There are pluses and minuses. The theory being of course the idea that digital editing would make things happen a lot

quicker is totally untrue. It still takes exactly the same amount of time to do things even though it's less physical and you don't have to pause to pull the footage out (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011).

Film editing styles today

As discussed, the style of 'discontinuous editing' that Eisenstein perfected was a precursor to 'visual editing' that is synonymous with editing styles today. American editor Richard Chew believes editing is experiencing a renaissance where 'anything goes':

"Visible" editing has grabbed center stage. Initially stunningly original (*Breathless*) but now commonplace, this modern impulse jars the senses with discontinuous jumps, hyped pacing, and image overload underscored by layers of sound, which in concert distract the viewer from a lack of content, continuity, and character development. It's a cinema stimulating the senses (Chew et al. 2009, p. 54)

Most editors will agree that the film dictates the style of the edit. However, with the advent of digital technology, the freedom to shoot vast amounts of footage, the use of multi-camera set-ups, a preference for hand-held devices and the use of unconventional coverage such as crossing the line and whip-pans etc., all encourage non-conformity when it comes to the edit: "Making cuts impactful, jarring, and shocking is now the MO in keeping with a high-paced, dissonant world" (Chew et al. 2009, p. 62). As a result, visible editing is now widely accepted and generally goes unnoticed as long as the audience is engaged with the story, a sentiment shared amongst the Australian screen editors I interviewed for my artifact:

I think styles come and go and I think visible editing has come. If you look at television in Australia, *East West 101*, or *Underbelly* or any of those shows, they're all cut very visibly (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

I think everybody is feeling quite relaxed about using jump cuts, hopefully for the right reasons, whereas I'm sure ten or fifteen years ago we would have been much more hesitant about using them (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

I think digital editing has made it more visible, in the fact that you actually jump cut, forget about continuity etc. (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011).

Another consideration is that with an increase in prosumer film production, the non-professional/independent film practitioner can explore their creativity without resorting to stylistic conventions or commercial constraints, including budgets. As film director Mike Figgis observed:

Digital equipment that allows you to shoot a film and edit it on your own computer to professional standard is the biggest innovation since the beginning of cinema ... Film-making is now more like writing a novel or painting a picture than it has ever been (Trilling 2009, p. 42).

This freedom to explore is perhaps another reason for a more relaxed attitude to style and content. However, the question as to whether editing styles go in and out of fashion was one that I put to the editors I interviewed for my artifact:

Whether editing styles come and go and whether there are kind of phases or they are fashionable or not fashionable, it's probably true ... I mean jump-cuts is the most obvious example. I think everybody is feeling quite relaxed about using jump cuts hopefully for the right reasons (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

I think today because of most visual content being narrowed down to a smaller screen whether it's your iPhone or iPad or any other system that you choose to take, and the accessibility of being able to edit yourself, makes it a different looking medium. So you will get bigger shots, closer shots. You will get more visual editing with no rules because you just work with what you've got (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

The power of montage was groundbreaking in its inception not just as an editing technique, but more so in the fact that filmmakers such as Eisenstein turned their focus to the art of editing itself. Like his predecessor, screenwriter and director David Mamet believes, "A movie should be a juxtaposition of uninflected shots that tell a story" (1991, p. 4). Mamet challenges the concept of 'directing' in terms of following the protagonist in order to find the story, and at the same time, trying to make it look interesting. In contrast, Mamet believes in the power of editing as a means to move the story forward in the mind of the audience: "the work of the director is the work of constructing a shot list from the script ... the film is directed in the making of the shot list" (1991, p. 5). This approach is closely aligned with Godard's belief that: "the editing is above all the ultimate word of the production. We don't separate one from the other without danger" (Godard, *Cahiers du Cinema*, December 1956).

It is common practice that films are generally shot with editing in mind, in working from the initial structure of the script, to developing a shot list, a directorial treatment and storyboards, to finally shooting the film. In this context, Mamet believes that directing is more for the purpose of 'gathering', and the use of montage as an editing technique allows the story to unfold: "Let the cut tell the story. Because otherwise you have no

dramatic action, you have narration ... It's important simply not to *tell* the story. Let the audience be surprised" (1991, p. 2). Kevin Brownlow firmly believed in the power of editing as a seminal factor in the construction of a film, and has been quoted many times in saying: "Editing is directing the film for the second time. To gauge the psychological moment – to know exactly where to cut – requires the same intuitive skill as that needed by a director" (1968, p. 280).

How editors view their work in terms of art or craft

Kevin Brownlow's acknowledgement of editing as 'the hidden art' or the 'the art that conceals art' is an accurate observation and one that hasn't much changed. As established, in recent years editing has become more 'visible' with editors speaking out about their work. The advent of digital technology has revolutionised editing processes and the ability for editors to communicate about their practice through editors' forums and websites such as *The Art of the Guillotine* and *Creative Cow*, as well as through screen editors' guilds such as American Cinema Editors (ACE) and the Australian Screen Editors (ASE). As previously noted, this new-found freedom in discussing editing practice also instigated a number of editors' events and conferences around the world, including the American Cinema Editors' annual events EditFest LA, EditFest NY and EditFest London, and the aforementioned Symposium on Creative Post-Production, *Revealing the Hidden Art*. The symposium, initiated by the editor-academic-film historian Richard Crittenden, was first presented at the National Film and Television School in England (2010) and subsequently travelled the world, including Griffith University in Australia (2012). Through events such as these, Crittenden spoke of the cultural shift over the past few years where editors and academics openly discuss the complexities of their craft or *art*:

Until recently it has been extremely unusual for editors and others involved in post-production to meet to celebrate their craft and share experiences, except in the closed world of their own society or craft organisation. For me, this all changed a few years ago when, after I had published a book of interviews with European Editors, I was invited to contribute to international gatherings where editing was discussed in open forums with a wide range of distinguished professionals (Crittenden 2012).

Like Brownlow, Crittenden has always been a strong advocate for the editing profession, and has written a number of books on editing, including *Film and Video Editing* (now in its 6th edition). In the introduction Crittenden again alludes to the 'hidden art':

The contribution that editing can make is still the least understood and most underestimated part of the whole process, and yet it is often the point at which the magic comes together or proves finally to be elusive (Crittenden 2006, p. x).

By the late 20th century a small number of texts on editing by editors were published including Ralph Rosenblum's *When The Shooting Stops ...* (1979) and Walter Murch's *In the Blink of an Eye* (1995). In fact, one of my interviewees, Ken Sallows, initiated the publication of Walter Murch's *In the Blink of an Eye* after attending a lecture by Murch on a visit to Sydney in 1988. For Sallows, it was the first time he'd been privy to an editor expanding on the creative aspects of his craft: "Wow, this is fantastic, it's not technical at all. I was sick and tired of reading books about editing that are too technical" (ASE interview, 2012). Anthologies of editors speaking about their work also started to emerge, including Gabriella Oldham's *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* (1995), and by the early 2000s a number of anthologies appeared including Michael Ondaatje's *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Film Editing* (2002), Richard Crittenden's *Finecuts: The Art of European Film Editing* (2006), and Justin Chang's *Film Craft: Editing* (2012).

As much as there is a renewed interest in reading about and discussing editing practice, "Theories of film editing cannot be considered outside the historical development of filmmaking because they are totally integrated within the practice" (Fairservice 2001, p. 3). However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there has been an increase in the number of texts written by film academics/editors investigating the creative attributes of editing. The best of these include: French academic Valerie Orpen's book, *Film Editing: The Art of the Expressive* (2003); Australian editor and academic Karen Pearlman's book, *Cutting Rhythms: Shaping the Film Edit* (2009); and American editor and academic Norman Hollyn's book, *The Lean Forward Moment* (2009). Not unlike Murch's *In the Blink of an Eye* (1995), these texts go beyond the technical to give a first-hand view of the more elusive attributes of creative editing practice. Orpen clearly delineates the functional or 'connective' purpose of editing from the creative or 'expressive', for me the most fascinating aspect of editing and the focus of my research enquiry:

We all know that it is expressive, but it is more difficult, uncomfortable even, to explain why and how. The expressiveness of lighting, camera movements, colour and sound and so forth have been explored to a large extent. Editing is far more elusive (Orpen 2003, p. 3).

In fact, Orpen questions whether editing exists at all, and whether it qualifies as something tangible outside of its primary function of cutting from one shot to the next:

Strictly speaking, editing exists only *in relation to*, as a *counterpart to*, the shot. In other words, it is impossible to isolate editing, to analyse the cuts *per se*, that thin line, or 'switching', that demarcates one shot from another (Orpen 2003, p. 3).

While film academic Mark Le Fanu acknowledges that the beginning of editing is the beginning of cinema itself, he asks the same question: "What is so 'momentous' about this joining or splicing that impels us to pause on it and puzzle out its meaning?" (1998, p. 5).

Editors often speak of the expressive or emotive elements of editing in terms of what happens 'between the cuts':

Because continuity survives in the space between shots, in the same way that rhythm derives from the interval between notes ... Editors create the illusion of significance and of presence through the emptiness between and around their material (Andrew 2010, p. 34).

This sentiment is reflected in the editors' interviews for my artifact:

I think it was David Mamet that said, the story is really told by what's between the cuts. It's not jump cutting but it's jumping time. Every one of those seems to sort of mount an extra level of tension (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

It's not the actual joins that are important, it's what's between the joins. And the selection of what's between the joins comes from all that life experience that you've had as to why would you choose that piece to put into that film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

The edit or the 'cut' may be invisible in its application in the style of 'continuity editing', or it may make a statement in terms of graphic and rhythmic overlays more in keeping with 'montage editing'. Either way, the fact that much of the editing process goes unnoticed makes it all the more difficult to evaluate, but in the end what does exist is story, which is the embodiment of the film:

When you're seeing a good film, you're seeing good editing. The cuts may be invisible, but what you see is movement of story, movement of emotion, and movement of images and sound, and all that is shaped by the editor" (Pearlman, *Art of The Guillotine*, 2011 [online] Available from <http://www.aotg.com>).

Walter Murch believes "emotion, story, rhythm are extremely tightly connected" (2001, p. 20), but in defining the key criteria in making a good cut he puts emotion at the top of

the list: emotion 51%, story 23%, rhythm 10%, eye-trace 7%, two-dimensional plane of screen 5% and three-dimensional plane of screen 4% (2001, p. 18):

There is a practical side to this, which is if the emotion is right and the story is advanced in a unique and interesting way, in the right rhythm, the audience will tend to be unaware of (or unconcerned about) editorial problems with lower-order items like eye-trace, stage-line, special continuity etc. (Murch 2001, p. 19).

Murch also acknowledges that emotion in editing is the hardest thing to define and to deal with: "How do you want the audience to feel? What they finally remember is not the editing, not the camerawork, not the performances, not even the story – it's how they *felt*" (2001, p. 18).

In a contemporary context and as evidenced through interviewing Australian screen editors for my artifact, there is still a mystique around the practice of editing. Although most editors tend to agree it is an art form, from a practical point of view it is difficult for anyone other than the director, and possibly the producer, to truly understand the creative input of the editor on any given film:

Yes, I do believe editing is a modern day art form. It's not in the traditional sense of painting. It's an intangible art in some sense, unless you're involved. And I do understand that people find it hard to understand what's involved (personal interview, Jason Ballantyne 2013).

In the whole overview of things, it definitely is sort of like an art. It just seems to me that calling it an art makes it more mysterious than it actually is (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011).

Interesting to note, that in describing the intangible aspects associated with the art of editing, editors and academics alike will often use the word 'magic':

I think editing is magic ... I think every art form needs its special magic, and editing is the art aspect of cinema which is especially magical (Pearlman 2011).

If we are talking about magic, the magic of cinema is surely sensed to lie here: in the strange alchemy arising out of the juxtaposition of images – images that cut through, or rather *dispense with*, pages of theatrical dialogue to achieve their effect instantaneously (Le Fanu 1998, p. 6).

As much as film is a collaborative medium, it's through the manipulation of image and sound that an editor can bring their own creativity to a film project. As an artist and an editor, I discovered my creative ambitions are best reflected in Kevin Brownlow's

affirmation: “Editing is an art, completely satisfying in itself” (1968, p. 23). This form of creativity in editing is what I hope to bring to my teaching practice, and one I expand on further in the section *Pedagogy and the practice of teaching editing*.

In summary: good film, good editing

In response to the questions to the editors I interviewed for my artifact – What is the editor’s contribution to the creative outcome of a film? Do editors leave their ‘hand-print’ on a film? What is the importance of the editor–director relationship? Can editing be acknowledged as art? – the answer is a unanimous ‘yes’ when it comes to the creative contribution of the editor in shaping a film.

It is also reassuring that the editor of the 21st century acknowledges their place as a creative practitioner and, through the recent proliferation of online editors’ forums, festivals and symposiums, there is an increased awareness and appreciation of the ‘art of editing’ within the film community and beyond. However, the creative contribution of editing to any particular film project is still privy to those closest to the production process, and in many ways something that will never be disclosed outside the editor’s and director’s relationship with a film.

In reviewing the ‘art of editing’, what has been clearly established is the sense of ambiguity that permeates all aspects of the craft in reference to defining the terminology around editing practice, articulating it as a process, and evaluating the creative contribution of editing to filmic outcomes. That being said, what has been acknowledged is the power of editing as a seminal factor in the evolution of film, and the role of the editor as a major contributor to the creation of a film. As such, the editor has taken center stage as a major stakeholder in the filmmaking process, and although their contribution may not be easily identified, their handprint is undoubtedly within the fabric of the film:

Editing’s such a personal thing, it’s like a finger print...And I think *Animal Kingdom* was the real peak of that so far where I feel so much of me is in the cut...it’s hard to describe but I guess by seeing the film I feel like whether you notice me or not, and I hope you don’t notice me, but I feel people walk away with something that’s a bit of my DNA (personal interview, Luke Doolan, 2011).

Section 4: Looking at film editing through the prism of film theory

Film theory opens up the scholarly discussion on filmic investigation and representation of space, time, vision and meaning in cinematic text. In aligning practitioners and non-practitioner-theorists, it's interesting to observe similarities in their theories on the phenomena of cinema, on one hand practice informing theory, and on the other hand theory investigating practice.

In this section I investigate where editing sits as a 'concept' in terms of film theory. It is widely acknowledged that the beginning of editing is the beginning of cinema itself (Le Fanu 1998, p. 5). The concept of joining two shots together to create meaning is something integral to the practice of editing, and part of the process in reconstructing story. In focusing on the 'notion' of editing and what it pertains to, film theorists seem to be divided in their approach as to whether editing is related to production, to structure or to reception (Kolstrop 1998, p. 39).

The nexus between practice and theory is not a harmonious one, particularly when it comes to evaluating the internal attributes of 'film practice' as opposed to 'meaning' in cinema. What we have come to recognise from the 'mid-range' film theorists, such as David Bordwell and Noel Carroll, is the tendency to define editing through a 'shot-by-shot analysis' (Kolstrop 1998, p. 31) as opposed to a more constructive aesthetic approach. Although the contribution of the editor is acknowledged, there is a sense of ambiguity as to what the job entails: "editing has exercised such an enormous fascination for film aestheticians, for as a technique it's very powerful" (Bordwell & Thompson 2010, p. 223).

The other challenge is that in the formative years of cinema, the job of the editor and their contribution to the film wasn't acknowledged: "there was no tradition to draw upon, no corpus of received wisdom: simply no way of talking about films which would enable the editor's work to be mentioned" (Ondaatje 2010, p. xii). As discussed, this is most likely in response the fact that, as a creative practice, it is the least understood and the outcomes are not easily identified, which implies a sense of ambiguity, even mystery. Michael Ondaatje alludes to the invisible art of editing in reference to "the art of the artist as solitary creator" (2002, p. xxi). Although the notion of the editor working away in a dark room is somewhat accurate, it is not entirely true given the collaborative nature of filmmaking and specifically the importance of the editor-director relationship, cited by most editors as critical to making a good film.

Ambiguity aside, when the notion of a 'film industry' took hold in Europe and America in the early to mid-20th century, the role of the editor was acknowledged if not credited as a creative contributor. Ken Dancyger dedicated his book *The Technique of Film & Video Editing* (2011) to Karel Reisz, who had written *The Technique of Film Editing* (1953) some 50 years earlier. Like Reisz, Dancyger firmly believes in the creative power of editing as "a seminal factor in the craft of filmmaking in the evolution of film as an art form" (2011, p. xvii) and, furthermore, in the aesthetics of editing as central to the creative evolution of film. For this reason, Dancyger focuses on the "artistic evolution of film" (2011, p. xix) and adopts the key criteria of *technique*, *craft* and *art* in deconstructing editing practice. He borrows from Reisz in saying: "the *art* of editing occurs when two or more shots takes meaning to the next level – excitement, insight, shock, or the epiphany of discovery" (Dancyger 2011, p. xix). Although inspired, this is not entirely new given their predecessors Eisenstein and Bazin made their own proclamations on the art of cinema and the power of discovery through the editing process: "chance and reality exhibit more talent than all the filmmakers in the world" (Bazin 1958, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 33).

Although Reisz and Dancyger imbed the practical in an historical and theoretical framework, they identify with the creative and more intangible aspects of editing and in this respect come close to how editors themselves attempt to describe their creative practice. As editor-turned-academic Roger Crittenden so eloquently states: "One of the most beautiful things you can learn as an editor is that elegant juxtapositions are a matter of discovery rather than calculation" (2008, p. 87).

Where does editing sit as a 'concept' in terms of film theory?

No one theory predominates in film studies today. What is more, different approaches no longer seem to vie for hegemony but instead seem to accept a peaceful coexistence" (McGowan 2003, p. 27).

Todd McGowan takes a more pragmatic approach to film theory, one that steers away from "the universalizing pretensions of the film theory of the 1970s and 1980s" (2003, p. 27) and is more open to investigating the practice of filmmaking, and in this case editing. As such, film language and concepts specific to editing such as continuity editing, montage, intuition, rhythm and pacing, may well be explored through a theoretical perspective.

The terminology around editing practice is somewhat ambiguous and open to interpretation, depending on nationality and stylistic traits. The notion of 'editing' is not easily defined in terms of process, but more through association using terminology

such as 'montage', 'cutting' or 'decoupage' (Kolstrup 1998, p. 31). In Australia (and in Great Britain) film is "joined" or "spliced" with the emphasis on bringing together, whereas in American film is "cut" which puts the emphasis on *separation* (Orpen, 2003, p.1). To complicate matters further, the French word *decoupage*, is translated as "cutting", but can also mean "to join". These processes are not exclusive of each other given editing *is* the process of *cutting* and *joining* shots together. However, the terminology clearly defines editing in terms of a post-production process, more practical than creative.

In the quest to discover the 'notion of editing', film academic Søren Kolstrup reviewed a cross-section of film texts written in the late 1990s by reputable film theorists including Edward Branigan, Bruce Kawin, Noel Carroll and David Bordwell. Traditionally, editing has been key-holed as part of the production process, which from a theoretical perspective makes it hard to get acquainted with. In reference to film practice, "editing' is a general term. It does not need to be explicated, defined or given any historical description" (Kolstrup 1998, p. 33).

Kolstrup starts out with a broad definition of editing as taken from *The Complete Film Dictionary*, which "focuses on the production aspect, to such a degree that the description becomes a story about the editor's work" (1998, p. 32). In a professional context the language is somewhat naïve, but it does attempt to encompass the integrity of editing beyond the practical:

The term "cutting" is sometimes used synonymously for editing, but is too limited since it conveys only a mechanical sense of snipping the film into pieces and reassembling them, without any suggestion of the technical, dramatic, and artistic skills to make the film move effectively and form a total, coherent entity (Konigsberg p. 99, cited in Kolstrup 1998, p. 32).

As established, the early film practitioners turned theorists did in fact establish the craft of editing as integral to constructing a film. Most notably: Griffiths, as a precursor to continuity editing or 'invisible editing', with his inventive storytelling techniques such as cross cutting, moving camera, parallel action and flash-backs; Eisenstein and Pudovkin, with their variations on montage theory; and Bazin, with his deep-focus editing technique. A whole dialogue around editing practice evolved out of these early forays into filmmaking and established much of the technique and terminology synonymous with editing today: "It was without doubt Griffith's incorporation of such elements into his films which propelled commercial film forward and gave it a legitimate and coherent form" (Crittenden 1981, p. 10).

There is no one predominant film theory

In a contemporary context, Lisbeth During and Deborah Levitt (2012) question classical film theory as a 'historical object'. The notion of cinema studies in a post-film world has created a divide between what we perceive as traditional film theory, and what is relevant to screen studies today, so much so that "Philosophy of film has taken over much of the search for an epistemology or ontology of the medium" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 134). In an attempt to bring film theory into a contemporary context, During defines 'good theory' as "concepts that are central to the practice in question, clarifies them and sets them into a coherent framework" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 136). Film theory treads a fine line between a philosophical and cultural discourse, and one that encompasses "not just aesthetic but also structural definitions and distinctions that are specific to film" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 136). During makes the distinction between an aesthetic account, which "does not have to argue against other aesthetic accounts", and theory, which does, but goes on to qualify "theories are provisional: they are things to tinker with and adapt, not declarations of first principles. While scholastics like systems, pragmatists like theories" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 136).

Film theory evolved not long after the birth of cinema itself: "No sooner had the first generation of spectators left the hall than the definitions started coming in" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 133). Film theory moved from classical and post-classical configurations to what is today arguably an open forum in the now post-film, digital era. In reference to McGowan's statement "no one film theory predominates film studies today" (2003, p. 27), During concedes: "film theory has to tell us about the films that people see and have seen, not just ideal films or possible films or the most exemplary films" (During & Levitt 2012, p. 137).

To put these statements in context, it is necessary to have an understanding of how film theory emerged, and where it's situated in terms of film practice. In his book *After Theory*, Terry Eagleton sets the scene citing the birth of 'cultural theory' as a new age of thinking and one that "helped demolish the puritan dogma that seriousness is one thing and pleasure another" (Eagleton 2003, pp. 4–5). Most significantly there was a shift in the scholarly understanding of what 'culture' stood for, which moved from an elite form of social commentary to encompass artistic pursuit and a new-found freedom of expression. By the late 1960s and 1970s, all forms of creative endeavour and new media such as film, photography, fashion, lifestyle, marketing, and advertising were accepted into the arts. The idea of the 'cultural revolution' migrated from the so-called 'Third World' to the well-heeled West, in a "heady *mélange* of Fanon, Marcuse, Reich, Beauvoir, Gramsci and Godard" (Eagleton 2003, p. 25).

In terms of 'film culture', the mid-1960s heralded the arrival of the French *Cinema-Vérité* and the aforementioned *Le Nouvelle Vague* (the New Wave) cinema, an exciting revolution in film style and technique that kicked against formulaic traditions imposed by "the pressure of commercial and industrial modes of production" (Crittenden 1981, p. 18). This was a time when culture and capitalism were diametrically opposed, and the avant-garde filmmakers including Godard, Truffaut and Buñuel, joined forces in turning the art establishment on its head. The humanities had become complicit in this, from which a cultural theory emerged:

The humanities had lost their innocence: they could no longer pretend to be untainted by power. If they wanted to stay in business, it was now vital they paused to reflect on their own purposes and assumptions. It is this critical self-reflection we know as theory ... It is a symptom of the fact that we can no longer take these practices for granted. On the contrary, these practices must now initiate the notion of 'mid-range theory, which does not claim privilege over empirical study and refocused its attention to the object of cinema itself:

During the 1990s in film studies there was a rash of books demanding that the moment of high theory should be abandoned, or at least rethought, in favour of a mid-range theory, which is less abstract and more pragmatic than high theory. Among the most important were David Bordwell and Noel Carroll (eds): *Post Theory* (Bordwell and Carroll 1996), *Making Meaning* (Bordwell 1991) and *Reinventing Film Studies* (Gledhill and Williams 2000) (Haefner 2008, p. 180).

Bordwell made clear his impatience with the type of theory that dominated film studies, which he rejected as the 'theory of everything' associated with psychoanalysis and deconstruction, in preference to what he called 'mid-range theory': "used in a case by case basis, along with careful empirical research" (Haefner 2008, p. 180). However, in defining film craft and specifically the notion of editing, the mid-range theorists rarely extend beyond technique into the realms of editing as a creative pursuit, but are "more concerned with the connective properties of editing" (Orpen 2003, p. 10). Søren Kolstrup discovered definitions of editing were often simplistic, with a focus on function over form: "To cut or to edit a film is to join its shots together physically into the order in which they are intended to be projected" (Kawin, cited in Kolstrup 1998, p. 34). In Kolstrup's (1998) review of David Bordwell's book *Narration in the Fiction Film*, he discovered the word 'editing' is not alluded to at all other than to quote Eisenstein in saying: "Editing as the most palpable stage of montage construction, will often violate verisimilitude for the sake of impact" (Bordwell, cited in Kolstrup 1998, p. 38).

Edward Branigan and David Bordwell have both written texts on film narrative – *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (Branigan, 1992) and *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Bordwell, 1997) – but in both cases they omitted to address the subject of editing. It's hard to imagine investigating narrative concepts and structure in film without deflecting to the impact of editing. In *Film Art: An Introduction* (1997), Bordwell gives greater attention to editing but his language defies any innate understanding of the principles of editing practice: “the technique that relates shot to shot, editing” (Bordwell, Thompson & Ashton, 1997 p. 168). However, he elaborates on the more pedestrian aspects of editing in making statements such as: “Editing may be thought of as the coordination of one shot with the next”; “The film editor eliminates unwanted footage”; “The editor also cuts superfluous frames, such as those showing the clapboard from the beginnings and endings of shots” (Bordwell, Thompson & Ashton, 1997 p. 271). Bordwell describes editing more as a process of elimination rather than creating context and meaning. In professional terms, this is a summary of every misconception about the editing process, and the antithesis of how an editor would explain their practice: “Good editors change the world with good stories ... bad editors take out the bad bits” (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

What was prevalent among the ‘mid-range’ film theorists was the use of shot-by-shot analysis to describe editing conventions. For example, Bordwell reviewed the shot construction in Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* in discussing the ‘graphic and rhythmic relations’. Similarly Carroll focused on production and comprehension but with “no attempt to define the notion of editing” (Kolstrop 1998, p. 36):

The material basis of film editing is the cut, the physical joining of two shots. We can easily account for this process with a little chemistry ... But editing involves more than chemistry and mechanics. It is a means of communication within the social institution of world cinema (Carroll, cited in Kolstrop 1998, pp. 36–37).

Given these film texts were written in the 1990s, it is somewhat disturbing to observe the level of naïvety around editing practices: “What film theory offers us is an endless stream of analyses of specific scenes or sequences of film. According to Carroll, editing is a means of communication, but the theory about editing is far from being as precise as the theory about language” (Kolstrop 1998, p. 39). Interesting to note, the word ‘editing’ is used in a more generic sense, whereas film theorists put greater emphasis on editing terminologies such as ‘montage’ and ‘decoupage’, to which they attribute creativity and interpretation: “As soon as a film is made of more than one shot, editing comes into play. When one shot does not simply follow another, and their

juxtaposition has dynamic significance, one speaks not about editing but about montage” (Kawin, cited in Kolstrop 1998, p. 35).

In his investigation on the ‘notion of editing’ Kolstrop concludes, “It is bewildering that we have no really precise concept about a phenomenon, which, according to almost all theoreticians, is the most fundamental construction principle in film making” (1998, p. 39). The blunt tool that was mid-range theory was disparaging of editing, in that it didn’t understand or appreciate the art of it. In this context, my artifact attempts to redress the lack of a holistic understanding of editing practice, to contribute new knowledge to what it is that editors *do*, and to bring the notion of editing into its rightful place as an art form.

Where does film theory sit in terms of filmic investigation and analysis in practice-based studies?

To mark the end of the 20th century’s modes of thinking around film theory, Frank Tomasulo quoted NYU graduate/film director Susan Seidelman as saying “Don’t take any film theory classes!” (1997, p. 113). Tomasulo observed the disillusionment of film practitioners who do not recognise “the valuable nexus between motion picture theory and practice” (1997, p. 113). So where does film theory sit in terms of investigating editing practice in the ten years since the texts of the so-called ‘mid-range’ film theorists were written? What is the value of integrated film theory and practice today, and does it lead to greater insights as to why and how practitioners make decisions? Although Tomasulo believes much of classical and (especially) contemporary film theory is rather abstruse, he adheres to Lev Kuleshov’s dictum:

Teaching filmmaking without being cognizant of fundamental cinematic theories demeans film craft to the mere level of an amateur workshop. And the opposite: studying film history and theory without a corresponding experience in the elemental aspects of filmmaking leaves theoretical research without a solid basis, forcing students to plunge into abstraction (Kuleshov, cited in Tomasulo 1997, p. 113).

Nick Haeffner concedes, “The dominance of theory has led to a downgrading of the importance of creativity, a narrow definition of skill and an insufficiently strong awareness of the underlying economics of media practices” (2008, p. 173). Although the nexus of theory and practice in film studies has long been accepted, now more so than ever, the academy has embraced pedagogy in the area of creativity. In response, Haeffner praises the emergence of practice-based research in “relating to practical work in higher studies” and in reference to film theory, an opportunity to “rethink what

we mean by theory and whether the primacy accorded to a certain notion of theory is any longer sustainable” (2008, p. 173). Empirical studies were once demonised by traditional theorists as “generally suspect and/or uninteresting”, but are now readily accepted in terms of “understanding the process by which an object is made and circulated” (Haeffner 2008, pp.175–76).

In *After the Theory* (1994), Terry Eagleton, like his many of his counterparts in the ‘theory war’, fuelled the debate arguing that the boom in theory, which had inspired so many people to teach and write about contemporary French thought, was well and truly over (Haeffner, 2008, p.177). The reasons given for this are varied and not always consistent with each other:

Some [...] have argued that theory has been discredited; some that it has simply grown old and outdated; some that it completed its task, that theory has now vanished into new, and better critical practice; others that it is impossible to talk of the end of a body of thought that itself does so much to problematize notions of historical linearity (Payne & Shad, cited in Haeffner 2008, p. 177).

Haeffner draws a line between creativity and theory in saying, “Creativity can’t be taught but it can be encouraged or discouraged, valued or devalued. It can also be theorized in ways that do not mystify its origins” (2008, p. 179). In contemporary practice, the concept of creativity has been released from its romantic shackles that “perpetuate a mythical and irrational link between individuals, art and creativity”, in favour of a more theoretical approach that makes the distinction between a practitioner’s creative process and the product. As such, creativity does exist in isolation but is a multi-layered discipline that draws on “systemic, staged and collaborative processes” (Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2011, p.126). This fits perfectly within the realm of film production, whereby creative outcomes or ‘product’ are the result of collaborative processes built on the skills of a number of highly articulate and creative individuals working for the common good of the film. This form of creative interaction draws on Csikszentmihalyi’s theories of creativity, not as “the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals’ products” (Csikszentmihalyi in Sternberg 1999: 314, cited in Kerrigan and McIntyre, p.119).

In terms of my research on teaching creativity in editing, I am less concerned with teaching technique, but more invested in “the process of editing as a seminal factor in the craft of filmmaking” (Dancyger 2011, pp. xvii–xix). The question of creativity and whether it can be taught is topical in all areas of the creative industries. In reference to the development of my artifact as a visual-aided teaching resource, my hypothesis is

that it can be taught by example, and through collaboration and consultation with practitioners, educators and peers in the place of knowledge. In line with Haeffner's view that creativity can be 'encouraged or discouraged, valued or devalued', by engaging students in the content of my artifact, where editors openly discuss creative concepts in reference to their work, I have attempted to imbed the practice of editing within a theoretical framework that is both accessible and practical, which in turn will inspire the students to engage with new knowledge and apply it to their own editing practice.

In the last decade, the increasing emphasis on "the study of practice as well as practice itself" (Haeffner 2008, p. 181) has led to the emergence of the practice-led PhD: "The great virtue of AV Ph.D. is that it trains people to teach both theory and studio practice" (Bell, cited in Haeffner 2008, p. 181). Bell also cites the move from 'post-structuralism' to 'pragmatism'. As Haeffner concedes, the appeal of pragmatism is in the: "privileging of the practical instance over the theoretical. Pragmatists have long held that theory is incapable of getting at the truth " (Haeffner 2008, p. 181). This follows the pragmatic doctrine that truth is derived from real world practical engagement, which at once privileges studio practice in the arts and media related studies. Rather than negate theory, such practice incites investigation in moving from 'action to thinking about action'. This has had a resounding impact on the study of editing and where it sits in terms of theory and practice. The fact that a pragmatic approach "lends itself easily to a concern with the particularities and processes of making" which, in itself, "dovetails with another kind of discourse gaining ground at present, one which concerns the concept of craft" (Haeffner 2008, p. 181), is grounds for acknowledging a practical approach to the pedagogy of film-related studies.

Again, this relates to my own studies as a practice-led/practice-based researcher and the opportunity to embed editing practice into an academic discourse to investigate new ways to communicate and teach creativity in editing. The concept of 'action to thinking about action' is one that resonates with editing, where creativity is often aligned with 'intuition' as something not preconceived or calculated, but a spontaneous action or reaction that is evaluated afterwards, both intellectually and in reviewing the cut:

It's amazing how you kind of post-theorise what you're doing (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

Your intuition comes to the fore when you're cutting, and then you can sit and write a book about it (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

As Haeffner concedes: “the tacit knowledge that the craftsman possesses cannot easily be expressed in conceptual terms” (2008, p. 182). In this respect, it is difficult for film theorists to expand on the ‘notion of editing’ when editors themselves find it hard to articulate their practice. Which leads to the question of how, without implicit knowledge as derived from a practical application, anyone can hope to understand the intricacies of a *craft*, or an *art*.

As a practitioner-turned-academic, I am all too aware that when it comes to disseminating codes of practice, editing has traditionally been a closed profession. As disclosed earlier, it was a curiosity about the art of editing that inspired Michael Ondaatje to engage in a series of interviews with Walter Murch, after Murch edited the film adaption of Ondaatje’s book *The English Patient*. The interviews subsequently became the book *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film* (2002). For the most part, anthologies are written by editors for editors or those with an interest in the profession. However, there is a need for both a theoretical and academic discourse on editing that investigates the practical attributes of the craft, namely creativity and expression in editing:

Textbooks and technical guides abound, but they have their limitations.

Interviews with editors can prove to be more useful, though they usually do not address the expressive dimensions of the end result of editing (Orpen 2003, p. 14).

What insights did the early film theorist-practitioners bring to academic discourse as relevant to the practice of editing today?

The early film theorists came closest to defining the art of editing as they were practising filmmakers themselves. As established, notable figures such as Griffiths, Eisenstein, Kuleshov and Bazin all developed a style of editing that informed their filmmaking practices and, in turn, laid the foundations of what editing is today: Griffiths and his “authorial style with its extensive dependence on cross-cutting and parallel action” (Fairservice 2001, p. 157); Eisenstein and his approach to ‘intellectual montage’ in creating story and dramatic effect through the juxtaposition of image; and Bazin through his in-camera, long-focus technique. All have their place and are important “because they assumed the need for an editing process” (Crittenden 1981, p. 3), whatever form that took.

It is important to reiterate that editing can be broken down into ‘two main traditions’: ‘montage editing’ where the cuts are ‘visible’ and designed to be noticed: “how else in Eisenstein’s terms could one register the feeling of shock” (Le Fanu 1998, p. 12), and

'invisible editing' as initiated by Griffiths and subsequently associated with the Hollywood style of 'continuity editing', whereby the cuts are unobtrusive to the action. Of course editing style is synonymous with the shooting style, which is pre-determined in the three stages of film production: the script, which renders story in the context of dialogue and the audio-visual setting; the production stage, which is considered the second writing in interpreting the script through performance, camera and sound; and the third writing, which is in the edit. "How well the director has succeeded on the set, becomes obvious in the editing", and in this sense the editing may be interpreted as the "(re)creation of the general narrative structure of the film" (Wiedemann 1998, pp. 23–24).

In bringing film production into an academic forum, Danish screenwriter, editor and academic, Vinca Wiedemann, explains:

When filmmakers hear how theorists describe 'the process of film creation', they are often amused: it always sounds as if every step of the process is carefully planned and constructed. The filmmakers know how accidental and circumstantial filmmaking really is (1998, p. 29).

As noted previously, this observation is nothing new: "Chance and reality exhibit more talent than all the filmmakers in the world" (Bazin, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 33). But what contemporary film theorists share with Bazin is an insight into the "aesthetic of discovery", as the "antipodes of a cinema of manipulation, including most animation and pure digital creation" (Andrew 2010, p. 42).

In *What Cinema Is!*, Dudley Andrew (2010) pays homage to Bazin, who did not adhere to the classical theorists' dictum of identifying cinema as a 'new aesthetic', as distinct from the visual arts, in that it is created 'beyond the human realm'. On the contrary, he saw Bazin as a "modern, not a classical theorist, for he accepts the value of mere recording, and he relishes the expressivity, as well as the opacity, of the non-human world registered by the photographic process" (Andrew 2010, p. 30). As an active supporter of the *Cahiers* line of thought, Bazin believed cinema was an object in and of itself and, as such, a 'creative force': "cinema is not made of images but of shots, and the shot is the indivisible bloc of image and time" (Daney, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 42). This thinking was radical for its time but something contemporary film theorists and practitioners can relate to in terms of the expressive power of cinema, and the element of chance in interacting with the medium.

Filmmaking is a collaborative partnership of creative minds and even the most carefully planned production is subject to change. Typically, once the script leaves the page it takes on a new life through the process of production, and the same can be said again in the editing. The concept of defining what happens in the process of editing a film is open to interpretation and the huge number of variables that rest with the editor in their personal response to the footage, their aesthetic, the ability to read a performance, a sense of rhythm and pacing, and an understanding of stylistic conventions. When it comes to decision-making, most editors will identify with Dede Allen's description of the editing process as one that is not formulaic, but full of challenges and uncertainties, all at the service of finding the film:

When I start cutting a movie, I always cut with ambivalence. I have a definite intention, a definite starting point: the dramatic function of the scene; the psychology of the characters, etc. But when I become absorbed in the material, I suddenly see all the possibilities the material contains. The unexpected. Intended and unintended possibilities. I can't help wandering into the material. I milk the material for all the small possibilities I see in it. A look, a smile – after the director has said "cut!", an unintentional juxtaposition of two images. Afterwards I form a general view again. But it is in the ambivalence, in the collision between the general strategy and the pleasant distractions along the way that constitutes editing as art; the true life of the film (Allen, cited in Weidemann 1998, pp. 29–31).

In my own experience and in gauging the responses from the editors I interviewed for my artifact, one of the greatest challenges for an editor is to keep an objective eye. An important part of the editor's job is to be open to interpretation, and as such the job requires a creative contribution in terms of how we respond to the images and sound. In most cases there is no predetermined way to tell the story, and intuition and spontaneity play an important role:

The greatest hurdle in cutting, particularly on long format projects, is to keep a fresh mind and to revisit the material that you've seen over and over and view it with a new perspective and a new story determinant. That's the greatest challenge is keeping that objectivity (personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2013).

Film Theory opens up the scholarly discussion on filmic investigation and representation of space, time, vision and meaning in cinematic text.

In looking at editing through the prism of film theory, it is pertinent to touch on Gilles Deleuze's philosophies of time-based media. Deleuze investigates film as *phenomena*, as opposed to the notion of film as either a form communication or entertainment. Like

Bazin, Deleuze acknowledged film as an entity unto itself “as pure semiotics of movement, sound and images”, that stands apart from the traditional conception of “images as representations or as language systems ... Deleuze's (film) philosophy has more in common with Eisenstein's views on the ‘plasmaticness’ of the animate form” (Pisters 2003, pp. 216–17).

Deleuze considered cinema to be one of the most important events of modern life: “Cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce as conceptual practice” (1989, p. 280). As a philosopher and film theoretician he examined the potential of film as a medium, as opposed to a reflective examination of the language of film. Deleuze argues that philosophy must remain open to life and cinematic affect, and is best revealed when cinema is at its most *cinematic*, when it is not trying to copy everyday vision or recreate a novel in a literary manner (Colebrook 2001, p. 31). This philosophy mirrors André Bazin's realist theory:

What is on screen is not reality but it's precipitate, it's tracing, it's remains which, like the mummy, may allow us to conjure the presence of something fuller, the phantom of that paradoxically more solid reality that hovers spectrally around, behind, or before the screen (Andrew, 2010, p. 41).

However, the focus of Deleuze's investigation was the manipulative power of cinema to theorise time and movement in constructing a new and imaginative world. In Deleuze's books *Cinema 1* (1986), and *Cinema 2* (1989), the concept of time is central to his philosophy, which he presents as two key concepts. The ‘movement-image’ of early cinema, which refers to the movement of the camera itself over a moving image and in doing so creating a movement in and of itself independent of time, and the ‘time-image’, a phenomenon of modern cinema which has the capacity to go beyond human, recognisable and already given forms. This is achieved through the imagination of time, and it is cinema that, according to Deleuze, “offers an image of time itself” (Deleuze, cited in Colebrook 2001, p. 29).

This re-thinking of time has a direct correlation to editing and the ability to manipulate time through the sequencing of shots. Deleuze investigates the theory of montage, and cites the work of Sergei Eisenstein, who created his narratives through the juxtaposition of what Deleuze termed ‘singularities’: “A cinema of singularities would present colours, movements, sounds, texture, tones and lights that are not connected and organized into recognizable or ordered wholes” (Colebrook 2001, pp. 33–34).

Although montage can follow a narrative line of thought, as evident in Eisenstein's form of 'intellectual montage', Deleuze's take on montage is more connected with the abstract piecing together of different but conflicting sites of movement to create a synthetic interpretation of time: "The art of montage presents these mobile sections. Each movement bears its own rhythm and pulsation" (Colebrook 2001, p. 45).

In the context of investigating contemporary editing practice through the prism of film theory, the observations of Deleuze and Bazin are incredibly refreshing. Deleuze looks internally to the tactility of the image and its ability to transform time and meaning when juxtaposed with another image. Bazin was also interested in the "tact and intelligence of montage" and its ability to be open to interpretation: "Montage in the strong sense can lead us to look more deeply into the images or away from them toward some meaning they may have chosen to illustrate" (Bazin, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 33).

In this sense, Deleuze (and before him Bazin) come closest to describing how an editor would define their process. This question of manipulating image and sound in creating story is pertinent to all the editors I interviewed for my artifact, yet each had their own interpretation:

Our job is to harness light and sound and action and story, and create a multilayered thing called a film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

I think it's revealing a story from a whole lot of other mediums that are dropped on your doorstep that don't resemble anything. Assembling them in a fashion, in a multi-layered fashion, with performance and photography and music and a story. And finding that story that it was always intended to be, even though it wasn't ever written or formed that way. So I guess an editor is the ultimate storyteller, the final storyteller (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

(Jill Bilcock, speaking of *Moulin Rouge*) ... I've now got this thing that I love most of all, which is the kaleidoscope of movement, colour, imagery. It's a painting for me but also it has to go somewhere (personal interview, 2012).

Bazin also believed in the art of withholding information, of revealing only what is necessary to tell the story. One of his early mentors was Roger Leenhardt, a film journalist and respected newsreel editor for *Eclair Journal*. Leenhardt's skill in compressing the hundreds of meters of film into newsworthy stories fuelled Bazin's appetite to theorise on film composition. What Leenhardt refers to in the 'effort of description', is the paring back of information or 'moments': "whatever is on the screen must be bolstered by all that is absent, and can carry abundant parallel associations

(rapprochements)” (Andrew 2010, p. 37). Likewise, Bazin believed in “the primacy of what is not given on the screen” and in reality’s “negative imprint ... the art that traffics with absence, often *in absentia*” (Andrew, 2010, p. 37). The concept of the ‘negative imprint’ is relevant as an editing technique today, as evidenced in my artifact:

Editing is the skillful manipulation in the withholding of story information, and I think that’s pertinent to your task (personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2013).

I can’t get over how little you can use of a shot and still get some storytelling into it (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

Always some of the best shots or the best material doesn’t end up in there. But I’m of the belief that if it’s been shot and committed to film, then it’s helped the film whether it’s ended up in there or not (personal interview, Jack Hutchins 2012).

Leedhardt goes one step further than Bazin in saying “it is not in the cinematic material that art resides ... but in assemblage, rapprochement, ellipsis” (Andrew 2010, p. 36). In the context of editing, ‘ellipsis’ means, “an idea or phenomenon or event that is suggested by the emptiness between and around what is shown” (Andrew, 2010, p. 35). As a documentary editor, Leedhardt purportedly used ellipsis as his ‘stock in trade’, and this technique was what caught Bazin’s attention when he invited him to screen his work at the ciné-club at the Sorbonne in 1943. Crittenden shares the philosophy that ‘the space left for the imagination can be more eloquent’, and interprets the concept of ellipsis as:

A visual and/or aural ellipse can create a metaphor, but often the unmediated junction between images and sounds can create a third meaning or feeling. This is familiar to us all from the so-called ‘montage of association’, usually spoken of in relation to the early Russian filmmakers and the experiments of Kuleshov” (Crittenden 2008, p. 89).

In a contemporary context and in reference to my artifact, editors often identify ‘ellipsis’ in terms of what happens between the cuts:

I think it was David Mamet that said, the story is really told by what’s between the cuts ... Every one of those seems to sort of mount an extra level of tension (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

It’s not the actual joins that are important, it’s what’s between the joins. And the selection of what’s between the joins comes from all that life experience that

you've had as to why would you choose that piece to put into that film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

Deleuze's theories on film as 'time-based media' have strong synergies with those of film theorist Bernard Stiegler who shares his opinion of cinema as "the most influential media form of the twentieth century" (Crogan 2013, p. 100). Crogan explores Bernard Stiegler's 'theorization of film editing' in reference to his dissertation on cinema, perceptual experience and the mainstream media-scape. Stiegler in his "novel reconsideration of key themes in film theory", explores what many film theorists and filmmakers have pondered before him, which is to investigate "the nature and appeal of film, its characteristic techniques and their effects in the spectator" (Crogan, 2013, p. 98). As such he turned his focus on "the relations between perceiving spectator and projected film, film and experience, and the individual and collective experience of cinema as a cultural form" (Crogan, 2013, p. 97). Stiegler's concept of cinema reflects that of Gilles Deleuze's, as a mediated experience that "combines and amplifies the photographic and phonographic technologies that preceded it", and in doing so "it emerges transductively as a *time-based media form* capable of coordinating the minds of the audience with its unfolding in a singular fashion" (Crogan, 2013, p. 100). Like Bazin before him, Stiegler ponders the "photographic coincidence of past reality, of past and reality", together with the time-based theories of Deleuze in the "coincidence of the 'flux' of the film's unrolling in time with the flux of the spectator's consciousness" (Crogan 2013, p. 100).

What is unique to Deleuze and Stiegler in their theories on time-based media is that they both acknowledge cinematic structure as inherent to brain function, and the concept that we 'order our thoughts'. Consciousness, argues Stiegler, "has always had a cinematic structure" ... Deleuze speaks "as if we have always had cinema [in our heads]" (Crogan 2013 p. 101). Film editor Walter Murch has a similar philosophy in his belief that in our conscious state we edit our thoughts, and in our subconscious state or sleep, we edit our dreams. For Murch, this validates the historical dilemma as to whether an audience would accept the experience of seeing a sequence of disparate images edited together in what was to become the advent of cinema:

I believe that one of the secret engines that allows cinema to work, and have the marvellous power over us that it does, the fact that for thousands of years we have spent eight hours a night in a 'cinematic' dream-state, and so are familiar with this version of reality (Murch, cited in Ondaatje 2002, pp. 49–50).

When watching a film, Stiegler argues, the film weaves itself to the audience's time: "our time is 'conjoined' with the events and experiences screened, as if they happened to us" (Stiegler, cited in Crogan 2013, p. 101). He identifies the machinations of the subconscious with the process of editing in constructing a film, citing:

the 'phenomenal' power of the cinema inasmuch as it corresponds so strikingly with the very process of consciousness as a temporal flux of perception permanently conditioned by structuring pre-syntheses. Editing is crucial to this correspondence. Editing as both selection (cutting), and structuring (montage), constitutes the shape and duration of the unrolling flux of the film. It makes possible the very delineation of the film as what Husserl called a 'temporal object': that is, as object of consciousness that is constituted in and through its unfolding in time (Crogan 2013, p. 101).

Stiegler believes that editing is key to a meaningful experience that is "fashioned out of fictioning processes such as sequencing, contraction, condensation, repetition, emblematic figuration, metonymies, summarisation, and so forth" (Stiegler, cited in Crogan 2013, p. 101). From an editor's perspective, Stiegler's philosophy on 'meaningful experience' is beautifully realised in Merle Worth's summary of what an editor does:

We build image and sound in ways that reinforce how unbelievably layered our existence is ... What we do is make *compressions of human existence*. At our best that's what we do! When I'm eyeball to eyeball with other humans on screen, I face my own fears and strengths over and over again and I send my responses back ... finding that moment of drama, that split second intersection of me, subject, and viewer, in which we all re-discover yet another piece of ourselves (Oldham 1992, p. 321).

In summary: investigating editing through the prism of film theory

As an editor, it's enlightening to move outside the sphere of practice and practitioners deliberating on the process of editing into a more theoretical, philosophical context – to look at what lies beneath the cinematic processes and to consider the meaning of cinema. In aligning practitioners and non-practitioner-theorists, it's interesting to observe similarities in their theories on the phenomena of cinema, on one hand practice informing theory, and on the other hand, theory investigating practice. Theories relating to the manipulation of time, the 'aesthetic of discovery' and chance, and the concept of ellipsis, are all familiar to editors in terms of practice, yet imbedded in a theoretical discourse. What is central to Deleuze's theories on cinema is his perception of time as an embodiment of past, present and future and how cinema,

through the power of image and sound, can mesh these elements together. What he omits to acknowledge is the part emotion plays in binding these elements together, the value-added ingredient that most editors will give the greatest attention to in telling a story: “If the emotion is right, the story is advanced in a unique and interesting way ... emotion, story, rhythm are extremely tightly connected” (Murch 2001, p. 20). The concept of emotion in editing is a key theme in my artifact, and central to the editor’s reflections and to my own editing practice as being the principal motivating factor in the storytelling process:

Emotion is for me, like many editors, probably the primary thing – it’s on the top of the list (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

Editors do require some level of emotional intelligence ... there needs to be an emotional sensitivity to make judgment upon performances. And you know there's emotion in camera moves, there's emotive compositions, the score for example, the color, the grade. Everything has a purpose, and that purpose is to ignite emotion in the audience (personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2013).

To the initiated, editing is an abstract concept in the way it pulls together images and sound that can transgress time and meaning. However, the most engaging aspect of cinema is in its ability to incite an audience emotionally to live their own story through the screen, and this is central to the function of editing. As Dany Cooper said, “It’s not the actual joins that are important, it’s what’s between the joins” (personal interview, 2011). And the play of emotion that exists in those temporal moments between the cuts is what drives the tension and emotional impact of the story.

This was something Leenhardt recognised in the 1930s when he declared, “the essence of film [is] *ellipsis*” (Leenhardt, cited in Andrew, 2010, p.34). Editors create the illusion of significance and presence through the emptiness between and around their material. Of all cinema’s effects, this is surely the most ‘special’ and the most specific. Ellipsis acts as the “armature in the construction of a film” (Leenhardt, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 34). This is something Weidermann reflects on in her paper *Film Editing: A Hidden Art*, in saying: “The brain will always strive to combine two separate informations, and the wider the gap between the two informations constructed by the filmmaker, the longer connection the brain will be forced to construct” (1998, p. 28). Weidermann also refers to Walter Murch’s theory on the superior imaginative power of the audience in transcending formal narrative structures:

The human brain has a sort of aesthetic selection and an imagination that reality will never be able to match. And consequently the best narrative is the one that

is created in the spectator's own mind. The film ideally works as a starter for the human fantasy, and the narrative gains thereby a first-rate partner and can benefit from this infinite co-poetic potential. The task of the filmmaker is to create gaps as wide as possible in every aspect of his storytelling and thus making the audience the other half of the narrator (Wiedemann 1998, p. 29).

I believe this is the essence of what the editor does in bringing new meaning to storytelling, by inviting the audience to live out their own reality through the experience of cinema. The power of editing to capture the emotive elements of story and performance is part of its allure and mystique, and that aspect of editing which may be related to as the *art*. What I have attempted to do with the artifact is to drill down into these more elusive aspects of editing in a model where practice-informs-theory, as something that can potentially be taught. On reflection, much of what is contemporary practice in editing can be aligned with theoretical underpinnings, some aspects more concise than others in identifying what constitutes the art aspect of editing and its contribution to creating story. However, what is liberating about the theories of Deleuze and Bazin is their appreciation of cinema as an object of *art in-and-of-itself*. The essence of cinema is not in its ability to replicate everyday life or rewrite history through the lens, but cinema found its form as a new medium outside of the realm of realism and representation:

Cinema has the power to free images from an ordered perception to one of an assemblage of images from competing viewpoints, which is in effect 'montage'. Instead of connecting or synthesising images into meaningful progressions, cinema can present images in their 'purely optical' form (Deleuze 1989, p. 2).

Bazin and his followers saw the power of the narrative in the 'fact and intelligence of montage' to transcend reality whereby, "montage in the strong sense can lead us to look more deeply into the images or away from them toward some meaning they may have chosen to illustrate" (Bazin, cited in Andrew 2010, p. 33).

In my artifact the interviewees explore the many different styles of editing, from traditional continuity editing to montage editing, in both narrative and non-narrative film. As established, an editor's relationship to story is the key motivator when it comes to interpreting the script from the vast amount of coverage, both image and sound, that make up a film. It is specifically the skill of emotionally engaging the audience and allowing them to find their own interpretation that resonates on a personal level that is largely in the editor's hands, which can be defined as the *art of storytelling*.

Jill Bilcock defended her position in using a style of montage editing in Baz Luhrmann's film, *Romeo & Juliet* (1996), which challenged traditional narrative structure, but, as she concedes, it's all at the service of story, wherein lies the art of editing:

Romeo and Juliet was criticized by other editors severely for what they said was an MTV style or far too commercial for them, as they'd worked their whole life to develop the 'hidden art of editing'. And suddenly somebody comes in and explodes with all this unconventional style, and people felt uncomfortable, other editors did. Yet directors like Oliver Stone stood up and applauded it because it still was storytelling. It still always comes back to storytelling (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

Section 5: Insights into teaching creativity in editing

In this section I investigate my own practice in teaching creative editing in reference to defining creativity, and those attributes associated with creativity in editing such as the art of storytelling, intuition, rhythm and pacing. I also review how editors learn their craft, and the shift from an industry-based learning environment to film schools as the new training ground for film practitioners.

Pedagogy and the practice of teaching editing is what brought me to this research topic and was the instigation for the production of my artifact. The pedagogy specifically addresses the question of how editing can be taught when so much of what editors do is attributed to 'intuition' or 'what feels right'. In editors' anthologies such as Gabriella Oldham's *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* (1992), editors attempt to describe what they do but keep coming back to abstract definitions around intuition in a personal response to their work:

I think editors don't get a lot written about them because it's not easy to explain what we do. It's what we feel. An instinct (Coates, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 154).

It's intuition. The only thing I've ever worked by throughout my career is how it feels to me ... intuition is the only thing you can go on (Hirsh, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 195).

I find that when I cut, I almost get into a Zen-like state, an intuition occurs naturally ... my mind starts working at a rapid pace and I'm not always aware of the process (Barnes, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 147).

What gives one editor the edge over another is, in my view, that you're really drawing on your intuitive self – depending of course on how refined an instrument your intuitive self is. In my opinion, that's what creates the difference between good work and brilliant work (Worth, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 313).

As discussed, Karen Pearlman equates knowledge with intuition: "Intuition is not the same as instinct. People are born with instincts, but intuition is something we develop over time, through experience, in other words it is learnt" (2009, p. 1). In researching the phenomena 'rhythm' and 'intuition' in editing, Pearlman expands on Guy Claxton's theories on intuition and the thinking processes associated with "expertise, implicit learning, judgment, sensitivity, creativity and rumination" (Pearlman 2009, p. 3). Pearlman adapted this thinking to an editorial context by interpreting 'expertise' as technical aptitude, and 'implicit learning' as "the acquisition of such expertise by non-

conscious or non-conceptual means” (Pearlman 2009, p. 4). Qualities such as intuition and rhythm are concepts editors have always grappled with in defining what they do: “In my experience editors are able to talk about some aspects of their process but refer to other aspects (possibly the most important ones) as ‘intuitive’ and don’t have much more to say” (personal email, Karen Pearlman 2011).

As an educator, Pearlman was also challenged in teaching the more elusive aspects of editing practice such as intuition and rhythm and posed the question, “where specifically does the experience and education of rhythm, which editors use as fodder for their intuition, come from?” (2009, p. 6). In discussing my research question with Pearlman, she challenged me in saying: “What more can be said about it (intuition) to shed light on the art of editing as a practice?” (personal email, 2011). This question was central to my line of questioning in interviewing the editors for my artifact:

To sit back and explain *why* you might do something? And I still find that difficult, because a lot of it is intuition and it comes from within ... that’s when you become truly good at your profession when you can teach someone the how’s and why’s (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

Pearlman’s research on intuition and rhythm in editing is valuable as a background to understanding the physiological aspects of editing and how the editor responds to visual and audio phenomena implicit in film media. However, the focus of my research is less concerned with the source of bodily rhythms and how they pertain to editing practice, and more so with the process of how to teach students the phenomena of ‘intuition’ and ‘rhythm’ in response to the movement and emotive content of the material they’re working with. If, as Pearlman says, intuition is “nourished by acquisition of explicit skills and knowledge” (2009, p. 6), then clearly knowledge is in the practice, which is integral to the experiential learning model. As editor Walter Murch said, “We hope to become better editors with experience!”, but he also acknowledges a personal aptitude for the job: “You have an intuition about the craft to begin with: for me, it begins with, *Where is the audiences looking?, What are they thinking?* As much as possible you try to *be* the audience” (Murch, cited in Ondaatje 2002, p. 41).

Editor Merle Worth prefers to refrain from explanation on the intuitive processes of editing. Worth states, “I’m absolutely *not* in the business of telling you what to think. I’m very experiential in my approach. I really don’t want you to know what you think until you’ve had the experience, until you know what you feel. Then you can draw whatever conclusions you want” (Worth, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 310).

My challenge as an educator is to harness the more abstract qualities of editing such as intuition and rhythm, and bring that knowledge into a learning environment. Editor and academic Richard Pepperman faced the same challenge, and after many years of teaching decided to put the challenge to task in writing his book *The Eye is Quicker* (2004). He takes a practical rather than a theoretical approach, and teaches principal editing techniques, strategies and methods by example:

Teaching film editing is a few measures more complicated than being a film editor. Working does not necessitate comprehensive explanations or 'near scholarly opinions.' Teaching sometimes does ... The first thing I learnt as a teacher was how much I trusted my instincts when I worked. I also learnt how little I understood my instincts; and how my work experience had not only provided me with additional know-how, but also expanded the array of accessibility of my instincts (Pepperman 2004, p. xiii).

Pepperman explores the territory of teaching intuition and creative editing practice by referencing a variety of sequences and scenes sourced from feature films, television and student films and then alluding to distinctive editing techniques and principles via hints and tips. On the one hand, teaching by example is a very direct way of presenting information on editing technique, and his tips are comprehensive and practical. On the other hand, the text-book approach tends to be very schematic and leaves nothing to the imagination nor encourages spontaneity. I believe audio/visual presentations are much more effective in terms of student engagement, retaining information, and then putting that knowledge into practice through 'reflective learning'. This form of 'visual-aided learning' has been endorsed in all areas of education, but I believe has a valid application in teaching the abstract concepts of film editing technique such as intuition and rhythm: "Visual aided learning process through film and the instructor's supervision provided meaningful contributions in enhancing co-construction of knowledge in teaching practice and also it contributed to internalize professional practice as well" (Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 170).

Film director Martin Scorsese acknowledged the benefit of visual-aided learning and was instrumental in setting up the *Film Foundation* in America, an online resource to teach secondary school children how to 'read' the visual language of film:

It is so important, I think, because so much in today's society is communicated visually and even subliminally. Young people have to know that this way of communicating is a very, very powerful tool (Scorsese 2012).

As noted, I have chosen to design my artifact as an audio-visual learning tool in the form of a series of interviews with prominent Australian screen editors, who articulate their editing processes in response to questions on the creative attributes associated with the art of editing. I anticipate this 'first-hand knowledge' together with visual representations of the editors' work (film clips) will be immediately accessible to film students in terms of identifying with the editors process, their stories and the film content.

Creativity: can it be taught?

There has been much debate around the concept of whether creativity can be taught and, if it can, what are the pedagogical measures for assessing creativity as a learning outcome. In her paper *Is Creativity Teachable?* McWilliam explores the 'creativity/pedagogy nexus' in higher education, and in asking the question, *can creativity be taught*, found the answer to be both 'yes and no':

Yes, some aspects of creativity appear to be teachable – thinking and application skills that are amenable to acquisition can be developed through appropriate pedagogies. And no, some aspects of creativity remain idiosyncratic and mysterious, despite the plethora of research literature that is dedicated to pinning the frog to creative endeavor (McWilliams 2007, p. 2).

Defining creativity within an educational context is fraught with difficulties in that some academic circles regard creativity as "so mysterious and serendipitous that it defies definition" (McWilliams 2007, p. 3), and only relevant to those graduates entering the creative industries. However, in recent years there has been a resurgence in creativity as "an increasingly observable and valuable component of social and economic enterprise" (McWilliams, 2007, p. 3). There is a direct link between creativity and economic productivity, which implies a practical application to the learning model. As such, creativity is no longer categorised as an artistic pursuit but there is evidence to support the concept that, "creativity is now understood to be enhanced through social processes", and "the 'perceived usefulness' of creativity as a powerful motivator for learning" (McWilliam 2007, p. 10).

Creativity is now seen not as 'the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals' products' (Csikszentmihalyi in Sternberg 1999: 314, cited in Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2010, p.119). Over the years researchers and practitioners have examined the phenomena of creativity and a number of theories have emerged in the quest to identify the 'creative process', often referred to as a 'staged process'. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi argues that the creative process is made up

of five stages: *preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, elaboration* (1996); Graham Wallas (1976) argues that it is a four-staged process: *preparation, incubation, illumination, verification*; whereas Tony Bastick (1982) argues, the creative process is made up of only two stages: *intuition* and *verification*. In this case, Bastick defines intuition as 'non-linear parallel processing of global multi-categorised information', a somewhat more academic definition of what is often referred to as "metaphysical or mystical" concept (Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2010, p.122-123).

In her book, *Creativity in Virtual Teams: Key Components for Success*, Jill Nemiro focuses on creativity as a collaborative enterprise, "a process through which individuals or teams produce something that is both *new* or *novel*, and potentially *useful* or *appropriate*" (2004, p.xxx). Nemiro believes the creative process "typically falls into three major approaches": a 'linear approach' to the problem-solving process, an 'intuitive approach' which involves insight and allows new ideas, meaning and solutions to be suddenly discovered, and the 'componential approach' in which the creative process is but one component of the entire set of abilities (Nemiro, 2004, p.4-6). In all instances, the 'staged process' allows for a logical progression from defining the idea or problem, to a creative outcome or solution, drawing on the individual and social enterprise in which the creative process is situated.

The concept of 'social processes' again draws on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theories on creativity as modeled on the confluence of multiple factors that contribute to creative outcomes, specifically the interaction between the domain, the field and the individual:

For creativity to occur, a set of rules and practices must be transmitted from the domain to the individual. The individual must then produce a novel variation in the content of the domain, the variation then must be selected by the field for inclusion in the domain (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: 315, cited in Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2010, p.119).

Csikszentmihal defines creativity as "an idea or action that changes a cultural domain ... Culture is made up by a multitude of domains, and when a domain is changed we have creativity. So a creative person is someone whose idea or action succeeds in changing one of the domains of culture" (Csikszentmihalyi 1995). By example, Csikszentmihalyi cites cinematography as a new domain, which much like film editing, didn't exist before the advent of movie making. Cinematography grew out of existing, related domains such as theater, literature, and photography to become a new art form

and integral to the creation of cinema as we know it today: “These already existing domains were combined to make the first movies. Any culture is made up of thousands and thousands of domains like these” (Csikszentmihalyi 1995).

Generally speaking, a creative person will be invested in a domain of their interest or expertise, and in the process of creating something new, may interact with other domains whereby “it is possible for the individual to draw on knowledge from a specific domain and use it to interact with a field or social organization, which understands and uses that knowledge when creating ideas, products and processes” (Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2010, p. 119). This would imply that in the pursuit of creativity, the process of learning is central to productivity, or what Csikszentmihalyi refers to as ‘a continuing spiral’:

A person absorbs certain rules or techniques from a domain and makes a change, which might or might not be accepted by the people who control the domain. The field acts as a gatekeeper to the domain, and if the gatekeepers accept the new idea and add it to the domain, then it will become part of the culture. Then another cycle will start, and so on and on” (Csikszentmihalyi 1995).

Interesting to note that ‘intuition’ is a key component in all stages of the creative process, and in this context defined as a ‘non-linear process’ that is drawn from one’s insight and expertise whereby “an individual or team suddenly moves from not knowing how to solve a problem, to just simply to knowing how to solve that problem” (Mayer, 1999, cited in Nemiro, 2004, p. 6). This is indicative of why editors find it difficult define their creative process: “explaining why you’ve done something or why you might be looking to do something is the real challenge” (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

In terms of teaching, theorists have attempted to de-mystify creativity as consisting of three components: “domain relevant skills, creative processes, and intrinsic task motivation, all fostered through formal and informal learning” (McWilliams 2007, p. 3). Given creativity works both as a way of thinking “associated with intuition, inspiration, imagination, ingenuity and insight” and as “a novel and appropriate response to an open-ended task” (Byron, cited in McWilliams 2007, p. 3), implies that the association of intuition with creativity in editing is a justified descriptor. In defining their creative process, editors will often associate intuition with some form of artistic endeavor:

To sculpt and shape a scene to achieve the best result (Christopher Tellefsen, cited in Chew et al. 2009, p. 62).

A good dramatic sense, so important when sculpting a film... (Thelma Schoonmaker, cited in Chew et al. 2009, p. 58).

In the editing it's particularly difficult because that's where you have to shape the statue from the block of marble (Bob Connolly interviewed in *At the Movies: Mrs Carey's Concert*, 2011)

It's a shape that you're creating ... (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

In many ways these editors are trying to unpack the intangible, creative process of editing as a practical pursuit. However, the process of 'revealing' or discovering the film by combing through the footage to find the best material in terms of performance, action, and technical delivery, as well as the visual attributes of composition, movement and colour, is highly intuitive and integral to the editing process. In addition, the more intangible elements in creating story through rhythm and pacing, and emotional engagement are the vital ingredients will grab the audience from the outset and keep them engaged for the duration of the film, which Merle Worth describes as the 'fusion of emotions', and without that fusion it would be 'mere footage':

In the end, however, there's no concrete explanation for magic any more than there is for human chemistry and falling in love. We could logically explore this together forever, but there is still something so mysterious about the editing process that I hate for the moment to come when I no longer feel that way (Merle Worth cited in Oldham 1992, p. 321).

However, Pearlman's belief that intuition in editing is "something that can be developed, enhanced and even acquired through practical and theoretical experience and education" (2009, p. 6) should not in any way dilute creativity as another 'commodity'. Peter Dallow, an academic in the creative arts, research and practices, agrees that any form of artistic endeavour is difficult to pin down "definitionally and conceptually", but concedes:

art can be usefully thought of as an indeterminate *condition*, a threshold between conscious thought and unconscious feeling, an opening onto a liminal space where rationality (theory) and irrationality (experience, emotion, art) mix in the individual creative *act* (practice) (Dallow 2003, p. 49).

Dallow's observation of the artist as a "practical intellectual', as one actively engaged with the creative process whilst making work" (2003, p. 50) is closely aligned with creativity in editing and what Pearlman associates with intuition, as an unconscious process but coming from a place of expertise.

In the context of teaching editing, I encourage students to collaborate at all stages of the editing process: initially in working with the director in creating a 'first cut' of their film, and then working through subsequent cuts in consultation with their lecturers, industry practitioners (if applicable) and their peers in the process of 'finding the film'. This form of trial and error is part of the creative process whereby the editor and director work collaboratively in re-writing the film through the edit. Editors are well aware that interaction with their key collaborators and creative processes such as these are vital to creative outcomes: "a good editor-director relationship is essential, otherwise you're really cutting in a vacuum" (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

As such, the 'creative workforce' that McWilliam refers to as 'a powerful motivator for learning' is imbedded in the culture of university teaching and learning, and most relevant to the film-school environment. In terms of teaching editing, if the act of creativity can be defined as a 'staged process', and the exploratory nature of the editing process is deemed as a 'collaborative endeavor', then it would stand to reason that creativity in editing can be taught. Csikszentmihalyi's summation of *A Systems Perspective on Creativity* is highly relevant to teaching creativity specifically within a studio-based environment: "Creativity cannot be recognized except as it operates within a system of cultural rules, and it cannot bring forth anything new unless it can enlist the support of peers" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p.16).

Students learn much of the practical and creative processes of editing through teamwork, social interaction and collaboration, whereby creative outcomes are integral to the learning process. Pepperman aims to teach creative editing through a mix of principles, strategies and methods as they come to hand through editing practice: "Truly creative editing is non-linear in process; and frequently, so is creative learning" (2004, p. xv). In the same way Pepperman adapts the concept of 'non-linear' to creative learning, I instill the concept of 'lateral thinking' by encouraging students to step away from what is familiar and predetermined (the script), to opening up new possibilities and meanings within the material that informs the body of the film. This is the ultimate achievement and harks back to Merle Worth's description of the editing process:

Half of you is worldly and scrutinizing, the other half is innocent and vulnerable. Without that fusion, without that measured incredulity, what you wind up with is mere footage (Merle, cited in Oldham 1992, p. 321).

How editors learn their craft

In Sections 1 and 2 of this exegesis, I established that the creative practice of editing is hard to define or articulate, but the process of *learning to edit* is something that all editors allude to when they speak of their backgrounds and how they came to editing.

Although there are many ways for filmmakers and editors to learn their skills today, two key factors have contributed to the pedagogy of teaching film editing: the advent of digital technology and the concept of film schools. Traditionally, the technical craft of filmmaking was learnt on the job, and in the following section *Film schools are not a new concept* I go into more detail on the history of editing and how editors learn their craft. In my artifact, I asked all the interviewees how they came to editing. Ken Sallows was the only one who worked his way up through a traditional studio system:

I turned up at Crawfords, who were employing about 400 people in those days in Abbotsford ... I was 17 and I started as what they call a 'trainee', which is delivering scripts and various odd jobs. But I even knew then that I wanted to be an editor (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011).

The trainee/apprentice model is still prevalent today, although less so in Australia where the studio system is almost non-existent. For the most part, the film industry operates by employing freelance practitioners for the duration of a job, and those aspiring to be professional editors are more likely to gain experience in mentorship positions with experienced editors, or as assistant editors in small production/postproduction companies. Mark Atkin started this way:

When I graduated from Swinburne (1981), my first job actually was as an assistant editor. So I suppose I did get that sort of grounding and learned something about the craft that way (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

Many editors also cite their mentors as highly influential in developing not only their skills in editing, but also their passion for the craft. Luke Doolan spoke of working as an assistant to Jill Bilcock on *Moulin Rouge*:

I'd seen Jill Bilcock's work a lot through my life but I hadn't really clocked her as being the sort of Statue of Liberty of editors in Australia until I got to work with her (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

However, the advent of digital technology brought with it a dramatic shift in postproduction processes and the role of the assistant editor. In the early days of non-linear digital editing systems, the high cost of technology meant the assistant editor by necessity would share a workstation with the editor. Tasks such as capturing the

footage and file management would have to happen outside of the editor's hours, and consequently editing assistants often worked parallel to the editor rather than beside them. At the time this was a grave concern for the postproduction industry and led to the question, "how is the next generation of thoughtful, knowledgeable editors going to come along when they're not standing next to you in the editing room, sopping up knowledge?" (Hollyn cited in Wood, 2007). Learning the technology was only a small part of the equation, but learning creative technique and most importantly the politics of the editing room, where at risk of exclusion. As editor-turned-academic Norman Hollyn explains: "I've heard horror stories about 'computer assistants' who didn't know a thing about the politics of the editing room and got the editor in deep trouble by telling the director what they thought of his film. I'd rather hire a people-savvy assistant over a computer-savvy one any day of the week" (Hollyn, cited in Wood 2007).

In more recent years, access to affordable high-end digital editing technology has progressed to the point that the assistant editor is more integrated into the editing process, and with it comes a greater opportunity to learn the craft aspect of editing:

I think the sort of model that we use in the cutting rooms today does assist the assistant editor to learn the craft. It almost comes full circle from when I was learning to be an assistant on film ... So I think yes, the technology is now allowing that apprenticeship process to work more effectively than it did in the early days (personal Interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

The accessibility of digital editing has meant being able to share media across a number of workstations and online, which supports greater experimentation and enhances learning opportunities. As a result, editors are more willing to hand over editing tasks to their assistants:

I can send my assistant off and say, *Cut that four different ways and come back to me with it*, and look at it and then incorporate that into something else, and share the creative process with my team much more. I think that's a huge benefit in this day and age (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

On the other hand, Hollyn believes room for experimentation is still limited, and that, "even though, with digital editing, it should be easier than ever for assistant editors to create alternate cuts for editors to discuss, it really isn't. Schedules are too tight, budgets are too tight and time is too tight (Hollyn, cited in Wood 2007).

This highlights another constraint with digital editing: the assumption that because you can cut faster on digital systems, there is an expectation to reduce postproduction schedules and budgets. However, factors such as dealing with increased film ratios

and negotiating postproduction pathways through a myriad of shooting formats has, in fact, made the postproduction process far more challenging. Editor Jill Bilcock has worked on digital editing systems since their inception in the early 1990s:

It's not quicker. It's slower ... it's slower because people shoot more and the transcoding takes longer. Technology is not fast. It's only fast up to a point. The cutting is much quicker, there's no doubt about that (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

This dilemma also applies to working with graduate students on the postproduction of their major film projects. Students shoot their films across a variety of high-end digital formats and consequently postproduction pathways are extremely challenging in terms of dealing with large media files, compression, file management and outsourcing for sound design and grading purposes.

On a positive note, the impact of digital technology has created opportunities for the more recent phenomenon of the 'self-taught editor'. By the late 1990s, affordable prosumer editing software was firmly established in the marketplace, such as the Apple Macintosh software Final Cut Pro. This meant editors could invest in desk-top editing systems suitable for working on high-end professional productions, from documentaries to feature films. The accessibility of digital editing software also gave students and would-be editors the freedom to learn editing skills working on their own projects using their own software, as well as giving freelance editing practitioners the ability to work independently on industry-based projects, including collaborating with the newly established independent sector.

Jack Hutchings, editor and founder of *The Butchery*, was one of the 'new-breed' editors that I interviewed who came to editing in the digital era. Hutchings learnt to cut by working on experimental projects of his own, and then with friends on low budget films:

I used to make little skate films with my friends when I was fifteen, sixteen. That's not really where I started editing, but where I sort of learnt making little stories out of stuff we'd shot (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

Hutchings went on to study film production at Footscray TAFE, but attributes those early days of experimentation as the determining factor to becoming an editor:

I never trained as an assistant editor or anything like that ... I started cutting freelance in about 2000. I met a guy Glendyn Ivan who I ended up doing a lot of work with and I became good friends with a producer who gave me a call out of the blue and said, *we've got this music video why don't you come in and have a*

go? And we clicked, you know, it just worked ... I just did a lot of music videos, which led to commercials and then short films (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

Access to the proliferation of editing software that hit the market the late 1990s and early 2000 allowed editors such as Hutchings to be autonomous, and subsequently move from being a freelance editor to establishing his own business, where he now acts as a mentor to the young editors he employs:

If you want to be an editor, you've got to cut. You can learn only so much just watching editors, you've really got to get in there and get your hands dirty, get the material and trial and error. That's how I did it and that's kind of how I feel like it is. With our assistants I'll try and just kind of throw them in the deep end, let them have a play and then come in and maybe give them some guidance (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

As most editors will attest, digital editing technology doesn't make up for a lack of skill or technique, but it is a sophisticated tool to practise and hone the craft of editing:

Although assistants are spending most of their time syncing up rushes and attending to all of the things an assistant needs to do, it becomes possible to come into the cutting room and to actually observe the director and the editor working together and to sometimes assemble and cut scenes themselves ... (personal interview, Mark Atkin, 2011).

There is no doubt that digital technology has made the editing process more accessible to young editors wanting to learn the craft. However, the opportunity to be mentored by an experienced editor is not a given, and this signals the importance of embedding a system of mentoring within the teaching environment. As such, I anticipate my artifact will be effective as an audio-visual teaching resource that delivers first-hand knowledge from experienced editors talking about their practice in reference to samples of their work. This form of mentorship will consolidate the role of the editor, which in turn informs the students of new ways of thinking about and talking about their own editing practice.

Film schools are not a new concept

The concept of the 'film school' took hold shortly after the birth of cinema in the 1890s, but initially focused on teaching film theory rather than practice. The Moscow Film School, founded in 1919 (also known as the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography), was the first film training institute in the world, where "Russian filmmakers including

Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Lev Kuleshov serving as faculty to disseminate their very distinct viewpoints on the purpose of film” (2008). However, such theorising extended into practice through their experimentation with the film medium: “Kuleshov believed that film art begins from the moment the director starts to join together the various pieces of film and demonstrated his concept by experiments in the juxtaposition of various shots” (Crittenden 1981, p.12), such as the aforementioned ‘Kuleshov Effect’. Eisenstein work-shopped his theories on ‘film style’ by demonstrating the concept of carefully constructed *mise-en-scène*. In doing so, Eisenstein was “not trying to convince his students that the one-shot solution is necessarily *the aim*” (Crittenden 1981, p. 3), but as an exercise to better understand dramatic development and pacing of performance, as opposed to ‘the montage approach of filmic construction’ which he practiced extensively and expanded on in his essays ‘Methods of Montage’ (1929).

As established, Fairservice questioned much of this theorising as formulaic, often obscure and some of it (including the Kuleshov Effect) as not entirely new, which he attributed to “something very in tune with earnest idealism of the time” (2001, p. 182). Given Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Kuleskov were making films so different from anything seen before, Fairservice believes they “prompted the production of theories to explain and justify them” (2001, p. 182). However, their intellectualising was, in itself, proof of the significance of their experimentation with various directorial and editing styles to manipulate meaning and story. Roger Crittenden concedes: “Kuleshov’s experiments in montage and the writing and practice of Eisenstein and Pudovkin are still witness to their achievements. A close study of their work in print and on film is essential to any self-respecting director or editor” (1981, p. 12).

This form of early experimentation laid the foundation for much that is familiar to editors today in terms of editing styles and conventions. As established, there are no hard and fast rules in editing and each job brings with it its own set of challenges. What is indicative of the work of these early pioneers including Kuleshov, Pudovkin, Eisenstein and Vertov, is that their visceral approach to the material informed their process and their ability to find solutions, create story and emotionally engage their audience, which lies at the heart of their theories on montage editing.

Although Eisenstein and his colleagues at the Moscow Film School went to great lengths to theorise their work, editor Ralph Rosenblum comments: “Eisenstein’s theorizing was never a substitute for his artistic passion, and although it propelled him along, it did not entirely dominate his work” (Rosenblum & Karen 1979, p. 57). As

Eisenstein himself concedes: “The filmed material at the moment of editing can sometimes be wiser than the author or the editor” (Eisenstein, cited in Rosenblum 1979, p. 57). This is a sentiment shared by most editors today in agreeing ‘the film dictates the style’:

It should never be forgotten that editing is a craft in which those involved have a tactile relationship with their ‘material’ ... the way the editor relates physically to the footage will affect his sympathy and harmony with the process of shaping the cut film (Crittenden 1995, p. 64).

Aside from the first film schools as established in Europe in the early 20th century, those aspiring to learn the technical craft of filmmaking were mostly self-taught engineers or still photographers who experimented with the new film technology. However, once commercial filmmaking took hold in Europe and America in the late 1920s and early 1930s, most film technicians learnt their craft on the job, working in the large-scale studio systems that emerged on the west coast of America and in Eastern Europe. In addition to these big budget commercial productions, government-funded and independent film bodies started producing ‘non-commercial’ films such as newsreels and documentary films. Crittenden acknowledges the importance of these filmmakers and their contribution to the artifice of non-narrative filmmaking and editing: “Music, poetry and visual montage were essential ingredients in the fabrication of their documentary films. They were never concerned with denying the artifice involved though they would have argued that their material and the structure of it still retained the spirit of ‘reality’” (Crittenden 1981, p. 16).

Ironically it was non-fiction film that allowed for greater exploration of the visual language of film. One such filmmaker was the American Robert Flaherty, known as the ‘father of documentary’, who produced his first documentary film *Nanook of the North* (1922). Unlike Eisenstein, who fabricated events through the editing, for Flaherty the object of documentary was authenticity, as is evident in the respect for the people and events that he represented in his films: “there is a clear line from Flaherty to contemporary documentary that continues to respect the relationship between subject, filmmaker and audience” (Crittenden 1995, p. 9).

Subsequent forms of artistic expression that swept through Europe and particularly France in the early to mid-20th century, such as the Surrealist art movement, *Camera-Stylo* (the camera as pen) and *Cinema Vérité* (representing cinema reality with minimal manipulation), and *le Nouvelle Vague* (the New Wave), opened the door to a new-found freedom encouraging experimentation with the film medium and, most

importantly, introduced the concept of the 'auteur': "Perhaps the most important, logical conclusion to be reached from this style of film-making is that there was every reason for director and cameraman and editor to be the same person" (Crittenden 1981, p. 18). Filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut were the doyens of avant-garde cinema, and subsequently influenced scores of filmmakers around the world to practise filmmaking as an art unto itself. In particular, this resonated beyond Europe to the producer-driven studio culture in America where a greater attention was given to the privileged position of the director within in the production process: "This shifted the power structure in the industry and films we considered less as factory products and more as individual works of art" (Redvall 2010, p. 62).

This creative freedom questioned the basic language of film, and in doing so challenged traditional storytelling technique which naturally extended to editing: "much of their work demonstrates a refreshing openness that defies the rules and throws over a slavish adherence to the convention" (Crittenden 1981, p. 19). One such example was film dissolves, traditionally used for conveying the passage of time: "Truffaut amongst others questioned both the need to use a dissolve in this way and even the need to signal time passing so conventionally" (Crittenden 1981, p. 19). Instead the 'simple cut' was used, which did the same job but in a less laborious fashion. This in turn lead to the stylistic convention of the 'jump-cut', synonymous with the New Wave and most famously used in Jean-Luc Godard's film *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960). However, more than challenging convention there was a new-found respect for editing: "Once released from this prime function editing can be used to do so much more" (Crittenden 1981, p. 19). As a director, Godard impressed upon the central contribution of editing to the filmmaking process:

The most efficient editing will give a film, otherwise without interest, is precisely the initial impression of having been directed. Editing can restore to actuality that ephemeral grace neglected by both snob and film-lover, or can transform chance into destiny (Godard, 1956).

The rise of the auteur and a renewed interest in 'film art' came at a time of technical innovation and advances in film production, such as the aforementioned advent of 16mm film, which opened the door to a new generation of filmmakers: "16mm lightweight cameras and recorders made it possible to film actual situations *without* the camera dictating how events were shown" (Crittenden 1981, p. 17). This new-found versatility instigated a shift to low-budget film production and, consequently, the rise of a burgeoning independent sector. It also encouraged aspiring filmmakers to learn the

craft, which led to a proliferation of film schools around the world offering courses in film production as well as film theory.

The new film school

The notion of the 'film school' as we know it today only came into being in the 1960s with the founding of prestigious film departments in America such as the Walt Disney–founded California Institute of the Arts (1961), the New York University Tisch School of the Arts (1965), and the Columbia University School of the Arts (1965). A number of independent and government-funded film schools also started to emerge throughout Europe, including the National Film School of Denmark (1966), an interesting case study in that it initiated the move from classical film training in support of a modern Danish film culture. As in America and throughout Europe, “from 1930 to 1960, Danish film was dominated by a studio system” (Redvall 2010, p. 62), and in that capacity the apprenticeship system was the training ground for film practitioners. However, the Danish 'art-orientated' film school promised to deliver on innovation, and started thinking about “this difficult education between art and technicality” (Redvall 2010, p. 63).

Although the new film schools were forward thinking in their ideologies of film as a 'creative pursuit', “the ideal of the auteur with a focus on the '*caméra-stylo*' to express a personal vision as introduced in the 1950s” (Truffaut, cited in Redvall p. 61) was strongly held for many years, and as such the teaching of production specialisations was limited. For example, film schools in Lodz and Paris didn't teach sound; this was taught in a technical university that only dealt with “sound as a technological phenomenon” (Canre, cited in Redvall 2010, p. 63). Likewise, the National Film School of Denmark took many years to move to a more collaborative film-training model, the subject of Redvall's (2010) paper 'Teaching Screenwriting in a Time of Storytelling Blindness: The Meeting of the Auteur and the Screenwriting Tradition in Danish Film-making'. She comments on the marginalisation of the writer in screen education and industry: “While it has been natural for directors to use a cinematographer, an editor and a sound engineer on their productions, screenwriters have not been an immediate choice as collaborators” (Redvall 2010, p. 65). In 1979 the National Film School of Denmark established a screenwriting department, but student directors were slow to collaborate in that 'real' directors were considered to be 'writer-directors'. However, as the course matured, students could see the benefit of collaborating in furthering their ideas: “It is all about collaboration. You have to respect each other's skills and specialities whether you are an editor, a screenwriter, or a director” (Michelsen 1996, cited in Redvall 2010 p. 70).

The National Film School of Denmark is just one example among the many film schools worldwide to introduce the concept of the 'shared language'. Given many of the new film schools grew out of a visual arts stream, the notion of a shared vision was something entirely foreign to fine-arts education, and most challenging to adapt. As Dean Simonton comments in his paper 'Collaborative Aesthetics in the Feature Film': "Unlike most forms of artistic expression, the feature film is the collaborative product of many individuals ... Most artistic products come from the hands of individual creators. This individualism is particularly apparent in literature, music, painting, and sculpture ... It is extremely rare for a highly claimed masterpiece to be the collaborative product of more than one person" (Simonton 2002, p.115).

In my own experience as a lecturer in postproduction and editing, collaboration is one of the biggest challenges in screen education, but one that students come to appreciate in acquiring knowledge across all areas of the production process, specifically in the specialised skills required in making something that is 'greater than the sum of its parts'. This is something we need to instill not only in the minds of the students, but also in designing curriculum for film and media institutions. As Redvall acknowledges, "the National Film School of Denmark has for a number of years worked hard to create a common understanding for film production, and to teach students to collaborate" (Redvall 2010, p. 77). At the same time she observes that in the Danish film industry, the director still has the final cut. Film school consultant and Department Head of the *New Danish Screen*, Vinca Wiedemann, argued for the concept of a 'collaborative auteur theory' as unique to Danish film, and one that is now pursued at the National Film School of Denmark. Projects are still initiated and driven by the director, but the director collaborates closely with all people on their production team who, to a greater or lesser extent, "all have a storytelling function" (Vilhelm 2007, cited in Redvall, p. 76).

Film schools in Australia

The original Swinburne School of Film and Television was also an example of the new film-school model. As the first film school in Australia, established in 1966, the same year as the National Film School of Denmark, it was initially part of the Art School in the Department of Graphic Design at the Swinburne Institute of Technology. In their formative years, students were required to do two years of art and design before gaining entry into the final year of film and television studies. However, the program had an innovative approach, in which students were considered to be "artists being trained in the technical skills of filmmaking" (Carter 2008, p. 28). Although the founder

Brian Robinson was auteur in his approach to training “producers and directors”, he supported the concept of film as a new form of artistic expression: “Contemporary film and television offer the artist a flexible new voice of expression, in which all the arts it would seem, seek to speak with one voice” (Paterson 1996, p. 10). Jill Bilcock was in the first year of the Swinburne Film School, and recalls being given a camera and told to go out and make a film:

Coming out of film school we were trained in all areas at that time. It wasn't like we were able to only study editing. We were just seven kids fooling around making five-minute films ... we had 100 foot of 16 mm film to use for our exam film and that was it (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

The early Swinburne Film School model of training the auteur writer/director held strong until 1992, when the film school merged with the Victorian College of the Arts to become the VCA Film and Television School. The film school was reaccredited within the Bachelor of Fine Arts and, like the National Film School of Denmark, the concept of specialisations was slow to take hold. However, when the newly accredited Swinburne University of Technology reestablished the film school in 2004, it took the opportunity to move away from the traditional auteur film-school model, and capitalised on digital technology in opening up specialisations as integral to the delivery and output.

In the current model, Swinburne Film and Television students are trained in all aspects of film production and work collaboratively in key crew roles on their film projects. By their final year, students have identified an area of specialisation such as screenwriting, directing, producing, cinematography, editing or sound design, with the opportunity to further enhance their skills through collaborating on major film projects, and by participating in advanced production classes as relevant to their skills.

As a delegate of the Australian Screen Production and Research Association (ASPORA), it is evident that providers of media education are seeing the benefits of specialisations in educating film practitioners, which in turn, feeds back into the Australian film industry. This is a positive endorsement for Australian screen education and the local film industry in providing creative training in all areas of production to aspiring filmmakers who have an ambition to pursue a career in the film industry.

In summary: The challenge of teaching creative editing

As a lecturer in postproduction and editing, teaching the practice of editing has always presented a challenge in aligning the creative with technical expertise. The technology is a tangible commodity and as such can be taught in an experiential learning

environment by engaging students in 'hands-on' editing exercises to learn the software and basic editing skills. The challenge of teaching creativity in editing – which is what drives my research enquiry – is less tangible, in that it requires a great deal of contextualising in terms of content and problem solving, as aligned with 'creative outcomes'. As established, the question of how to get students engaged in and excited by the creative challenges of editing was the initiative for the development of my artifact. My directive was to open up the conversation about editing, to hear what editors have to say about their work, and what drives them and inspires them to find the best possible outcomes for the films they work on. As a final question to the editors, I asked them to explain in a few words what it is that editors do:

What does an editor do? We tell stories through the manipulation of images and sound (personal interview, Mark Atkin 2011).

They actually interpret picture and sound and try to put it together into a coherent form that entertains people (personal interview, Ken Sallows 2011).

Myself, as an editor, I'm trying to make the film the best it can be and trying to take the vision of the director and all the other people that are part of that film and my own vision, and impart that to the material and bring it to life, and make an audience feel something and think something, and make it the best film it can be (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012).

Good editors change the world with good stories ... bad editors take out the bad bits. I'll probably come to regret that but that's my sort of hipster tee-shirt version (personal interview, Luke Doolan 2011).

There's a theory that editors cut out the bad bits. I don't think that's a good example of what editors do ... We take light, and sound and performance and we weave an interesting story that people have an emotional response to. And we try and make the performers and the directors and the writing as good as possible ... and we try and have fun in the process! (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

Editors are responsible for the final draft of the film, the script. The first one is writing it, the second one is directing it, and the third one is the collaboration of the director and the editor rewriting it again. So it is the final draft (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012).

An editor ... it's all story driven. It's how can a story be best, be its most succinct, emotional delivery. That's it! (personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2013).

All seven editors I interviewed for this project enthuse about their level of commitment and passion for their craft, which in many ways is an open door for students wanting to learn more about the art of editing. Dany Cooper spoke of her level of immersion:

You become obsessed, absolutely obsessed with what you're making. That's the only way to edit a film" (personal interview, 2011).

In many ways the nature of editing is different to the roles of other key creatives in the filmmaking process in that, for a time, you as the editor have the whole film in your hands which brings with it a sense of responsibility and ownership:

It's just the material and you alone. In a room, initially, trying to make something out of just a random image, and a random sound. So that's what you're doing, effectively, that's where the creativity comes into it (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2011).

Sometimes you can get it out of proportion and you can believe you are the sole author of the film. But only for that amount of time that it's in your arms and it's sitting there on your Avid (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

To actively engage students in their learning with the purpose to achieve a best possible outcome for their films is the first step in unpacking the creative process. Pearlman believes knowledge and experience are implicit to creative outcomes, and "implicit learning as the acquisition of such expertise by non-conscious or non-conceptual means" (2009, p. 4). As established, the other contributing factor that supports teaching creativity in an experiential learning environment is the collaborative nature of filmmaking and editing itself. McWilliam endorsed the idea of "the community, not the 'individual' as the unit that matters when seeking to foster creativity" (2007, p. 4). This form of collaboration fuels a passion for the craft of editing which to a great degree drives creative outcomes, as is evident in my artifact:

I think that what actually sank in when I was editing was the fact that I loved film. I loved the look of it. I loved the feel of it. I loved the shapes, the compositions. And I felt lucky that I was always working with people who were very artistic or experimental (personal interview, Jill Bilcock 2012)

What excites me? I mean everything excites me. I live and breathe it. I can't wait to get in in the morning. It exhausts me but so what. I think that you're making a world that is your world, or the world of the film (personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

Section 6: The nexus of theory and practice in teaching creativity in editing

In returning to my research question investigating *creative practice and pedagogy*, in this section I will engage in a scholarly discussion on the *nexus of theory and practice* in reference to ‘formal and informal learning’ as specific to teaching in a collaborative studio-based environment, and in reference to my artifact as a ‘visual aided learning tool’.

Much of what we associate with creativity is subjective and, from a pedagogical perspective, hard to put a value on. In terms of editing, concepts associated with creativity such as intuition, rhythm and pacing cannot easily be quantified in terms of assessment, but can be measured in their contribution to creative outcomes.

McWilliam refers to the concept of ‘prod-user’ in describing an interactive learning environment where teachers and students are ‘co-creators’ of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, “drawing on a network of people and ideas that is fluid and organic” (2007, p. 8). This in itself can lead to a more nuanced approach to assessment criteria, with the ability to engage in “value-adding assembling and disassembling processes – not the ability to regurgitate content knowledge – that needs to be prioritized in any authentic regime of assessment for creative capacity building” (2007, p. 8). The ‘prod-user’ is relevant to my discussion on the pedagogy of editing practice where the various networks of engagement – including access to industry practitioners, the pooling of academic knowledge and resources, and engagement in a peer-review processes – all contribute to an integrated learning model where creative decision making and problem-solving are shared in an open learning environment.

The nexus of theory and practice

“Art educators have long been concerned about the relationship between theory and praxis” and, in particular, “the role of critical theory in studio arts programs” (McKenna, 1999, p. 75). This is apparent in film education, where critical analysis and peer review are integral to learning and in producing creative outcomes. In terms of editing, as a conceptual practice-based medium, much of the learning is reflective and as Dany Cooper concedes, much of the theorising internalised: “Your intuition comes to the fore when you’re cutting, and then you can sit back and write a book about it” (personal interview, 2011).

The question as to where editing sits as a ‘concept’ in film theory is central to my research question. In discussing this I circumnavigated theoretical discourse from high-

theory to mid-theory, to the more pragmatic view that ‘no one theory predominates film studies today’. Todd McGowan spoke of the shift from the “universalizing pretensions of the film theory of the 1970s and 1980s” (2003, p. 27), in the form of a totalizing theory of filmic experience more in keeping with psychoanalysis, to a theory open to investigating the practice of filmmaking itself. Lisbeth During defines ‘good theory’ as “concepts that are central to the practice in question, clarifies them and sets them into a coherent framework” (2012, p. 136).

The emergence of ‘practice-led’ and ‘practice-based’ research in the creative arts as “initiated by the artist or designer in response to their own particular studio or design practice” (de Freitas, 2002) has in many ways been a green light for the academy to promote pedagogy in this area:

Through situating practice within scholarship and hence showing practice as research in itself, the academy is able to look at practice as a way that generates significant new contributions to knowledge (Nelson, cited in Peterson et al. 2012, p. 16).

However, the nexus of theory and practice in higher education is still contentious and “this divisiveness does not fully consider the particular challenges that arise in the studio art classroom”, with the presumption that, “a skills approach to studio art is not a teaching of theory” (McKenna, 1999, p. 75). Although McKenna acknowledges that theory verses practice oversimplifies and, “each side must dig in to hold on to the oppositional position” (1999, p. 75), a positive outcome of this challenge is the renewed interest in, and recognition of, the importance of studio-based learning as a positive influence in bridging the world of theory and the experience of practice. This is particularly true in the areas of arts practice and creativity in that “studios are active sites where students are engaged intellectually and socially, shifting between analytic, synthetic and evaluative modes of thinking in different sets of activities” (Dutton, cited in Peterson et al. 2012, p. 16).

In terms of teaching film production and editing, a healthy open-access studio-based environment is vital to creative outcomes. From the outset students are encouraged to communicate in the shared language of film (both verbal and visual), and then to question this language in response to their own creative outcomes:

The goal of teaching perhaps should not be to politicize students, but to encourage them to engage with complex ideas. It is this distinction between *politicize* and *engage* which is the key to bridging the boundaries that divide studio art education (McKenna 1999, p.76).

The concept of 'politicising', which infers communicating in a way that deflects from questioning or being otherwise opinionated, kicks against the concept of critical interaction and engagement with the students. In teaching the principles of editing there is no right or wrong: "editing does not really have any rules that are set in stone" (Orpen 2003, p.9), but as established, critical evaluation comes from a place of learning and experience. It is through the process of doing and reflection-in-action that students start to develop the skills to critically evaluate and appraise their own practice and that of their peers. Over time, this experience starts to morph into what can be defined as 'intuitive', which in terms of learning Pearlman defines as "the acquisition of such expertise by non-conscious or non-conceptual means" (2009, p. 4).

Good communication skills and being open to direction are other attributes associated with being a good editor: "First and foremost to be a good, active spectator who can grasp the director's way of thinking immediately" (Villian, cited in Orpen 2003, p. 11). It's also vital to be able to respond in a positive way to constructive and critical feedback: "The thing that I've learnt is to be very, very open to being completely wrong" (personal interview, Jack Hutchings 2012). Again, this validates the collaborative nature of film and the necessity to facilitate student learning by teaching in an open studio-based environment where the concept of 'prod-user' is imperative to critical thinking and finding creative solutions.

As a teaching environment, the 'contemporary studio' works as an experimental or development space that relies in part on a 'community culture': "'studio' is commonly perceived as a culture – a creative community, incorporating both individual and collective practice endeavors, although for at least some of the time studio practice may be a solitary activity" (Peterson et al. 2012, p. 16). In the context of teaching editing in a 'lab', in the form of studio-based environment, my editing classes are structured as part-lecture, part-technology, peer reviews and critiques, and regular screenings and consultations with individual students and groups on the postproduction of their films. What prevails is a culture of open communication between the lecturer and students whereby students are engaged through interacting and reacting with the learning processes, and through the practical and theoretical application of new insights and knowledge as applicable to their work.

Studio-based learning and collaboration in creativity

In the field of arts and design, the pedagogy of studio practice is central to the learning experience. Nancy de Freitas believes studio methods enhance the skills of creativity in revealing the "intellectual and creative substance of the artwork or design" (2002, p.

1). Furthermore, studio-based learning contributes to the concept of problem-based learning in that “students practise skills and techniques and learn new concepts whilst working in an environment that encourages learning by doing, working together and seeking advice and assistance from mentors and tutors” (Lynch et al., 2001, p. 1), as specific to my area in teaching postproduction and editing.

Erica McWilliam supports the concept of studio-based learning as ‘creativity-enhancing’ and one that underpins real-world learning as being closely aligned with industry–studio practice. As previously discussed, McWilliam explored the ‘creativity–pedagogy nexus’, specifically in higher education. In doing so she found evidence to support the fact that “creativity is now understood to be enhanced through social processes”, and is an argument for “the ‘perceived usefulness’ of creativity as a powerful motivator for learning” (McWilliam 2007, p. 10). This supports the notion that a studio-based learning environment encourages creativity through team-work, social interaction and collaboration, and as such is the perfect incubator for creative outcomes. This was a motivating factor in the development of my artifact whereby all the editors I interviewed endorse a passion for the craft of editing, which in turn incites creative learning.

The other key criterion is that “studio-based learning prepares students for the real world of studio practice” (Corkey et al. 2007; Lynch et al. 2001, p.1; Zehner et al. 2009). This is certainly true in the broad disciplines of Art, Architecture and Design, as proposed in the Studio Teaching Project (2009), which cites the benchmark requirements of a positive studio culture as including: positive studio culture; quality staff; student engagement; high levels of interaction; strong collaboration; quality projects; connection with industry and the profession; variety of outcomes and appropriate studio space and facilities (Zehner et al., cited in Peterson et al. 2012, p. 3). These attributes are all endorsed as ‘best practice’ in the teaching methodology of the new film school model, specifically in the areas of quality staff, student collaboration, professional engagement and working to industry-standard specifications in all aspects of production. In referring to ‘quality staff’, what is pertinent to film education is the prevalence of the practitioner-academic, who brings professional practice, knowledge and industry-connectedness to their teaching.

In focusing on the studio-based learning model as relevant to preparing graduates for industry, Fiona Peterson led an investigation into the concept of the ‘industry studio’: “what the industry studio is, and whether educational studio reflects this” (Peterson et al. 2012, p. 1). Through interviewing a cross-section of industry studio creative practitioners on the physical and philosophical aspects of ‘industry studio’, Peterson

found that there was “an intangible overlapping of both – the hybrid ‘space in between’”. Although the ‘complex overlapping’ reflects the “idiosyncratic nature of studio practice, where no generic model for industry studio can claim to exist, between or sometimes even within specific disciplines” (Peterson et al. 2012, p.9), what is common to both professional studio practice and the studio-based learning model is: “learning through action ... an investigative and creative process driven by research, exploration and experimentation; making and constructing; and critique and reflection (Zehner et al., cited in Peterson et al, 2012, p. 5). This is highly relevant to film education in the delivery of industry-standard practice and protocols across all areas of the curriculum, by teaching staff who bring their professional knowledge and expertise to their teaching practice in driving creative outcomes. This, in turn, meets the demands of the “growing emphasis on employability as a graduate attribute” (Peterson et al. 2012, p. 16).

Another consideration in film education is that, given much of the production process happens outside the learning environment, the concept of ‘studio’ is in many ways both internal and external of the studio-based classroom experience. This aligns with the concept that the practicum studio may be physical or virtual, or a combination in providing, “an experimental space or one in which ideas and work are developed, with technology providing opportunities to experience and understand the multi-dimensional characteristics of creative process” (Edmunds et al. 2005, p. 452).

In the ‘pre-production stage of their film projects, students collaborate ‘in class’ in initiating, developing and enhancing project content, in preparation for the ‘production phase’ where they work collaboratively but external to the classroom environment in shooting their films, and finally in the postproduction stage they return to a studio-based environment in working through the editing process to a final output of their films. Learning the technology is embedded in all aspects of production, but more so in the context of exploring the more creative and experimental aspects of the filmmaking process. As such the studio model in film education is both physical and virtual, but acts as a melting pot to develop and enhance creativity, as well as preparing students for real-world opportunities:

The challenge for universities seeking to equip undergraduates to enter the creative workforce is to promote and support a culture of teaching and learning that parallels an unpredictable and irregular social and commercial world in which supply and demand is nether linear or stable ... (McWilliam 2007, p. 8).

In discussing the pedagogy of editing practice, I also made reference to digital technology and the impact on editing processes. In terms of teaching, I always emphasise to the students that the technology is a tool, not the knowledge or technique, in finding creative outcomes: “digital technologies cannot be depended on to produce new dynamics ... It is *pedagogical opportunity*, rather than technology, that is the driver of enhanced and different learning outcomes” (Sassen, cited in McWilliam 2007, p. 8).

In summary, it is not the ‘studio model’ or the technology that seeks to replicate the ‘industry studio’ model, but the ‘learning model’ as informed by the pedagogy of theory and praxis that is nurtured within the studio-based environment, be it real or virtual. In adhering to the benchmark requirements of quality studio-based learning (whatever form that takes), this form of integrated, collaborative, industry-based education is highly relevant to preparing film students for employment in the creative industries.

Visual-aided learning

In developing my artifact as an educational resource in the form of a ‘visual teaching aid’ I hope to extend the learning experience beyond the studio environment to a broader industry-based learning model. As discussed, the concepts of creativity in editing such as ‘rhythm’ and ‘intuition’ are hard to conceptualise, but these develop over time through practical application and what can be defined as ‘implicit learning’. In terms of teaching, it is preferential to situate implicit learning in a place of knowledge that supports creative outcomes. This integrated learning model could be aligned as ‘constructivist’ in creating an environment conducive to interactive, experiential and discovery learning whereby students are self-motivated to “construct their own knowledge and meaning drawing from real life experiences” (Jonassen, cited in Gazi & Askel 2011, p. 170).

Again, in returning to my research question, specifically ‘creative practice and pedagogy’, as a visual teaching aid the artifact was designed to fill this gap in delivering first-hand accounts of editing processes from industry professionals, each bringing their own sensibility and ideology of what pertains to ‘best practice’ in editing, as part of an integrated visual learning experience. Throughout their time in the film and television program, students develop skills and a knowledge of editing by engaging in coursework and through their own practical experience in working on the postproduction of their films. In addition to that, in being presented with a series of interviews expounding on the finer art of editing [the artifact], “the learning process

build[s] on what the student already knows, because it provides thinking and understanding of subject matter knowledge” (Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 170).

This is evident in a brief survey that I distributed to my 3rd and 4th year editing students (2014) after screening two sections of my artifact: *The Art of Editing* and *Visible Editing*. In asking the question, *Where you engaged or inspired by what the editors had to say about their practice?*, there was an overwhelming response in terms of building on existing knowledge, as well as gaining new insights into editing practice:

It's interesting how well I related to what they said but at the same time, how inexperienced I felt because of that (student feedback, 2014).

You can tell when an editor is talking about something that's really important because they evoke passion. We can all read books or research what makes a good editor, but when you see someone talking about something they consider really important, *that's* what sticks (student feedback, 2014).

Editing is an art form that we don't always acknowledge. Taking sequences of film and organising them to tell a story with emotion, suspense, anxiety, tension, rhythm is incredibly difficult, and listening to these editors discuss their work really helps you understand what goes into it – it's so much more than cutting (student feedback, 2014).

I was surprised by the amount of passion and the way they talked about editing being such a creative art, which is inspiring for me as a filmmaker (student feedback, 2014).

Absolutely, they all said something useful I had never thought of before (student feedback, 2014).

Yes, as a filmmaker I'd be failing myself to not have an interest in what these people had to say (student feedback, 2014).

It was insightful and engaging throughout but what stood out for me was editing in terms of a shape or movement (student feedback, 2014).

This feedback clearly conforms with Gazi & Askel's statement, “recent literature reveals the visual aided learning process encourages students to think, understand the specific subject matter and construct their own knowledge with regards to the different perspectives and representations of the content in a meaningful way” (2011, p. 171). In this case, it is clear that the students openly engage with and take inspiration from the editors in reflecting on their own understanding of what editing pertains to be.

In response to the questions, *What did you learn about the creative process of editing in terms of new knowledge?*, and *Can you apply that knowledge to how you approach the edit of your graduate film?*, a number of students directly quoted from the editors interviews, and referred to specific stylistic conventions and devices as relevant to their own experience:

A really good read doesn't translate to a good watch (student feedback, 2014: quote taken from personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2011).

A good read doesn't make a good film. The visual medium requires a whole different understanding in the way a story is told (student feedback, 2014: quote taken from personal interview, Jason Ballantine 2011).

The idea of intuition in editing reflects greatly on my own editing methods, which I'd never given much thought to. The idea of 'instantly knowing how to cut something three times' intrigues me (student feedback, 2014: quote taken from personal interview, Dany Cooper 2011).

Thinking of ways to change and cut differently regardless of continuity could certainly prove beneficial. Being more adventurous (student feedback, 2014).

This video was a good way to get in the editor's mindset and will help me support the editors on my film (student feedback, 2014).

The point that stood out to me the most was the way in which the editor and the director need to understand each other's intent (student feedback, 2014).

I liked hearing a different range of opinions and views of the editing process (student feedback, 2014).

It's as creative as it is technical. Great interviews and the editors are engaging, passionate, varied (student feedback, 2014).

Many of the students also made specific reference to the sample film clips used to illustrate the editor's responses:

I particularly liked the excerpts of the films discussed (student feedback, 2014)

Helps in understanding the editors' advice (student feedback, 2014).

The quality of information was excellent, the video wasn't too long and I think the film examples worked well to break up the talking heads. I'm interested in seeing more and would even watch this video again (student feedback, 2014)

In summary: teaching creativity in editing

In developing my artifact as a pedagogical resource titled, *The Art of Editing - Australian Screen Editors Discuss Creativity in Editing*, the challenge was to harness the 'idiosyncratic and mysterious' which McWilliam's associates with teaching creativity, and to inspire students to look at editing more than as 'a means to an end', but as the final stage of creative development in achieving quality outcomes in their films.

In response, the students willingness to engage and interact with the knowledge and ideas as presented in the artifact is affirmation that this form of creative learning is significant in enhancing their editing skills. Their feedback is indicative of McWilliam's notion of teaching creativity which she defines as "domain relevant skills, creative processes, and intrinsic task motivation" as fostered "through formal and informal learning" (2007, p. 3). The concept of visual-aided learning fits both criteria in that "knowledge is not passively accumulated, but rather it is the result of active cognizing by the individuals within the learning process (Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 170). As evident in the students' response to my artifact, they actively internalise the knowledge as presented, as applicable to their own editing practice. As such, the artifact meets the criteria of 'diversity in learning' and 'industry-relevant', and highly applicable as a form of visual-aided learning in that it presents, "multiple perspectives and representation of the content in terms of co-construction of knowledge though internalization" (Ello, cited in Gazi & Aksal 2011, p. 176).

Section 7: In conclusion - *The 'Art of Editing': creative practice and pedagogy*

As a practitioner-academic, the focus of my practice-led/practice-based research on the topic, *The 'Art of Editing': creative practice and pedagogy*, has led to new insights into defining creativity in editing and the pedagogy of teaching creative editing practice.

The practice-led/practice-based research presented the opportunity to create a valuable educational resource (the artifact) that clearly fulfills its purpose as a visual-learning aid in teaching creativity in editing, and an exegesis that supports the artifact in reflecting on my practice as a film editor and educator, and the production of the artifact itself. The exegesis also presented the opportunity to open up a scholarly debate on theoretical, historical and contemporary notions of creative editing practice through investigating integrated theory and praxis pedagogy, a reflection on 'practice-led/practice-based' research in reference to reflective practice, practice theory and intuition, and contemporary teaching practice and strategies such as studio-based learning and visual-aided learning.

In summation of my research enquiry into creative editing practice, I will give a brief overview of knowledge gained from the exegetical output and the production of the artifact.

As an introduction to the research topic, *The 'Art of Editing' creative practice and pedagogy*, Section 1 identifies a gap in knowledge in terms of defining creative editing practice from a theoretical and pedagogical point of view, and in response, the development of the artifact as a reflection on my practice as an editor, and as an educational resource for teaching creative editing. The artifact investigates the 'art of editing' through a series of interviews with esteemed Australian screen editors addressing the key themes of my research enquiry, and in doing so attempts demystify the practice and celebrate the role of the editor as a key creative in the filmmaking process. In terms of production methodology, the recorded interviews inform the major content of the artifact, and the editing process itself determines the final form of the artifact, as reflected in the interviews: "Editors are responsible for the final draft of the film, the script" (Jill Bilcock 2012). As a result, the artifact fulfills its intended purpose which is to enlighten students on the 'art of editing', to expand their knowledge on creative editing processes, and to make them aware of the creative contribution of the editor to the final outcome of the film, whatever form that takes.

As a film-practitioner–researcher, in Section 2 I reflect on practice-led/practice-based research as a model to frame my investigation on the ‘art of editing’, and as an opportunity to explore best practice in teaching creativity in editing. This form of autoethnographic research allows me to place my practice as central to my investigation in the development the artifact in the form of a research film, and in conceptualizing my research in the writing of the exegesis. The artifact gave me the opportunity to produce a creative work in it’s own right, expand on my practice as an editor, and investigate teaching creativity in editing in reference to the concepts of ‘intuition’, ‘reflexive practice’ and ‘reflective learning’. The exegesis allowed me to conceptualize my practice theoretically, and through self-reflective methodology, to legitimise the study as qualitative research in bringing new knowledge and insights to my topic, ‘the art of editing’, that has enriched my own artistic practice and informed my work in teaching creative editing practice.

In Section 3, ‘The Art of Editing’, I go to the heart of my research topic in reviewing the craft or *art* of editing in reference to defining the terminology around editing practice, articulating it as a process, and evaluating the creative contribution of the editor as a key creative in the filmmaking process. In undertaking an investigative review of the history of editing through to contemporary practice, including recording interviews with Australian screen editors for the purpose creating the artifact, it was established that a degree of ambiguity still permeates the craft in terms of ‘the hidden art’, as specific to defining the role of the editor, editing processes and the attributes of creative editing practice. However, there is overwhelming evidence to support the editor as central to creative outcomes in film, and that, in fact, a ‘good film’ is the product of ‘good editing’.

In Section 4, I investigate editing through the prism of film theory in looking beyond my own point of reference as a film-practitioner-educator, to a more theoretical, philosophical context, and found new insights into editing - on one hand practice informing theory, and on the other hand, theory investigating practice. Through investigating the theories of Deleuze, Bazin and Leenhardt, and abstract concepts associated with editing such as the manipulation of time, the ‘aesthetic of discovery’, and the power of ‘ellipsis’, all familiar to editors but imbedded in a theoretical discourse, it was enlightening to evaluate editing practice in terms of the physiological and psychological impact of film on the audience, who live out their own reality through the experience of cinema. This reality is at the core of my investigation into creative editing practice whereby the power of editing in shaping story and emotion are is part of its allure and mystique as a craft, or what may be referred to as the *art*.

Finally, in sections 5 and 6 I investigate teaching creative editing practice in reference to the challenges of teaching creativity, what creativity pertains to in editing, and how editors learn their craft. The concept of intuition is a recurring theme, but in terms of editing intuition comes from a place of experience and is “nourished by acquisition of explicit skills and knowledge” (Pearlman, 2009, p. 6). Of course there has to be a pre-disposition for the craft to begin with, but hard work and passion drive creativity in the challenge to problem solve and find innovative solutions (through the editing process), and make something new (a film), all contributing factors to creative outcomes.

I further explored teaching creativity, not as the product of the individual artist, but in a social context as situated in a culture or ‘domain’, in this case the domain of film production. The concept that creativity is enhanced through social processes, in taking inspiration and knowledge from expertise in the field and drawing from other domains, has direct synergies with editing as a collaborative endeavor, and integral to the filmmaking process whereby key creatives work together in finding the best possible outcomes for their films.

The concept of the ‘creative collective’ is explored further as a powerful motivator for learning in teaching creativity in editing. In section 6, I investigate ‘studio-based learning’ and ‘visual aided learning’ as a way to engage and interact with the students through the process of ‘formal and informal learning’. In developing the artifact as visual-aided learning tool, it clearly succeeds in bringing first hand experience of editors discussing their practice into the classroom environment. As is evident in the student feedback, they actively engaged with the content, internalized the knowledge and then apply it to their own editing practice. As such, the artifact fulfills its purpose as a stimulus to learning and applying new knowledge specifically pertaining to the more idiosyncratic skills associated with creativity in editing, such as intuition and emotive storytelling techniques.

In summary, through the production of the artifact, *The Art of Editing - Australian Screen Editors Discuss Creativity in Editing*, and the accompanying exegesis, insights gained as specific to the *art of editing* and best practice in *teaching creativity in editing*, bring new knowledge to the academy and enhance learning in terms of understanding editing processes and the pedagogy of creative editing in new and significant ways.

As a final notation, Valerie Orpen, who has made a most valuable contribution to the art of editing with her book *Film Editing: The Art of the Expressive* (2003), made comment on the ‘dearth of studies on editing’:

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

What I have endeavored to capture in the production of my artifact, designed around a series of interviews with esteemed Australian screen editors, is the essence or 'magic' so often referred to but unexplained in terms of the expressive elements that are drawn out in the edit of a film. The presentation of this knowledge, in the form of the artifact as an original work in both content and context, is an insight into what pertains to be the 'art of editing' and best practice in teaching creativity in editing.

References /Bibliography

- À bout de souffle (Breathless)* [Motion picture]. (1961). Directed by J.-L. Godard, France.
- Apple, W. (2004), *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing*. [Film. DVD release September 6, 2005].
- Andrew, D. (2010). *What cinema is! Bazin's quest and its charge*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Arnold, J. (2011). ALTC literature review. Does the educational studio reflect industry studio practice?. 14.
- Arnold, J. (2012). Practice led research: Creative activity, academic debate, and intellectual rigour. *Higher Education Studies*, 2(2), 9–24.
- Atkinson, T. & Claxton, G. (Eds). 2003. *The intuitive practitioner: On the value of not always knowing what one is doing*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Art of the Guillotine, The (AOTG). Retrieved July 25, 2011 from <http://www.aotg.com/>
- At the Movies*. (2011). *Mrs Carey's Concert: Interview with Bob Connolly and Sophie Raymond*, ABC TV, Australia.
- Australia Screen Editors (ASE). Retrieved??, ??, from <http://www.screeneditors.com.au/>
- Battleship Potemkin* [Motion picture]. (1925). Directed by S. M. Eisenstein, Russia.
- Biggs, M. & Büchler, D. 2007. 'Rigor and practice-based research'. *Design Issues* 23 (3 Summer), 62–69.
- Biggs, M. & Büchler, D. 2011. 'Communities, values, conventions and actions'. In M. Biggs and H. Karlsson (Eds), *The Routledge companion to research in the creative arts*, pp. 82–97. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Birds, The* [Motion picture]. (1963). Directed by A. Hitchcock, USA
- Birth of a Nation, The* [Motion picture]. (1915). Directed by D. W.Griffith, USA.
- Bordwell, D. (2013). *Narration in the fiction film*. Routledge.
- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2010). *Film art: An introduction*. London: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Ashton, J. (1997). *Film art: An introduction* (Vol. 7). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Branigan, E. (2013). *Narrative comprehension and film*. Routledge.
- Brook, S., & Magee, P. (2012). Postscript. *TEXT special issue website series number 14: Beyond practice-led research*. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue14/content.htm>
- Brownlow, K. (1968). *The parade's gone by ...*. University of California Press: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Byron, K. (2007, 8–10 January). *Defining boundaries for creativity* [Keynote conference presentation]. Creativity or conformity? Building cultures of creativity in higher education, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff..
- Carter, N. (2008). *Pen to pixel: 100 years of design education at Swinburne*. Prahran: Swinburne University of Technology.
- Chang, J. (2012). *Filmcraft: Editing*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press.

- Chew, R., Coates, A. V., Heim, A., Hutshing, J., Murch, W., Scalia, P., ... Tichenor, D. (2009). The art and craft of film editing: A critical symposium. *Cineaste*, 34(2), 54–64.
- Claxton, G. 2003. The anatomy of intuition. In Atkinson, T., & Claxton, G. (Eds) *The intuitive practitioner: On the value of not always knowing what one is doing*, pp. 32–52. Buckingham, UK and New York: Open University Press.
- Cohen, H. (2004). Trust me – I’m an editor! *Metro Magazine*, No. 141, 106.
- Colebrook, C. (2001). *Gilles Deleuze*. London: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Corkery, L., Roche, B., Watson, K. & Zehner, (2007, 9–12 July). *Transforming design studio learning and teaching through real world, interdisciplinary projects*. Connected 2007 International Conference on Design Education, University of New South Wales, Australia.
- Creative Cow. Retrieved??, ??, from <https://www.creativecow.net/>
- Crittenden, R. (1981). *The Thames and Hudson manual of film editing*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Crittenden, R. (1995). *Film and video editing* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Crittenden, R. (2006). *Fine cuts: The art of European film editing*. Boston: Focal Press.
- Crittenden, R. (2008). Conceiving the rhythms of silence. *Soundtrack*, 1(2), 87–94. doi: 10.1386/st.1.2.87/1
- Crittenden, R. (2012, 19–21 November). *Conference Introduction*. Asia-Pacific Symposium on Creative Post-Production: Revealing the Hidden Art, Griffith University Film School, Brisbane.
http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/470371/Symposium-and-Conference-Program.v2.pdf
- Croghan, P. (2013). Editing (and) individuation. *New Formations*, 77 (Spring), 97–110. doi: 10.3898/NEWF.77.06.2012
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1995). Creativity across the life-span: A systems view. *Talent development III*.
- M. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) Edited extract from R. Sternberg (Ed) (1999) Handbook of Creativity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 313–35.
- Dallow, P. (2003). Representing creativeness: Practice-based approaches to research in creative arts. *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 2(1), 49–66.
- Dancyger, K. (2011). *The technique of film & video editing* (5th ed.). Oxford, UK: Focal Press.
- de Freitas, N. (2002). Towards a definition of studio documentation: Working tool and transparent record. *Working Papers in Art and Design, University of Hertfordshire*, 2. Accessed ???? Available at https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/12305/WPIAAD_vol2_freitas.pdf
- Deleuze, G. (1986). *Cinema 1: The movement-image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Originally published as *Cinéma*, 1).
- Deleuze, G. (1989). *Cinema 2: The time-image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 77.

- Douglass, B. G., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25(3), 39–55.
- During, L., & Levitt, D. (2012). Film theory. *Year's Work in Critical & Cultural Theory*, 20(1), 133–173.
- Eagleton, T. (2003). *After theory* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Eisenstein, S. (1929). Methods of Montage. *Film Form*, 72-83.
- Eisenstein, S. (1957). *Film form [and]: The film sense; two complete and unabridged works*. Meridian Books.
- Ellis, C. (1991). Sociological introspection and emotional experience. *Symbolic Interaction*, 14(1), 23–50. doi: 10.1525/si.1991.14.1.23
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733–768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- English Patient, The* [Motion picture]. (1996). Directed by A. Minghella, USA.
- Fairservice, D. (2001). *Film editing: History, theory and practice* (Vol. 1). Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Furlong, J. (2003). Intuition and the crisis in teacher professionalism. In T. Atkinson, & G. Claxton (Eds.), *The intuitive practitioner: On the value of not always knowing what one is doing*, (pp. 15–31). New York: Open University Press.
- Garfield, R. (2007). Articulating a position through research: The practice-led PhD, a case study. *Journal of Media Practice*, 8(2), 221-234. doi: 10.1386/jmpr.8.2.221_1
- Gazi, Z. A., & Aksal, F. A. (2011). The film as visual aided learning tool in classroom management course. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*, 41, 170–179.
- Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography. Retrieved 2 September 2008
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_school#cite_note-historyinformation-1
- Godard, J. L. (1956). Montage my Fine Care. *Godard on Godard, Cahiers du Cinema*, December, 39–41.
- Great Train Robbery, The* [Motion picture]. (1903). Directed by E. S. Porter, USA.
- Gross, D. (2009). *Making a story move: The art of film editing*. (Honors scholar thesis, University of Connecticut, USA).
http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/srhonors_theses/93
- Haefner, N. (2008). What's wrong with the primacy of theory? *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 7(2), 173–189. doi: 10.1386/jvap.7.2.173_1
- Intolerance: Love's struggle throughout the ages* [Motion picture]. (1916). Directed by D. W. Griffith, USA.
- Kerrigan, S. (2013). Accommodating creative documentary practice within a revised systems model of creativity. *Journal of Media Practice*, 14(2), 111–127. doi: 10.1386/jmpr.14.2.111_1
- Kerrigan, S., & McIntyre, P. (2010). The 'creative treatment of actuality': Rationalizing and reconceptualizing the notion of creativity for documentary practice. *Journal of Media Practice*, 11(2), 111-130.
- Kolstrup, S. (1998). The notion of editing. *P.O.V. A Danish Journal of Film Studies*, December(6).

- Konigsberg, I. (1985). *The complete film dictionary* (pp. 98–100). New York: Meridian.
- L'affaire Dreyfus* [Motion picture]. (1899). Directed by G. Méliès, France.
- L'âge d'or* [Motion picture]. (1931). Directed by L. Buñuel, France.
- La sortie des usines Lumière (Workers leaving the Lumière factory)* [Motion picture]. (1895). Directed by L. Lumière, France.
- Le Fanu, M. (1998). On Editing. *P.O.V. A Danish Journal of Film Studies*, December (6).
- Le voyage dans la lune (A trip to the moon)* [Motion picture]. (Year). Directed by G. Méliès, G. France.
- Lebow, A. (2008). AVPhD: Supervising in the dark. *Journal of Media Practice*, 9(3), 201–213. doi: 10.1386/jmpr.9.3.201_1
- Life of an American fireman, The* [Motion picture]. (1903). Directed by E. S. Porter, USA.
- Lynch, M. (2000). Against reflexivity as an academic virtue and source of privileged knowledge. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 17(3), pp. 26–54.
- Lynch, K., Carbone, A., Arnott, D., & Jamieson. (2001). *A studio based approach to teaching information technology*. Seventh World Conference on Computers in Education, Copenhagen, July 29–August 3, 2001.
- Magee, S. B. A. P. 2012. Beyond Practice-led Research. *TEXT special issue number 14: Beyond practice-led research* [Online]. Available: <http://www.textjournal.com.au> [Accessed October 2012].
- Mamet, D. (1991). *On directing film*. New York: Penguin.
- McGowan, T. (2003). Looking for the gaze: Lacanian film theory and its vicissitudes. *Cinema Journal*, 42(3), 27–47.
- McKenna, S. E. (1999). Theory and practice: Revisiting critical pedagogy in studio art education. *Art Journal*, 58(1), 75–79. doi: 10.2307/777885
- McWilliam, E. L. (2007, 8-11 July). Is creativity teachable? *Conceptualising the creativity/pedagogy relationship in higher education*. Paper presented at the 30th HERDSA Annual Conference: Enhancing Higher Education, Theory and Scholarship, Adelaide.
- Mello, R. (2002). Collocation analysis: A method for conceptualizing and understanding narrative data. *Qualitative Research* 2(2), 231–243.
- Metros, S., & Woolsey, K. (2006). Visual literacy: An institutional imperative. *Educause Review*, 41(May–June), 80–86. Available at <https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ERM0638.pdf>.
- Michaelson, A. (1984) *Kino-eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. University of California Press.
- Moulin Rouge!* [Motion picture]. (2001). Directed by B. Luhrmann, Australia.
- Murch, W. (1995). *In the blink of an eye: A perspective on film editing*. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press.
- Murch, W. (2001). *In the blink of an eye: A perspective on film editing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Silman-James Press.
- Nemiro, J. (2004). *Creativity in virtual teams: Key components for success* (Vol. 6). John Wiley & Sons.

- Oldham, G. (1992). *First cut: Conversations with film editors*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Ondaatje, M. (2002). *The conversations: Walter Murch and the art of editing film*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Ondaatje, M. (2010). *The conversations: Walter Murch and the art of editing film*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Orpen, V. (2003). *Short cuts: Film editing: The art of the expressive* (Vol. 16: Short Cuts Series). (Reprinted 2009; page references are to the 2003 edition.) London: Wallflower Press.
- O'Steen, B. (2009). *The invisible cut: How editors make movie magic*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.
- O'Steen, B. [Editfest LA, Conference Moderator]. (2011, 5–6 August). *A tribute to Sally Menke: Friends and colleagues reminisce about the life's work of a master editor*. Universal Studios, Los Angeles.
- Paterson, B. (1996). *Renegades: Australia's first film school from Swinburne to VCA*. Ivanhoe East, Victoria: Helicon.
- Pearlman, K. (2009). Cutting rhythms in *Chicago* and *Cabaret*. *Cineaste*, 34(2), 28-32.
- Pearlman, K. (2009). *Cutting rhythms: Shaping the film edit*. Amsterdam & Boston: Focal Press/Elsevier.
- Pearlman, K. (2011). Karen Pearlman on theories of non visible edits [Online Interview]. *Art of the Guillotine (AoTG)*. Available from: http://www.aotg.com/index.php?page=list_full_media&article_id=6564
- Pearson, M. 2010. The cutting edge. *Inside Film*. Glebe NSW, Australia: Mark Kuban.
- Pepperman, R. D. (2004). *The eye is quicker: Film editing – making a good film better*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.
- Peterson, F., McWhinnie, L., Lawrence, J., & Arnold, J. (2012). The industry studio in the creative arts: Ten practitioner perspectives. *TEXT Special Issue Number 16: Strengthening learning and teaching leadership in the creative arts*, 16(2). <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue16/Peterson&McWhinnie&Lawrence&Arnold.pdf>
- Pisters, P. (2003). *The matrix of visual culture: Working with Deleuze in film theory*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Redvall, E. N. (2010). Teaching screenwriting in a time of storytelling blindness: The meeting of the auteur and the screenwriting tradition in Danish film-making. *Journal of Screenwriting*, 1(1), 59-81. doi: 10.1386/josc.1.1.59/1
- Reisz, K. (1953). *The technique of film editing*. London & New York: Focal Press.
- Romeo & Juliet* [Motion picture].(1996). Feature Film. Directed by B. Luhrmann, Australia.
- Rosenblum, R., & Karen, R. (1979). *When the shooting stops ... the cutting begins: A film editor's story*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Ryan, T. (2005). When you reflect are you also being reflexive? *The Ontario Action Researcher* 8(1).
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London: Temple Smith.
- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Schön, D. A. (1991). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Scorsese, M. (2012, 15 June). *Martin Scorsese on the importance of visual literacy* [Video interview]. Edutopia's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I90ZluYvHic>
- Simonton, D. K. (2002). Collaborative aesthetics in the feature film: Cinematic components predicting the differential impact of 2,323 Oscar-nominated movies. *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, 20(2), 115–125.
- Sooryamoorthy, R. (2007). Behind the scenes: Making research films in sociology. *International Sociology*, 22(5), 547–563. doi: 10.1177/0268580907080486
- Strike* [Motion picture]. (1924). Directed by S. M. Eisenstein, Russia.
- Studio Teaching Project. *Volume One: STP Final Report* (October 2009). <http://www.studioteaching.org/?page=reports>
- Tarkovsky, A. (1986). *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 18–21.
- Thieme, S. (2012). "Action": Publishing research results in film. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 13(1), 1–21.
- Tomasulo, F. P. (1997). Theory to practice: Integrating cinema theory and film production. *Cinema Journal*, 36(3), 113–117.
- Thompson, R. (1993). *Grammar of the Edit*. London, Focal Press.
- Truffaut, F. (1954). Une certaine tendance du Cinéma Français. *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 31 (January), pp. 15–28.
- Trilling, D. (2009). Perspectives: Interview with director Mike Figgis on the future of film. *New Statesman*, 138(4958), 42.
- Un chien Andalou* [Motion picture]. (1929). Directed by L. Buñuel, France.
- Vilhelm, T. (2007), *Filmbyen*, Copenhagen: Ekstra Bladets Forlag.
- Wall, S. (2006). An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(2), 146–160.
- Wiedemann, V. (1998). Film editing: A hidden art? *P.O.V. A Danish Journal of Film Studies*, December (6).
- Wood, J. (2007). Finding 100 ways: An interview with Norman Hollyn. *MovieMaker Magazine*, 3 February. <http://www.moviemaker.com/archives/moviemaking/editing/articles-editing/finding-100-ways/>
- Yeates, H. (2009). Embedded engagements: The challenge of creative practice research to the Humanities. *International Journal of the Humanities*, 7(1), 139–147.
- Zehner, R., Forsyth, G., Musgrave, E., Neale, D., de la Harpe, B., Peterson, F., & Frankham. (2009). Curriculum development in studio teaching, Volumes I–III [Report]. Australian Learning and Teaching Council. <http://www.studioteaching.org/?page=reports> (accessed 19 October 2012)

Appendices:

Transcripts of interviews with Australian screen editors

INTERVIEW 1 – KEN SALLOWS A.S.E

RECORDED 19 OCTOBER 2011

Background

I grew up in a family...my father was a cabinet-maker. Basically my sense of arts is him being able to build things and I was always very aware of that. I made surf boards...so I thought I was quite practical, hence going into editing I think of myself as a constructor.

Well how I started in the film business which I now call the 'show business' because it's no longer film, was primarily blamed on a secondary school teacher which was in the fourth form who would actually screen 30 minute reels of film in English, usually prescribed text, but he actually varied from there and started introducing the whole concept of signs and meanings in the cinema. Not necessarily what was on the screen but what was behind the ideas of what was in the screen. As a result of that actually, my only interest in films was to go to the Brighton Town Hall and see surf movies...so um, I didn't have any background in film, but because of this teacher who I think my mother still wants to kill, I actually became interested in that aspect of it. And I went to the University of Melbourne and lasted a very short time there because I was more there for a number of weeks, and my parents caught up with me and told me I had to get a job.

So I came back and they said what do you want to do and I said I wanted to work in film, which in those days in 1973 was almost like saying you wanted to be a brain surgeon. There was just not really an industry. My father sailed with a guy called George Fairfax down at Brighton. He got me to go and see George...he sort of advised me to go and see all of these people, and correctly said don't limit yourself simply to film. Be aware of all of the arts. As a result he gave me introductions to various people including Fred Schepisi, Bilcock and Copping and the AFI, as it was in those days, which used to run all the things like the experimental film and television fund.

I turned up at Crawfords, and Crawfords who were employing about 400 people in those days in Abbotsford, and I turned up in a suit. I think that was the last time I ever wore a suit to work. And Fred Grey was the personal manager and he said start tomorrow and I said fine. In those days I was 17 and I started as what they call a trainee, which is delivering scripts and various odd jobs. But I even knew then that I wanted to be an editor, whereas

most of the other kids in the training room wanted to be the directors or cinematographers which is more of a hero role! I knew I wanted to be an editor...as the result of the secondary school teacher telling me all these things about how you can manipulate ideas, which I figured you could do in editing a lot better than you could actually in any other part of the film other than writing. After a number of months there a role came up on *Matlock Police* and I became an assistant editor on *Matlock Police*. So I was at Crawfords for four years and eventually survived the purge, the infamous purge when they lost all of their shows in a couple of months. They lost *Homicide*, *Division Four* and *Matlock*, and then a show came up, another show which was called *The Sullivans*, and I was promoted into cutting *The Sullivans*, which I did the first 128 episodes of when I was 19.

I left Crawfords because Adrian Carrick left, he'd gone to work for The Film House, cutting commercials for Fred (Schepisi). I said to him when he left, if you ever hear of anything coming up even if it's an assistant, just give us a ring. He heard Brian Cavanaugh was looking for an assistant editor on a film call The Long Weekend. So I went to see Brian and he said, well unfortunately we can't pay you very much, it's a smallish budget film. And I said how much is not very much and he said its \$130 a week, and I said well I'm getting \$160 a week to cut *The Sullivans* so I'm going back to resign straight away. And so I did. I gave them 2 weeks notice and went to work at Film House in Fitzroy. As a result we did *Long Weekend* and then back to back onto *Blacksmith*.

So for quite a number of years I was going from being an assistant on features and mini-series, but occasionally going back and cutting things for Crawfords...As I said, I started in 1973, and it wasn't until '81, '82...I think '82 was the year I went to work for Rod Kinnear for a year doing doco's, because I'd never done doco's before. And then we lost all our work there...like a reoccurring theme. I was cleaning toilets at the start of '83 and Jill (Bilcock) was cutting *Strikebound* and Dean was the sound editor on it. I know Dean from Crawfords days, and they got me to come in and do a 10BA soundtrack on it, which was 3 or 4 weeks. And through that I decided I was not going to be an assistant anymore, I was going to be an editor, which is a catch 22...when people turn up and say *what have you done*, yeah well I've done 8 or 9 as an assistant, *but how many have you actually cut*, none....it was then just a case of just hassling. As a connection via *Strikebound*, a film called *The Slim Dusty Movie* came along, and then pretty soon after that was a film called *Malcolm*.

I was a film fan as well. Half the reason I actually left university was I actually found it very difficult to go to Melbourne University. I was catching the train from Beaumaris into town, and I'd be going up Swanston street and think, I'll go and see a movie today. And if I got

up to university they used to have these festival type screenings in the Union theatrette. They had a week of Godard, 15 Godard films. I didn't understand what they were about but I went and saw them, it was just sort of like an addiction. In 1973...there's 365 days in the year and I actually saw 400 films that year in the cinema. I was endlessly going to see films, and it wasn't just American films because I wasn't a really huge fan of American films. I was more a fan of European films. Again, not necessarily understanding what was going on. I mean you'd go to a double at the Carlton Movie House, *Red Desert* and *Even Dwarves are Small*, and you'd come out going I have no idea what that was about! Anyway it was great and so hence I had that sort of background as well as being an apprentice so I was *learning* cinema.

Editing Styles

It's terrifying to think that an editor has a specific style, although it's quite apparent. Dede Allan's first film is one called *The Hustler* and you can actually say well, that's definitely Dede Allan, you can sort of see that style, it's just jump, jump, jump. She obviously finished up cutting *Bonnie and Clyde*, most of the films she ever did were very fast cut films. The concept of having a style is something you're always trying to fight against.

The hardest thing, I always find, in editing is actually *not to cut*. Teaching people how to edit films is actually teaching them how not to edit. Again going back to Crawfords, the very first scene I was allowed to cut was at Crawfords was on 16mm, virtually had to put it all back together because it was just un-viewable. Here I am, I have a splicer and I can cut, it doesn't make any sense. So actually the process of learning not to is quite an achievement.

I don't have any problems with over-cutting, and I don't have any problems with under-cutting. It's really content, which is the basic design of the film in the first place. The first time I ever get involved with any film is usually reading the script. You base your ideas on that first reading. Usually I try to put that script aside and forget about it, and then you sit and watch the footage as it comes in, and manipulate it as it comes in.

The Editing Process

You can actually alter a film from how it's being shot, to try and make it better. Well, obviously you're always trying to make things better; you're not trying to make it worse. There is a limit to the amount you can do.

Usually what happens, and this is a technical sort of process, when films are being shot, and the editor's working on it during the shoot, there's a certain number of setups per scene. In other words, each setup is a different camera angle. And with your first assembly, which theoretically you're meant to be collaborating with the director but you're not, because the director is more concerned about getting the footage on the day, I actually have a tendency to think well they've shot this shot, so there must have a reason for putting it in. So you do your first assembly as tightly as you can, but you think OK there was a reason for shooting it so you actually have to include it; which eventually, half the time later on it gets thrown away in the process of when the director eventually comes in.

Creative contribution of the editor

My creative contribution to the film varies an awful lot. I've been in situations where the director doesn't even come into the editing room, and I've been in situations where the director just doesn't leave the editing room.

Again, it's collaboration in all situations, so it varies. Andrew Dominic is the classic sort of person who actually just won't leave. And he actually correctly said to me when he approached me to do *Chopper* all those years ago...he said to me even before we even got started, *I don't give up, Ken, I hope you're aware of that. I'm making you aware, if you don't want to work with me knowing that, fine. I'm just telling you.* It was great because he knew exactly how he worked. This was a person who hadn't done a feature before. But he knew this was the way he did things and he didn't give up, he didn't stop. Whenever you got to the point where you think *well, that's pretty good, or that's almost good*, virtually lock off, he'd tear it apart and you'd start again. That's frustrating those sort of processes, but he told me that beforehand, hence we can actually work together, in that respect.

The editor's handprint on a film, and the editor/ director relationship

I think editors do leave a handprint on the film, and I actually think there's a collaboration with directors. You can actually see because of the auteur theory, that the director is the prime creator of any given film.

You can say that, but you can also then see if there is a consistency in an editor being there. Someone like Clint Eastwood always uses Joel Cox, who I'd love to be a fly on the wall to actually be in that editing room to see how they work, because that's classical American filmmaking. How do you aspire to something like that? Jonathan Demme for a number of years was using a guy called Craig McKay. Joel's worked an

awful lot with Baz Luhrmann. There's distinct collaboration between the editor and the director. There's almost like a marriage going on between the director and the editor.

And you're always talking not to each other, not connecting in any eye line, you're actually talking these days at a television monitor, and the television monitor has got the film on it, or the show on it. Both of you are talking to this television screen, and you say some pretty strange things in the editing room; things that you would not say anywhere else. You're dealing quite a lot with emotion, so it's like how do you actually deal with the concept of emotion and express yourself. And it can be pretty blunt. It can be pretty rude. I'd hate to be an actor in an editing room, seeing what's being said about them a lot of the time because it's quite brutal.

I think the editor-director relationship is key for it to make any sense at all. If you're not working well with the director it's actually impossible. You're working for yourself. The two people in the editing process who are the closest aligned are the director and the editor. Of course you have other influence as well, which is the producer, obviously your assistant, if you do have an assistant. Then producers go beyond that to distributors and all that sort of stuff. But the two people who should always be on the same team are the editor and director, it's essential.

Storytelling verses style

Storytelling is the main focus I have in starting any kind of production. The storytelling doesn't necessarily mean you start with a premise, it goes from A to B, then you finish up at C, and that's the end. That doesn't necessarily mean that is storytelling. That's a form of storytelling but it's very conventional. Storytelling can take very many different forms.

Creative process

The concept of say working on documentaries is very interesting in that aspect as well because in drama you're generally working from a script. Documentaries are, quite often there's no script, and it's an awful big pile of footage. And hence you're trying to tell a story from that big massive pile of footage, and it can go a hundred different ways. It's incredibly rewarding, unfortunately it takes an awful long time, or can take an awful long time. But it's actually incredibly rewarding when you get to a point and you think, *wow we're actually doing something here, we've created a whole story out of this bucket of footage.*

Intellect verses Intuition

The concept of intellect versus intuition is terminology. Intellect is a scary thing, because you can say that if you're cutting purely on an intellectual basis, you're becoming very cerebral and it's not emotional. That's not to deny the fact that there is a thing called emotional intellectualism. (I think that's the biggest two words I've put together in a long number of weeks.) Hence it's intuitive.

Many years ago I was working on a film and Paul Schultz was the music composer. He actually told me I could cut everything in 4-4 and I was horrified. It was like an insult and I thought I'm going to beat you; I'm not going to cut in 4-4 anymore. And it was quite odd because when I started not cutting in 4-4 it was weird, it just didn't seem to work. Hence it's sort of a strange intuition; it wasn't totally aware of the fact that I'd been cutting in 4-4, but that was an intuition. That was the way speech happens, the musicality of speech, but you can alter that rhythm. There's no such thing of having to cut everything in fours. It was the Murch theory of blinking as well, it wasn't his theory at all, it was actually John Houston's theory. His concept about blinking was that blinking was a change of thought pattern. When I first heard that on a tape that I transcribed that in the lecture and so on, I actually tried to do scenes without any blinks. I perfected the art of making zombie films. It was actually wonderful, because there was no blinking and everybody was just staring all the time, it was great. Instead of having that hard and fast rule about blinking be aware of this. You still use them, but use them in a different rhythm or pattern. That's an intuition thing.

"Editing is the art aspect of cinema". Karen Pearlman 2011

Even though initially when they started using the word craft, actually would drove me around the bend, because I thought it was demeaning. I think it's more of a craft than an art. In the whole overview of things, it definitely is sort of like an art. It just seems to me that calling it an art makes it more mysterious than it actually is. I'm quite happy with the idea of it being mysterious and sort of shutting up about it.

Do Australian Screen Editors have a distinctive style?

With the American system and the British system the budgets are massive in comparison with the Australian system. The Australian system in these so-called feature films here is, what does it average 4 million, 5 million for a feature? Whereas now even that's being thought of as not being great because the fact you have to take 10 million at the box office to make it pay for itself. Everybody's going either super-cheap, or bigger.

The pressure of actually having more money indicates a style, or an attitude to your work where you're actually responsible for an awful lot of people other than yourself and directors, also producers and distributors. And you have to be very aware of them.

There's a lot of films that I've worked on which I actually think just don't work. Simply because of the fact that it seemed like there was an influence coming in on the film that wasn't necessary. People were trying to make something really wonderful, or what they thought was wonderful, but they really had nothing to do with the process, and so it got messed up along the way.

And, again, the story these days – and going way back to *Blacksmith* and *Long Weekend* – as an assistant editor, I worked on the picture and the sound and actually went all the way through to virtually an answer print. These days to actually tell a producer that you're going to want to work on the sound, they think *why?* And you can actually say, well you construct the half of the film when you're cutting the picture and the other half when you're doing the sound, and quite often putting in music, whether it be temp music or whatever. These days people sort of say *no you don't want to do that*. You go now.

The impact of digital technology on editing styles

The impact of digital technology is it's altered the editing process dramatically. It's just totally radically changed it. Cutting on film. Well I cut on film when I used to work on Moviola uprights, well that's showing how old I am. It was even cheaper to work on a flatbed, whether it be a Kem or a Steenbeck or whatever the Italian ones are called.

The process in that was you'd actually have a thousand feet of film, which is basically ten minutes, and you sort of look at your footage as it's went through the machine, and you'd actually mentally or physically write out *this is the way I'm going to construct the scene*. Cutting on film, I would actually have a process to construct the scene by starting the very end. In other words knowing where it was going to finish, and then going backwards and pull things out along the way. Not actually starting at the start. I actually found that if I started at the start [of the film] I'd have a tendency to get distracted too easily and wander off. That was the last thing you wanted to do when cutting on film was be distracted, because you had one chance to do it this way, sure you could actually put it all back together again. It's a very physical process, but the distraction concept of it was quite frustrating and annoying.

These days, cutting digitally, you can start wherever you want because it doesn't really matter. You can just throw a few things together and it's basically done. You can alter it

whenever you want and it's incredibly easy to do things. There are pluses and minuses. The theory being of course the idea that digital editing would make things happen a lot quicker is totally untrue. It still takes exactly the same amount of time to do things, even though it's less physical and you don't have to pause to pull the footage out.

It's the ability to be able to change things now so quickly that allows the director, the editor and everybody else to have a contribution, or think they can actually contribute, which can be worrying. There are quite a number of films, say for instance *Chopper* again, where I think we were up to cut 35 by the end of it. There have been other films that I've worked on where actually I cut 12 versions, which is a bit embarrassing. And that's the great thing you can actually store all your old cuts whereas cutting on film you couldn't do that unless you actually went and got a copy of it, which is hideously expensive.

There are distinct differences between film cutting and digital editing...For instance, a film like *Tom White* which we cut on film in the middle of a process where everything was digital. The reason we cut it on film is because (Director) Alkinos Tsilimidos wanted to...I can watch that film now and I can definitely say that was cut on film, and that's because shots are left longer. Not necessarily to the point of saying long because we couldn't put all the changing them, it's just the way things are. We were more conscious of leaving shots run, whereas digital these days there's probably a tendency to cut too much. Again going back to the art concept, the idea of less cutting is actually quite a new achievement.

Chopper, there's no way we could cut *Chopper* on film. Just for the simple fact that Andrew wanted to change things endlessly and we could have never have done it. A film like *Getting Square* which we did in Queensland and Sydney, had to be cut digitally because, again, it's a fast film. Again, the famous scene in that with David Wenham where he's at court was shot initially all in one day and then David wasn't happy with his performance in some of it so he went back and did another half day. It was a massively long scene, but the camera's always moving so it's had to be cut digitally.

But, a film like *Crackerjack*, which is Mick Molloy and Paul Moloney's comedy, which we cut on Lightworks, could have been cut on film. Again, the idea of consciously making a different decision because you're cutting digitally is probably because you can change things incredibly quickly and it's very easy to do. Again, I think the achievement is not to cut (laughs). You can see all the mistakes endlessly and so on, but then you think can I leave it on that shot and then you just say no.

One of the weirdest things about editing is do you sort of get tired of looking the show endlessly and do you actually see something new in it? Quite often you don't. That's the hard thing to play, to constantly reinvent yourself, and reinvent your show actually, and coming at it with a different attitude, it's incredibly hard to do. For some silly reason I actually have the tendency to, when the show's being screened, to look at the timeline. I have no idea, it's like the different colors go on through and come in at certain points and say *well this is fifteen minutes*, well that's interesting. Just like a distraction of watching out the window or something like that because you know the dialogue, you're hearing the dialogue endlessly, you're kind of referring to a rhythm or a pace of the dialogue.

Editing process

The weird thing about editing as well is that there is a huge librarian aspect to it, which is actually learning the footage and putting it in your head.

You actually have this bizarre sort of thing where you fill yourself with this film for quite a number of months and then once it's finished you somehow or another clean it all out. But there's always this one little line here and there that you remember. I remember *Blacksmith* for God's sake saying, *it's done, I'll keep you safe, Jimmy*. I'll never forget that, you know? Or again, relating to *Proof* where he says, *Bill...Hugo*, walking around, looking for his dog, and it's such a wimpy line, he's going, *Bill. Bill*. We always laughed when it came up.

The other silly thing is...you're watching these things actors, documentaries, people on screen all the time, you actually have a tendency to believe that you know them. The number of times that an editor turns to an actor and introduces himself, and the actor just sort of looks at him as if going, *who are you?* Then you say, *well I've been watching you for months*.

What is editing and is it understood?

What do editors do? They actually interpret picture and sound, and try to put it together into a coherent form that entertains people.

Process/ style

Editing I don't think is understood at all, but that to me is an advantage. It's not an obvious thing that actually happens. There are obviously situations where fast editing or abrupt editing is very conscious. But it's actually sort of an element of the show-making process that can be invisible, and can be visible, and it's delightful that it can do either.

As far as analysis of what actually editing is, how long is a piece of string? We could go on forever with that. It's great because when you analyze what cinema was, and the Lumière brothers, if they were the first person to make a film. They had a shot of a train coming into the station and everybody thought that was wonderful. It was one shot. Then all the sudden somebody actually got the idea of cutting that shot in half and cutting to something else, and that's what editing is. Now it's not just a ten minute reel with two shots in it. Again, going back to digital editing and things like that. The so-called average feature film, when digital editing came in, all of a sudden increased the number of picture edits from film days, which were roughly 800 to 1500 per film. That's sort of a thing that's actually happened, and it's the revealing or non-revealing of information which is the game you play. It's a game.

Has digital editing made the process more visible?

I think digital editing has made it more visible, the fact that you actually sort of jump cut, forget about continuity etc. Documentary, you don't have the standard coverage. You have a shot and quite often there's no way known you're going to get that person to do it again.

Brian McKenzie did a great thing on a show over in India. He actually tried to get person walking towards the camera and saying, *do you mind going back and doing it again?*, and the person just sort of looked at him and said, *why?* And they said, *well, just walk backwards* and the person said, *Hindus don't walk backwards, I'm not going to do it again.*

Hence the concept of documentary editing can be a lot rougher, hence that's gone straight through into drama as well. The difference between drama and documentaries is minimal in a lot of ways. Anybody who tells me that documentary is real is fooling themselves because it's a lie just as much as anything else. It's the editing process. As soon as you make a cut, it's an interpretation. It can be a lie, it can be anything, it's your interpretation, or a combination of people's interpretation how you are telling a story or getting across an idea. How quickly you do it, whether you can do it more quickly via digital is sort of neither here or nor there.

Actually I think *Electra (1962)* has got eight shots in it. And I just look at that film and I go, wow. It's got three levels of stuff going on within the screen. There's foreground, mid-ground, and background. It's this massive circus of horses and everything going everywhere, and I just go, *wow, that's extraordinary.* Sure, it's an achievement in perhaps design, and isn't it wonderful we can make a film with eight shots, but what about that St. Petersburg film where the guy did it in one shot? (*The Russian Ark*).

Sure that's an achievement in design, but then that becomes the process actually more so than the content. Which, doing things less, making a film in one shot is *wow, isn't that exciting*, but doing it in say three thousand shots is *wow, isn't that interesting*. It's neither here nor there.

Is the editor the co-creator of the film?

I think the editor definitely has a role in co-creator of the film. It's not necessarily a case of just two people, it's a case of a lot of people along the way, and you're obviously very aware of it. The process of actually editing, the way I work in drama and so on, it's not necessarily just me is that you read on the script, you sort of work on the film or assemble the film during the shoot. The director theoretically is meant to be looking at the assembly but they never have the time.

Now, with digital editing, say two, three days after the finish of shoot you've got your first assembly done. In that process of getting to that first assembly I always warn people, the producers, the directors, anything like that, that the first assembly is the worst screening you're ever going to see in your life. Everybody will say, consistently, *no, it'll be okay*. And then you watch people's faces after that first screening and they just want to go and kill themselves.

Actually what the process becomes is that you then start working with the director and actually reshaping that film out from what it is as an assembly. You're reinterpreting the script because of what's worked and hasn't worked on that day during the shoot, and how to tell that story as succinctly as possible.

That's the thing that I always get kind of bemused by, where everybody always says *no, it'll be alright*, then you actually watch their faces and they're just like death. Then you work on through and it becomes a new film again. The three parts of film making cliché: it's writing, production, post-production. They're all sort of different elements, they all can go sort of haywire or work really well depending on which whatever happens. There's no way you can predict that, that's chance.

Cutting on digital verses film

Two examples I'll use of a film cut digitally, which is on a Lightworks, is a film called *Gettin' Square* in particular, the scene with David Wenham in the courtroom. The amount of footage we had on that was massive.

Fortunately it was cut digitally because it ended up being an easier way of throwing the scene together, knowing it wouldn't work initially, just trying to eliminate a lot of the footage that we just didn't need and trying to get the scene to go from here to there. I

think it's an incredibly long scene. There's a lot of camera movement which is very random going backwards and forwards. It's almost like a monologue in some ways from *Wenham*, which is actually a humorous scene. It's actually being in on various people, reacting to this lunatic trying to tell a story of what he is being accused of doing, and he actually knows full well that he has done it, but he's coming up with all these excuses under the sun, and actually throwing the jury, and the lawyers, and the judges entirely. It's combining comedy and a sort of irony, and black comedy, and everything, all at the same time.

Again, we only cut digitally because it's easy to do it. It was easier to throw it together and then work out, what are we going to do with it? ... David Wenham wanted to redo his performance a bit, and we could see it very quickly having thrown it together and saying well OK, these are the bits that sort of don't really work...Jonathan Tepiltzky the Director, will concentrate on these bits, these are the bits to worry about, and we're happy with the rest.

There's a film like *Tom White*, Alkinos Tsilimidos film, which is definitely cut on film, and I think there are times it very much looks like it was made in the 70's. Alkinos will hate me for saying that, but there's a scene towards the end where Tom White, played by Colin Friels, comes back and visits his wife who he's walked out on. It's the first meeting of them together, and a lot of the situation is he's trying to explain his story, and she is just totally confused as to why he actually walked out.

It's an incredibly simply covered scene and it's just so nice because it was cut on film. And again, I think if I'd cut that digitally I would have actually been cutting backwards and forwards a lot more. Because for some reason or another and I don't know why, because it was cut on film, I was quite happy to just leave shots run for the length as they are.

Introduction to camera

My name's Ken Sallows and I'm a film editor.

[end of interview transcript Ken Sallows]

INTERVIEW 2 – MARK ATKIN A.S.E

INTERVIEW RECORDED 22 NOVEMBER 2011

Background

My background in editing, I suppose probably goes back to when I was a kid really making films at home and high school really. So it was just part of the process of making those films. But no, I didn't have any grand plan to become an editor as such. It was something, like a lot of people, I just sort of fell into or came to much later on.

I had a great interest in filmmaking as a kid and then went on to film school at Swinburne and was there between '78 and '81. And when I graduated from Swinburne, my first job actually was as an assistant editor. So I suppose I did get that sort of grounding and learned something about the craft that way.

But I don't think even then I was really thinking of that as a career necessarily. It was much more that it was a way to learn more about the process in general because at the time I was a Jack of all trades. I was shooting music videos and directing the occasional one and doing sound recording and a bit of everything really. Then towards the end of the '80s, I was doing quite a lot of writing and getting quite a few grants as a writer, and I think this did have an influence on where I went as an editor.

There was a point there in about 1990 when I had a choice between really committing myself to being a writer, and an opportunity to pursue editing a bit more seriously. And up to that point I had cut the occasional short film and so on, but they were very sporadic as I said. So yeah, there was a point at which I was offered a sort of low budget feature film to cut, and around the same time I was offered a gig writing and researching for *Flying Doctors*, which is a series that Crawford Productions were making then, and it made me think *what do I actually enjoy doing for other people?* And I realized that the writing was something I liked to do for myself, and editing was something I really enjoyed doing for other people. So that was point at which I became sort of conscious of maybe pursuing editing as a career or as a way of earning my living in the industry.

Correlation between writing and editing

I think writing and editing do have parallels. They obviously do. I mean people often say that editing documentaries is very much like a writing process for an editor. You are much more involved in finding the story and looking for the story within the

material. And I think if you've got a writing background, it really helps in that process because you are thinking about structure, story structure, and so obviously that kind of experience is very helpful to that. So yeah, I think obviously writing is a really good background for an editor, if that's where you have come from. It's one of the things you need. If we think of ourselves as storytellers, then obviously that experience really helps.

Documentary verses narrative filmmaking

When I started editing, it wasn't documentary which was the main thing. Most of the films that I cut to start with, that I sort of cut my teeth on, were short films. There were quite a few through the '80s. There were quite a few short films that friends had funded, so I got to do those sporadically and then got to do a low budget feature film. So by the time I cut my first documentary, I had a fairly strong background in narrative filmmaking. So documentary was just something that came along and was offered to me a bit further, like in the mid '90s I guess, something like that.

I mean there's been periods where I've actually done a lot of documentary cutting and people have assumed that I'm a documentary editor. But it's much more to do with the patterns of work and what's on offer and the fact that for a long time we went through a period in television where there was very little drama being produced locally, so I sort of got by cutting documentaries, which I love doing. I really have a passion for documentaries now, which is sort of spread more broadly from cutting them to just having a general interest in documentaries as a result. For an editor, documentaries are arguably a really great challenge and that you actually have a lot more... The margins for an editor on a documentary are obviously a lot broader, and as I said earlier, you've got an opportunity to actually almost engage in a writing process with the director on a documentary. So potentially, they're quite much more satisfying for an editor, in actually getting involved in that kind of searching for a story style of cutting.

Learning the craft of editing through working on independent films.

It's funny how your career can go off in different trajectories because, I mean, if I had gone down the writing route, I would have had much more of that kind of experience that perhaps Ken had as an editor, where I would have gone into Crawfords and learned the craft of writing from the ground up... Gone on as a story researcher and worked my way up as kind of an apprentice writer as it were, and worked then towards becoming a professional writer and then come out of that process presumably actually writing perhaps my own material or doing feature films or writing professionally for TV.

Going through that sort of system. Whereas an editor I didn't have that experience of going through cutting *Neighbors* or going through a kind of television process and learning my craft that way. It was much more sort of on the outskirts, working in the independent scene I suppose.

Do editors bring their own style to a film?

My view of whether or not an editor brings their own style to their work, I probably sit on the fence a bit with this because whilst I know you can obviously point to certain editors having very particular approaches to their work, quite distinct approaches that you can identify when you see their work, and someone said to me the other day that they can tell when I'd cut a documentary, which was interesting. And I don't know how seriously to take that, but that's something that was said to me about two days ago.

I tend to feel that although it's inevitable that you bring something of your own sensibility and your own style, and given the sort of broad selection or different types of documentaries and drama that I've cut, that I feel the first impulse is to take your reference from the material itself, from the story, from the director's own sensibilities. Most directors... I mean one of the first things that I do as an editor is I try to engage the director in a lot of conversation and chatting, which might not seem to have any direct relevance to the work but it's about understanding their view of the world and about trying to understand their sensibilities. And the reason that's important for me is because then I can channel that to some degree.

I think my role as an editor to a great degree is to channel the direction and the purpose of the director in the kind of story they are trying to tell, in the way that they want to tell it. So that's part of my role I think, is to try and help them get to where they want to go. You take on and you talk to the director about different approaches you might take for the material. Are we going to approach this in a sort of fairly classical way with sort of seamless cutting from a master shot to a close up and keep things simple? Are we going to just commit ourselves to long tracking shots and not try to break them up at all? Are we going to use devices like jump cuts and so on to heighten the psychological state or an anxiety state, something like? What devices will we use?

So you try to work out what your template, what your elements are going to be as you start and go in with some sort of understanding about the sort of things you might try. And you might change your mind obviously. But it's something you try to kind of tune into to, so it's like a tuning process really.

But in the process of doing that, I'm sure that you do either unconsciously...I mean I know that I've got certain tools in my kit bag that I'll bring out for different occasions. So there are some of those I probably favor more than others. I know that I don't mind a fade up and fade down, where I know other editors actually hate them. So there are things that I will do that another editor won't do in a particular situation. Yeah, of course I'll bring something of my own set of filters, my own mannerisms to it, but I think the first key thing is the overall approach, that the script, the story is bringing to it. With documentaries, for example, there's lots of different types of documentaries that I've cut. There are the essay-style interview based documentaries on the one hand and then the very observational...The challenges with both of those are quite different, and the approach you take to the material obviously is different. So I'm sitting on the fence a little bit when answering your question. I think it has to be a bit of both, and I try at least anyway to adapt myself.

Are storytelling and style synonymous?

I think that storytelling and style do have a relationship obviously. They have to. I mean I know that you could probably tell a given story in different ways. Obviously you can. I mean you can tell the story from the Bible in one way or another. I'm sure people have told those stories in different ways in different times.

Style, to me, is a sort of a filter. It's a filter through which you interpret the story. It's the thing that you use to spin the story in a particular way I suppose or give emphasis to certain things. And so, for example, on *The Slap*, which is a series I've just recently worked on we talked a lot about, because each of the episodes of that show take a different point of view of a particular character in the story. So we try to attach a style, even if to the audience these things seem to be fairly not so obvious I suppose, difficult to identify.

But for us, we did try to adopt a different style for each character and therefore for each episode to some degree. And so, within that, we sort of tried to adopt a set of stylistic elements that we would apply to that story and to that character that seemed to help amplify the things we wanted to explore emotionally. So it was attached to emotion. It's attached to a whole lot of things I suppose. Style can't simply exist in its own right.

And I suppose when you think about examples that are like that, things like music videos for example. When you watch a music video very often or even some ads, some advertisements, style is the thing that obviously dominates. It's all about how you present something, someone, usually a performer...and everything else is subservient

to that. But when you are storytelling, what you try to do is use the style to amplify the emotion in some way or to set off the story in a particular way.

One director might approach that in a kind of straightforward, naturalistic way. Another director might approach the same story with a different set of criteria, maybe use more expressionistic kind of devices to tell the story depending on how they want to look at it.

Talk about examples of different editing styles: The Slap

To give an example of how those different styles were applied to something like *The Slap*, there are two different characters that are probably quite a reasonable contrast to each other. One is Manoli, who is the old man character in the series, and we approached his episode in a more, so-called classical way. Sometimes I wonder what we mean by that. But in a fairly straightforward way, with coverage that simply allows the action to unfold fairly much in front of the camera, where the camera is not terribly active, where we used a series of wide, mid-shots. That sort of traditional type of coverage. And we tried to keep it fairly simple and unobtrusive. And there's a lot of stillness in the frames.

Some of these things that I'm describing are choices that are made when the shooting happens too. They are not just about the editing, but it's then how we respond to that in the editing. So we tried to keep it fairly unobtrusive and tried to amplify the stillness of Manoli's life because he's an old man, and things are fairly quiet in his life. And it's all about things swimming around him a little bit as well. So we tried to reflect that if you like through the cutting and the shooting.

Whereas another character, Richie, who is the teenage kid in the story, who is very much in turmoil and very confused and in crisis particularly in his episode. We tried to reflect that in the cutting as well. So the episode actually starts fairly simply and quietly and probably not dissimilar to the Manoli episode actually, but then as the drama escalates, we tried to use the cutting to reflect that. So then the cutting becomes more frantic and his point of his view and his feelings, as they become more intense and he becomes more confused and distressed, that the cutting reflects that to some degree. So we started to wherever the camera might do a move and a jolt, we would use that and emphasize it. And we used quite a few jump cuts and things.

There's a sequence after he gets some very bad news, he runs home in great distress. And then the camera is following him down a driveway. And instead, we could have

just chosen to let the camera go in one continuous shot and we almost did. But then, we decided to combine three or four different takes where the camera landed in slightly different spots in the same move, which is actually something that goes back to Godard's *Breathless*. In *Breathless*, the film *Breathless* from the 1950s, he used those sort of devices where you take various takes of the same shot and then you combine them and you just use that sort of jolting mixture.

So we used that sort of device to kind of amplify his growing distress. And then as he runs into the bathroom and he's going through all the drugs and he's actually about to take an overdose, it actually jump cuts. But each time it jump cuts, it cuts in tighter and tighter on the action. So it may not be even that obvious to the audience, but it's just to create that sense of growing anxiety and distress and so on I guess.

Cutting for emotion

When you are actually cutting in that way that I've just described, you are actually amplifying the emotion. It's not that it didn't happen in front of the camera. And this is one of those points that's often hard to convey to people because sometimes when we talk about what we do as editors, you can tell that people often think maybe you are grandstanding and you are exaggerating what you do in a sense because it doesn't just happen front of the camera.

And it is true. Of course, that's in part what the actors did in front of the camera, but actually the choices you make in the way you cut it, and that example I just gave of just ratcheting it up a little bit by bumping a couple of elements one into another in perhaps a way that's slightly more violent or slightly more kind of jagged, helps hopefully. And we all just hope that we are doing the right thing, but hopefully it adds to that sense of what he's feeling inside. It isn't just a stylistic choice.

I mean I've heard criticism made of the way in which modern films sometimes just get tricky and do these things perhaps in an unmotivated way sometimes. And that might be true, but hopefully when you are doing a job properly and you make the choices to do something along the lines I've just described, you are doing for the right reasons and you are doing it for the reasons that are about *how is the character feeling in this moment, what's going on for the character, what can we do through the cutting that's going to help amplify the way that character is feeling right now?* And in this case, this character is in crisis and he's about to try and self-destruct basically. So you want to try and find a way to help amplify that that's going to help tell the story and help convey that emotion to the audience.

Working with actors

One of the things that I was interested in in the past apart from writing was also directing. I mean there was one feature film that I wrote that I was aiming to direct as well. And so in the process of trying to learn to be a director as it were, I did workshops and I did work with actors. And you do study that whole process of *what does an actor need?* And I still find that really useful as an editor today, is having done the writing but also having studied what a director needs to do to work with an actor, and what actors do. It really helps inform your choices as an editor.

When I look at a scene, look at the rushes, I actually...When you try to analyze what you need to do with that scene, you look at breaking down the scene in the way an actor would. You break it down into those beats, the emotional beats that an actor...You know, a good actor when they look at a script, at a scene, they will look at what the emotional beats in the scene are and then work out how they are going to apply themselves to those beats, how they are going to work through those beats. And that's what a director and an actor work on together in part when they are trying to work out the emotional line through it.

So as an editor, you try to tune in on those beats as well. Actually you are following a parallel journey albeit from the other side of the scene later on. But that's what you do when you are trying to break it down. So there's actually a lot of similarities there. The process is not dissimilar actually even though actors look at us editors and wonder what on earth it is that we do, and get quite sort of bewildered because we are very familiar with what they do. And if you roll up to an actor at a party as I have done on occasion, and you're terribly familiar, they just think that you are some sort of weirdo. Because you are like some peeping Tom that's been watching them, and they don't know who the hell you are, but actually we have a lot in common. It's just that we really...it's all about trying to tell the story through very similar processes. It's not that different really. It's just that we use different tools to do it.

Knowledge verses intuition in editing

The balance between the intuitive and the sort of intellectual part of the process, if you like, I mean I think they are obviously both present. I think like any creative endeavor, there's got to be a part of the process that you've absorbed and learnt and gone off. You've read the books. You've worked as an assistant editor and observed other people working.

I remember when I worked with Ana Kokkinos, for example on *Only the Brave* year's ago, and it was probably only really the third or fourth serious piece of drama I'd cut. Anna, because she's a great intellectual character, was reading David Mamet. And that's when I was introduced to Mamet's notions about directing film and his great respect for Eisenstein and that notion of juxtaposition and telling the story through the cut and all of that.

It was through working that with Anna, because she was kind of teaching herself that process and inquiring into it intellectually, that I became conscious for the first time that there was this whole background of experimentation that had gone on in the 1920's, for example in Russia. And that there were great sort of very conscious rigorous processes applied to what the possibilities for film might be, and in fact still inform what we do today. They were very modern ideas about the way you can put films together. So that's when I became very aware of that.

I imagine it's not dissimilar to anything we all do whether it's learning to ride a bike or surf or learning to paint. You do have to apply yourself to the craft. You do need to learn how to do things in the physical world. You need to know how to manipulate those things, so that later when you are actually working and you are responding to the material in an emotional way.

Because emotion is for me, like many editors, probably the primary thing on the top of the list. Walter Murch talks about emotion being 60% something percent of what the process is. So if you are trying to engage emotionally with the material, there has to be an intuitive aspect to that. So hopefully you can rely on those other processes but you don't have to be too conscious of them. They just get naturally applied to what you are doing as you intuitively respond to the material. And you don't have to think about them so much anymore. So there's a feedback going on between both things.

I mean it is a bit Zen and it might sound a bit wankerish, but I do think that's true though. I think it is true that one of the great pleasures when you finish cutting a sequence that's coming together well is that you haven't necessarily been analyzing precisely where that cut should be or even where the beats in the scene are.

When it doesn't work: editing a scene from Only the Brave

I tend to only fall back on those things when I'm really having a problem. Sometimes you might get a performance or something that's not quite right somehow, where for some reason the actor or actors were struggling. So there's sort of a break down in the

natural flow of what was going on or you might have to re-think a scene. Maybe there's a problem with the writing or maybe there's some other problem that's being created by other parts of the story. You've got to rethink a particular sequence. So in that case you might have to think about how to solve a problem.

I can give one example exactly that comes from *Only the Brave*, from Anna's film, and it does feed into what I was saying earlier about Mamet process and juxtaposition. There's a scene in *Only the Brave* that's quite upsetting. In the film, there are two young ladies who are friends. It's about a friendship between two young women, and one of the girls comes around her friend's house late at night because they were meant to meet up earlier I think from memory. And she comes to her bedroom window. When she looks inside, she sees her friend actually being raped by the father. So it's pretty heavy duty, awful scene. But when we were cutting it, we had terrible troubles with it. And it was because we were trying to sort of see the horror of what was going on in the room and see the reaction of the friend as she sees what's going on. And for a long time, it just didn't work. The cuts were really kind of clunky and it just seemed almost bizarrely dark comic. It just somehow didn't -- it just seemed to be something was terribly wrong with it. We couldn't quite work out why.

And then we realized it was because we weren't just allowing the cut to tell the story. What we were trying to do was narrate the whole thing. We were trying to show what was going on and see the reaction. But the trouble is because the reaction was coming too late, because what you forget sometimes is that the audience will fill in the gaps for you, or if they see something terrible happening, they will be already responding emotionally. And we don't need the other actor in this case to narrate that reaction for us because we are already feeling it.

So when we took out the actor's reaction, so the actor has gone to all this trouble to emote and react, but in fact it really proved that idea of the montage theory and how it works. You show something. You cut and let the cut tell the story. You remove the reaction, just cut to the actor already watching and having already reacted, a slight change in reaction. But if you took that reaction and took it out of context, it wouldn't mean very much at all. It's just a slight furrowed brow and it actually isn't, in and of itself, very much. But the juxtaposition of those two things with the actor, suddenly it worked because you have your reaction. You cut back to the actor and you know the other character has already seen that and reacted. So that's one example of realizing how that technique really does have an impact. And it's simple, too. What's interesting

about that is the challenge there was to work out a simple way through it, and not try to do everything and trust the elements that you've got to tell the story.

Your intuition will set off alarm bells for you and tell you that this is not feeling right. It's not feeling right. And you can keep working away. But that's where sometimes you do need to draw on your intellect or your experience or your knowledge to say, *okay it's not working. Is there anything I can refer to? Is there anything I can think of? Any sort of tools in the kit bag that I can call on to solve this problem?*

Beginning in film

I mean I started on film. I was an assistant on film and that's how I learned my trade. And I have cut films. The last feature film I cut was *Mallboy* (2001) with Vince Giarrusso, and we decided to cut that on film for different reasons. But one of the things about cutting on film is that you end with a process that is more...I suppose what you do is you kind of end up thinking about what your choices are a bit more. I suppose you could argue the brain is the ultimate nonlinear machine and you do think of what the possibilities are of what you might do. And I suspect when you cut on film, you would tend to be a bit more considered about your choices.

Just because you've got to actually physically get the roll of film and get the shot. You've got to put it in a splicer and stick it together, and then put it back and rethread it. And every time you do a cut, you've got to go through a physical process. I know when I'm cutting on a computer you are pushing buttons and that's physical, but it's not quite the same thing. I mean you feel the weight of the film, and you have to thread it and all that sort of stuff. So that whole process gives you more thinking time in a way.

So you could argue that maybe we made more considered cuts when we were cutting on film, and we relied less on just trying stuff out, which is what we tend to do now. Hopefully there's some consideration going on as well, but it is much more kind of like, *oh let's just try it and see how it goes!* You constantly hear that. *Let's just try it. See if it works. Can we just try that and see if it works?* Whereas we would have done less of that on film. I mean we can put things back together. That obviously did happen. But it's just a question of degree really.

The difference between cutting on film and digital editing

I don't know whether fundamentally it's a different process really. It's just that the rhythm of the process is different, but whether that affects what's on screen I'm not so sure about. Maybe when you are cutting on film, you would be less inclined to try

different options because to do so would mean having to do a whole lot of things. Cutting up your work prints more and ending up with more splices and scratches on it. So maybe there is an unconscious resistance to trying different things out, and had you done so, you might have ended with something better.

Are there more cuts in digital editing?

I mean when I think back to the 1980's when people talked about music videos becoming a big thing, and people were watching more of them and we were making them. And there were declarations that the feature film was over and from now on narratives would happen in three minutes and all that sort of stuff. Most of those music videos were cut on things pre-digital. They were cut on usually video tape I suppose, punch and crunch. Certainly the music videos we made in the early days were all cut on Steenbecks (editing machines), and we did all of the above. I mean we did music videos that were fast cut. Even my short film at school, some parts of it were very rapidly cut and other bits weren't...Even in the context of the 1980's we got over things being so fast cut and rapid and we all responded against that. Friends of mine, for example, made a music video for Elvis Costello that was one shot, with his face being kissed by people. It was shot down at Flinders Street, and that was a response *then* to the idea that things were getting cut too quickly and so on.

I don't know whether that's really the case. I mean Salvador Dali and Buñuel were mucking around in the '30's with rapid cut montage overlaps and stuff. Alfred Hitchcock did it. All of that stuff has been going on for a while. So the idea that you would say it is because digital technology we are now cutting things more rapidly, I'm not sure. That may be more of a reflection of just general *styles*, the fact that now I think we are in a very interesting phase where audiences will accept as long as you create a template for your film or your documentary where you say *okay this is the part of the feel, the style, this is the palate that I'm going to present to you as part of the story.*

I suppose *The Slap* again is a good example of this where we've actually tried different things within that and all of that reflects the fact that audiences I think are probably more sophisticated, more aware of different approaches to things. They are not going to get thrown. They are not going to think you are an amateur if you put in jump cuts, but all these things are in the mix now. People will accept them in a way that maybe 30 years ago they would have thought it was really radical. It's not new.

Do audiences have reduced attention spans?

Certainly there's a lot of evidence to show that people's attention spans are reducing, that people want stuff delivered to them more quickly and that they do get more impatient with stuff that takes its time. People do get very impatient with some of the old school films that take their time and even documentaries too. It's like *get on with it, I got the point*. Even my kids, I've heard my kids responding to stuff in that way and that's getting driven more and more by what we have online.

How has digital technology changed the process of editing?

Yeah, I think one of the things that digital editing, non-linear editing has changed, and has meant isn't so much to do with the actual processes of what ends up on the screen, but just the craft part of it I suppose. Because you can actually cut more quickly and you can try things in a more fluid way, I suppose that you could argue that it means that the choices that you are making moment to moment come closer together because you are physically not having to kind of literally take the film out of the splicer, and all those mechanics are less in the way if you like. It means you can more quickly try one thing and then you go that's not quite working, I'll undo that, I'll try this.

So you can actually go snap, snap, snap. You can kind of go through the choices and the different ways of doing things much more rapidly. And so there's a freshness. It stays fresh in your mind and you can try things out much more quickly. So I think that probably does aid the process and make it a bit more fluid.

Some people say that they get overwhelmed by that too, because it becomes so fast that they can't quite digest what they are doing and they are not having enough to think and they are getting stressed by the fact that there are so many possibilities and choices, and so therefore, that could be a detrimental thing. But from my own experience I have to say that on the whole it's a really positive thing because you are able to respond almost like an extension of your body or an extension of what's in your imagination. You can kind of try it and do it more quickly.

The other part of it that's really terrific I think is the fact that you can actually make a cut even if it's just a loose assembly and then do a cut and paste and make a copy of that cut as you do with a written document, and then start working on the copy of that knowing that if you want to go back to the original.

What impact has digital editing had on learning to become an editor?

Yeah, I think where the sort of model that we use in the cutting rooms today does assist the assistant editor to learn the craft. It almost comes full circle from when I was learning to be an assistant on film. There was a period there where non-linear editing meant that the assistant editors by necessity had to work at night time to digitize, logging and so on, because we were locked into one workstation. It's only in recent years when it became possible for separate workstations to actually see the same media that we could back to that old model where we all worked at the same time.

Although assistants are obviously most of the time spending their time syncing up rushes and attending to all of the things an assistant needs to do, it becomes possible when they've done that, to come into the cutting room and to actually observe the director and the editor working together and to sometimes assemble and cut scenes themselves.

So on *The Slap*, for example, Annabelle Johnson, who was the assistant editor on that, did get an opportunity to cut several scenes and then work with the director on those, or see them then get integrated in. And the other editor and I might make changes and so on, but she got to see that evolve and see the choices that were made to stuff that she had cut and get a chance to follow through. So I think yes, the technology is now allowing that apprenticeship process to work more effectively than it did in the early days.

Do Australian screen editors have a distinctive style?

The notion of whether Australian editors have a different approach or style, I don't know. Personally, my view right now would be that perhaps that would be a very difficult thing to quantify. And that's maybe just a reflection of the fact that we live in a much more global environment these days. We are all exposed to each other's stuff and there's even more fluid movement I suspect between the industries as well. Say Australians editors working in America and vice versa.

I understand there were periods where it was generally agreed that English editors might be working differently to American editors and so on...My observation might have been that maybe in the 1970's and '80s in Australia you could say that because our work was much more particular to that time and to period films, for example, that were being made that seemed to be a very particular Australian preoccupation at the time, might have been cut in particular way. But then you know, not long after *Mad Max*

was cut and that took a very different approach to cutting and that had a big impact on American cutting too. That was very much montage theory and very sort of action oriented and so on. And that's something that we relate to a lot in American films. So yeah, I don't know. I personally don't see that. I don't see that there is anything particularly *Australian* about what we do.

Do editing styles come and go?

Whether editing styles come and go and whether there are kind of phases or they are fashionable or not fashionable, it's probably true. I mean I suppose it's true of a lot of things, isn't it? It's probably true that certain kind of approaches using...you know it's like in graphics. The jittery kind of graphic and films were very fashionable for a long time, and that seems to have come and gone. So I'm sure that the idea within editing, to embrace the use of jump cuts or crossing the line and so on, those kinds of devices that would tend *not* to have been used 20 years ago, are being used more freely now. And I'm sure that we see each other doing that.

I mean jump cuts is the most obvious example. I think everybody is feeling quite relaxed about using jump cuts hopefully for the right reasons. Whereas I'm sure 10, 15 years ago we would have been much more hesitant about using them. But we feel free to use them now because we see it in all the other stuff that we are seeing on TV, and in mainstream television we are seeing those jump cuts being used, just to use an example. So I think yeah, we feed off each other. We get informed by each other's work, so those things have to be. And I'm sure there will come time when there's a kind of response against that and we'll go back to a more formal approach to things. So I'm sure there is...but I don't know that it is as fixed at that though, like there's actually a *fashion*. It's more that everything's kind of acceptable at the moment.

What do editors do?

What does an editor do? We tell stories through the manipulation of images and sound. Sometimes I think it's a bit like knitting. My grandmother once asked me what do I do as an editor, and I said *it's actually a bit like what you do Nan. It's kind of like knitting* because she had always been a knitter. And she looked at me like I was completely mad, but I think it's true. It is like knitting because it's like you are weaving together a set of colors to form a pattern that hopefully at the end of it resembles a jumper. So it's a bit like that I think.

Personal introduction

My name is Mark Atkin. I'm a film editor.

[end of interview transcript Mark Atkin]

INTERVIEW 3 – DANY COOPER A.S.E

INTERVIEW RECORDED 1 DECEMBER 2011

Background

My background was very arts filled. My father was an administrator at the Arts Council of Australia and then moved in to being Head of Arts and Education overseas. And he was also a yoga teacher and had a fascination with religious studies overseas and ended up doing his PhD at Sydney University. My mother was a potter, and so there was no way I was ever going to be allowed to be a merchant banker, or a doctor or a lawyer (laugh!).

I was a musician as a child, I did eight years of piano, maybe nine to ten years of violin playing, did all the AMEB examinations. I used to go to the conservatorium every weekend and had a teacher there. I joined Sydney youth orchestra, played rank and file and moved up the ranks. Probably got to be first desk but I was never soloist material. And I decided I didn't want to be a violinist because I got sick of sitting in a dark room all by myself practicing, so I became a film editor (laugh!).

But I think the point of all of this is that I went to Sydney University straight after school, I was going to go to the Canberra School of music but my mother thought I should stay in Sydney because I was quite young when I left school, 16. And I went to Sydney University and enrolled in an Arts degree, with a Major in music. Did that for a couple of years, then I transferred to a Fine Arts Anthropology Major. I think I was there for 4 years in total. Moved out of home, did all of that stuff you know screen printing workshops, little filmmaking workshops. I think I made a documentary about education cut-backs...and cut it on Umatic tape for heavens sake. Left university, graduated. And a very good friend of my mothers, Gillian Coote who is a documentary filmmaker...and I said, *I don't know what I'm going to do, I think I'll go to NIDA and be a production designer or something like that.* So I applied and didn't get in, as I'd done no research at all. So anyway, Gillian said to my mother, why doesn't she become a film editor. She's got a sense of rhythm and she's got a sense of phrasing, and she's quite neat, so it could work (laugh!). And then nothing much happened. And then I got a call from Denise Haslem one day saying that she had a documentary to cut on 16mm film that Gillian was directing and did I want to come in and assist her. And I said *I have no idea how to sync rushes,* and she said *it's not brain surgery, you won't have any trouble.* So that was my first job ever!

Becoming an editor

Well I was an assistant editor for a long time, about 8 years. I found back in those days it was very difficult for women to move into editorial roles. The last show I worked on was with John Scott, he was the editor and I was his first assistant. I did a number of shows with him. I think it was Kevin Lucas who gave me my first film to cut which was the history of jazz in Australia. It was called *Beyond El Rocco*. Five camera coverage and we cut it on a Steenbeck, a 4-plate Steenbeck. So that was quite a challenge.

Do editors have a style that is evident in their work?

I mean I think I respond to the footage, but I think it's a lot deeper than that because I can pick other editors styles. I can say Jill [Bilcock] cut that, or Nick Myers cut that, or Jason [Ballantyne] cut that. I can see style, but I can't see my own (laugh!). I think what I try and do, I try and get right into the heart of the characters, and the characters create the style in a way. I used to be adverse to forcing a style onto a film. I'm finding the more I know it's something I want to do. I want to imprint on the film, but generally I will look and see what's in there first before I start to sort of force it into something...force is not the right word, it's more...God it's really hard to talk about! You're sort of weaving strands, character strands together, and you're creating a shape. A film to me is a shape that you're creating. And a shape has highs and lows, rises and falls, and you now that's effected by performance and where you choose to put music, and the level of anxiety in the characters and whether it's a comedy or not. So style, yes I will add style if I feel like I need to, but I generally just look and see what's there first.

Dany's personal style

If the director has a very strong style, well of course you will go with that style because it's been printed on the footage. If there's not a strong style, you can make one but sometimes it sits awkwardly. I think it's to do with life experience, and how much life experience an editor has effects how they will interpret a piece of footage and what they will do with it.

How much emotion you choose to put in a film depends on where you see that emotion. I can spot emotion. I'm really good at seeing where something can make you cry. Not so good at making some people laugh, but I'm trying to do that (laugh!). I can spot it straight away. It's not to do with tearing up or anything, it's just to do with emotional depth in a performance. It's very easy to see. So what I try and do is I gather that, I gather as much as I can, and then I'll look at the film and see if I've got too much and whether it needs to be toned down in places. So I guess that's a style isn't it?

Similarities between interpreting music and performance

Interpreting a performance could be considered musical because you interpret a screenplay, and then the performances come in and quite often they're not what you read in the screenplay, or sometimes they're exactly what you read in the screenplay and then it's taking them further than the screenplay.

And yes, it is like music. You know when I was talking about that sense of being able to feel the tones and the rhythm. When you get to a later stage in a film which I'm at the moment, I see it very clearly *again*. I go through a period when I can't see it all and then I come back and I can see it very, very clearly. And it's almost like a piece of music, and I try not to keep it in quartets or anything. It's in three acts but (laugh!)...I don't like to have too many crescendos together for example, or here we're going to go quiet. You know, it's like you're playing the film but, you're not really...yeah.

It's the shape, that's what I'm going back to, the musical shape. It can be an audio shape or a performance shape. It's many, many different shapes. I mean basically our job is to harness light and sound and action, and story and create a multilayered thing called a film. And do it so it pleases us, and the director obviously as well.

Reading the film for an audience

Well that's another thing, reading a film for an audience is another thing (laugh!). It's objectivity and subjectivity and we could go into that...

The Art of Editing

I think editing is not just a craft. We are interpreting the dailies into the film, and I think that's an art. Well if you do it properly it's an art.

Editing and intuition

You respond to the footage from a personal point of view but there are a number of things that come into play and that is, you have a screenplay. You also have a series of people that you are working with, directors, producers, departments. All those people effect how you choose to put the film together, what their expectations are. You know, if you're cutting a comedy, they expect it to be funny. If you're cutting a tragedy, they expect it to be sad. So I think all that effects your interpretation of the dailies.

Although I will hark back to my previous statement that I do think editing is very intuitive and maybe later on you realise what it is that you've learnt. Your intuition comes to the fore when you're cutting, and then you can sit back and write a book about it.

But the more I do it the more I learn and you see there are things that I've learnt just come in when I'm cutting now. They're there with you when you're editing. Ah your experience is always there with versions straight away without having to try it? You know, I rarely do a cut twice. I just do it, and then move on. Because it's not the actual joins that are important, it's what's between the joins. And the selection of what's between the joins comes from all that life experience that you've had as to why would you choose that piece to put into that film. But you would choose that piece because you also have all these other people you're working with who require you to make a choice that they like as well. So I don't know if I'm being too esoteric here, but it sort of effects how you make choices all the time.

I think intuition is incredibly important though, really important. Your first response to something is very important. Seeing dailies for the first time, trying to retain that feeling you had, trying to retain that feeling when you put something together and you cried when you were cutting it. That's really important because that goes. After you've looked at it 35,000 times with a whole bunch of people. You look at it and you think, do I still cry? You don't remember. You've got to remember what it felt like the first time.

Digital verses film

Back when I was an assistant we always had daily screenings with the crew, and the editor would sit with the director and they would circle the print takes. And I guess I come from that school where, not that anybody does it anymore, but I really loved the way you got a first impression and it was on a big screen, and that's how it was going to look in the cinema. So you saw it, how it was going to look in the cinema and you understood if you used that, *that* was what it was going to look like.

Storytelling verses style

Try and define style? That's difficult unless it's someone like Jill [Bilcock], something like *Moulin Rouge* or one of the Luhrmann films that she worked on where the style is very clear. Or *Memento*, that had a very clear style. I guess the all *Bourne Identity* films have a very clear style but that style would come probably from the Director. I don't know how it came. Did it come from Jill or did it come from Baz? Does anybody know??

The creative challenge of being an editor?

What excites me...I mean everything excites me. I live and breathe it. I can't wait to get in in the morning. It exhausts me but so what. I think that you're making a world that is your world, or the world of the film.

Frans Vandenburg and I used to discuss why we became film editors and we decided it was because we couldn't cope with the real world. It's because we preferred this makeshift world that we could make and see and move around, and make talk and fix timings up, and create relationships and all those sort of things. So for a start it's like a great big play-pen and that's fantastic.

I think the other thing which is what I touched on earlier, is that you're pulling in sound and light and you're making something that's incredibly satisfying. When you make a series of cuts that work, you feel so good! It's so wonderful. If you put some music, even if it's temp music and it comes to life, it's really gratifying and great fun. So I think that's why I do it.

Are editors co-creators of the film?

Well I would like to think that editors are co-creators of the film and I find I work very well with people who consider me a co-creator. If they don't consider me a co-creator, I can deal with that, that's OK that's their thing. But it sort of takes away some of the thrill of it. I mean I didn't get into filmmaking in Australia to make money because you don't. I got into it because I really like making things. And making a film and feeling like you are part of a team and collaborating with people is very, very...it's a brilliant sensation. It sounds very art film but, on the other hand, if you're working on a big film like a Baz film or a George Miller film, that too...you're not necessarily a collaborator but you have a role, and that role is very secure and it's also good fun. It's just a different role, but when you're a solo editor I think I need to feel like a collaborator. Maybe it's old fashioned!

Sometimes you can get it out of proportion and you can believe you are the sole author of the film. But only for that amount of time that it's in your arms and it's sitting there on your Avid. And you do, you fall in love with a film. I mean you have to work so hard on it. And you...you need to feel you are the author of it. But that goes, because it is the directors and the producers film in the end, and then it will become the composers film, and the sound designers film and you know (laugh!). The solo authoring is a very small phase. It probably lasts two weeks with me.

The editor/ director relationship

I think a good editor/ director relationship is essential otherwise you're really cutting in a vacuum. You have no one to feed of, no one to feed back to. I mean I need a good director. I need a good director to look at my work and say great! Or look at it and say, have you thought about doing this? I'll also take direction as well. But yeah, I really think it's essential to make a good film.

The concept of rhythm and the part it has to play in editing

I like to stand sometimes when I'm editing and to move up and down, away from the screen. And I like to talk to the screen (laugh!). I guess there is rhythm. I mean editing is about rhythm. It's about creating many rhythms in a film. If it was all the same rhythm it would be pretty dull. You laugh. I'll laugh when I'm cutting a first cut, and cry. I sit there and look at the screen and go, *oh it's so beautiful, I love it!*

Digital editing and the impact on your work?

I do agree you can push creative boundaries when you cut on non-linear. I mean It's amazing what you can do but yes, then there's always the...like if you decide to do a dissolve, there's various types of dissolves so you've got to be very careful that you specify what that dissolve is. You know, that sort of thing. Yeah it's very empowering and very freeing to cut on non-linear. I mean I would actually hate to cut on film again, hate it! I'm carrying 14 tracks here so I think cutting without sound effects and things would be quite difficult.

I think you have more power with digital to re-write. I think very much so. And also thinking about what you were saying about Kate [Williams] ...doing three versions of a scene while cutting the dailies would stop you becoming attached which is a good thing. Because I can get quite attached to a version of a scene because I just know it's the best. You know I just feel it's the best (laugh!), and that sometimes creates issues because I don't want anyone to destroy my scene because it's the best! You know, I'm just being very honest here. It would stop you from doing that. You'd have three versions that you probably thought were the best.

Well there's the old way of looking at it. When digital technology was introduced it wasn't about doing A cut, it was about doing many cuts. DI's, aspect ratios etc.

Is there a style/ approach to editing that defines Australian editors?

I think that you could set Australian editors apart from English editors and American editors because Australian culture is apart from those two areas of the world. You used to be able to say you can tell an Australian film because every boring detail will be there. They will put the key in the lock, they will turn the key, they will then show you getting into the car door, shutting the door, putting the key in, starting the car, putting your hands on the wheel and driving off. Whereas in American film they would just walk up to the car and they'd be gone! You know they would jump through time.

I don't know if it was one of your quotes, but there was something about British naturalism that said, British editors were cutting in perfect continuity and cutting brilliantly, while the American editors were jumping time. I would like to think we are aiming to develop those skills here. I certainly try and jump time. I worked with Dody Dorn on Australia and she used to say to me, *the audience will be grateful if you cut that out*, and I thought that was a fantastic quote, and I run it through my head quit often. The audience will be grateful because they don't want to sit through those dull, boring details.

American films...generally they make a lot more of them, so there's a much greater film culture there. Hollywood editors grow up in Hollywood. They train on big Hollywood films. They work on the *Silver Surfer* or whatever. They know everything there is to know about big expensive visual effects sequences and action sequences. They also have a very experienced pool of actors, and younger editors will be cutting good actors, even on independent films. That all effects the development of craft and I think we haven't got that pool to draw from here. I wish we had!

They say post is the cheapest part of a film production, or that's what American post supervisors tell you. So if the films not ready, don't lock it. That's what they think. They'll spend money if they think they're going to recoup money, in that the film will be better. I don't know about here. I don't think we have the ability to spend money. We have these finite budgets and people are mortgaging their houses and you know, that's really tough.

On the other hand, some amazing low budget films have been made. I forget the name of it...there's an \$800,000 one that was made on America, cheap as chips. It's fantastic, a sci-fi movie, *Monster* I think it's called. It's very high-end looking. Or take Michael Rymer who just made *Face to Face*. I don't know what the budget was but it was nothing, and that's a good little film. I really like it, it plays well.

Visible editing, is it the current style?

Oh I think styles come and go and I think visible editing has come. If you look at television in Australia, *East West 101*, or *Underbelly* or any of those shows, they're all cut very visibly. And audiences acquire a taste for it from watching television, and rock clips and things like that. I think they can stomach it very easily on a feature film. Any edit becomes in terms of what's a good style for a film. Gosh I think it really comes down to the style it was shot in as to whether you can do that stuff. But you're always trying to make an impact, not all the time, but sometimes with a cut, and it's certainly more easy now days with that sort of way of editing. I mean I edited *Battlestar Galactica*, which had a lot of that stuff in it and I embraced that, it was fantastic fun to do it so. But I maybe wouldn't have done it on *Oranges and Sunshine*, which was a much quieter film, with brilliant thespians worrying and talking.

In a few words, what do editors do?

There's a theory that editors cut out the bad bits. I don't think that's a good example of what editors do. I think it's something I touched on earlier. We take light and sound and performance and we weave an interesting story that people have an emotional response to. And we try and make the performers and the directors and the writing as good as possible. And we try and have fun in the process (laugh!).

Personal introduction

I'm Dany Cooper and I'm a film editor.

[end of interview transcript Dany Cooper]

INTERVIEW 4 – LUKE DOOLAN

INTERVIEW RECORDED 1 DECEMBER 2011

Background

Well I always wanted to work in films somehow since I was a kid. At a pretty young age I started wanting to be a stunt man, then I heard about directors, and I just fell in love with the idea of boom cranes and stuff. Didn't really think too much about editing. You know when done really well it's invisible, or not noticeable.

It wasn't until my last year in high school and I was in a media class and I saw everyone making sort of dinky little pretty classic dumb high school movies, and I really wanted to kick their arses. So I made this sort of action, stalker movie, set in hallways and there were guns and you know... I was a bit obsessed with Brian de Palma so I sort of shot this whole thing, story boarded it and made my own equipment and then, *OK I'm done!*

And then really I just had a whole bunch of tapes and really I didn't know what to do with them. And that's when I was faced with this old tape to tape VHS machine. I had hours of stuff and I knew it was going to take a long time, and they'd shuffle you in maybe an hour at a time each, and that wasn't enough. I made a case saying they're not making very good work, can I have their time? It was pretty wrong of me but what they allowed me to do was stay the 2 weeks of the school holidays. And that's when I was there alone for the first time going in every day, happy to go to school and actually started finding the magic of putting one thing after another. And there was the added complication of this tape to tape thing on VHS which doesn't lock up very well. If you don't line the shot up and make the cut with the sort of 10 minute pre-roll that it requires, you get a blip on the cut. So it forced me to think a bit quicker or think ahead a lot more. That was sort of my first experience of editing and it was actually like a sort of drug rush of some kind, and I will not forget that and it's chased me ever since. It's quite a habit.

Becoming an editor/ getting a break in the industry

So then I got out of school and just thought I'd walk into a high paying directing job. No luck! So I got a job making coffee for people on TV sets and this director I was working with on this show called *Big Sky*, they were cutting at a place called Island Films which was a digital post-production house in Glebe. And they were running off Lightworks

machines. And I sat there for 2 weeks while I watched them cut this TV show and I remember thinking this is the most boring thing in the world. Where was that buzz I had?

I realized it's in the doing, not the watching. So I got it's more fun to play than to watch. But anyway...the director said *we're done!* They just couldn't pay me any more. So the owner of the place said, *do you know how to fix computers and editing machines*, and I said *yeah!* I had no idea, so I was sort of labeling cables and making fruit for all these editors, making coffee and stuff. And also learning how to fix computers, and also learning non-linear editing, just the principles of it. That was on Lightworks back in those days. And I remember the owner was really anti-Avid at the time. I'd never seen an Avid but I just spent a lot of time shooting things on the weekends and using the place to cut at nights and on weekends.

And did that for a couple of years before cutting other peoples films. Just anything I could get my hands on to try and get some experience, or get something that would get me into some kind of door. And you know, one out of about sixty ended up getting to Tropfest and winning. We won an award but it was for cinematography not editing. So I was a bit disappointed but not too disappointed. Then I started getting calls from people. One of the first was Nash Edgerton who I work with now. Palmed off a few commercial jobs, and you know, one thing sort of leads to another and suddenly you've got this little crop of directors you're working with. And we started making short films and got into music videos, and just over maybe four or five years started really snowballing. That's kind of how I got started.

Editing Styles

I think in principle editors shouldn't have a style. It's different on commercials, they want a style. But narrative filmmaking and features, I kind of feel an editor's more like an actor. You're meant to inhabit the story and the script, and the people you're working with and try and facilitate that. Absorb it and bring it out and, you know, the old cooking analogy of reducing and just getting it to be as tasty as it can be. But that being said, if you look over the career of a lot of great editors, you can see recurring styles or maybe techniques. But it's hard to say because it has a lot to do with the directors they work with.

So I guess I don't have a definitive answer on that but the ones I really started admiring early on did have styles. Like well first of all, Robert Rodriguez has a huge one. Just because it's so flashy and snappy and cool. It sort of titillates the teenage boy. It's sort of like a rock video but it's actually a really beautifully realised sort of rock video style. Very fluid and the rhythms are the most amazing of a lot of editors I know. But I guess he's a

filmmaker as well, so I guess it goes back to it's very hand in hand, editing and filmmaking. Editing and directing and writing I think are all sort of siblings.

Working with Jill Bilcock

I'd seen Jill Bilcock's work a lot through my life but I hadn't really clocked her as being the sort of Statue of Liberty of editors' in Australia until I got to work with her. And that was entirely by mistake. Not by mistake, but serendipity I guess. The place where I ended up working at Island films only ran Lightworks. When *Moulin Rouge* came about, suddenly they just sucked up every Lightworks assistant in the country I think. And they ran out of those and I got a call. I was only 19 or 20, and I was only hired for a week to do an online for their very first screening, and eighteen months later I think I was just walking off the job.

So it was a long one, but that was my time with Jill and it was great. It was the most full on bazooka in the face education you can get, but I loved every minute of it. I mean I wasn't in the room with her very often because her and Baz were very intense together and I didn't even dare go near the room. You know, I'm had my room and they kept us all busy. There was a small army of assistants. I guess I learnt by sort of watching the revisions of each reel. I mean they would come in thick and fast and by the time I'd finished locking off and cleaning up a reel, a new version would come in, so I'd just start again.

There's no short cut to that you've just got to do it. And so it was like in the army, they show you how to strip a rifle and you just do it over and over until you can do it in the dark while people are shooting at you. It was kind of like that. That's how I learnt just by watching changes, little increments. One of the best lessons I learnt and this is a hard one. I was in LA. She [Jill Bilcock] had come back to Melbourne to do a pre-mix I think, and I was sending through the reels as she finished them before she left. And because we were working long hours, that's no excuse, but I did send through the wrong reel, and they didn't pick it up until it was on the mixing stage. It didn't actually ruin the screening, it didn't effect the length of the reel but there was a shot within it that was missing. Something there that she'd popped in a close-up or something. And I swore I'd sent her the right reel and she was on the other end of the phone as I was giving excuses and she went, *Luke, stop. You sent the wrong one. It's OK but it's the last time you'll ever do that, right?.* And I went, *Oh yeah yeah...* And it's the last time I've ever done that with her, not the last time I've ever done it though...

Do you have a personal style?

The style's more in the process than I think the end result. If you work the process the right way, I think it's different for everyone, then eventually the film will tell you what it wants to

be. I guess the style is there. I'm trying to think through all the things I've done. Yeah, I think it's in the process. I mean I start with how few cuts can I put in, where do I need to cut, and then usually screen that. It's different on my films to the films that I'm cutting for people, but I usually find that I get three screenings that don't get better and then by that point I've asked enough questions and had enough feedback that I know how to get going again. And the next three screenings get better and better and better. And I'm pretty big on there being roughly six. I found the origins of that in working as an editor for other people because there were some directors I found were not listening, or we weren't jelling. And I just sort of told them, *tell me what you want and I'll do it*. Until I could break them, by having them sort of beg me to go, *Oh, how do I make this of work better?* And they're laughing at me and I go, *Well OK, I've been doing this on the side. Do you mind if we screen that just for a look?* I don't know if it's better or worse but screen that, and you get maybe a little bit of a more positive response and then they're a bit more receptive. I don't mean it to sound nasty or manipulative but...you know you've got to crack people sometimes. And I've got to be cracked sometimes, and I find those relationships the hardest but the best.

Editing Animal Kingdom

On *Animal Kingdom*, David and I we'd been friends for years. We made a few very well awarded shorts, but nothing prepares you for sitting in a room for six months. Even as best friends you get tested and we had to crack each other...it was like that 6 screening process, it got worse and worse and worse, and then it got really better and better and better, and then the friendship survives.

Intuition: to quote Karen Pearlman that editing is intuitive, but the more you support the intuition with knowledge, the better you become.

Look I do agree with that statement because editing's such a personal thing. It's like a finger print, and it's based entirely on everything you've ever seen, and all the subliminal things you get by watching. I mean every time you turn on a screen there's something edited. I began with this theory when I was in junior high school that if I watched every film I'd somehow pick something up by osmosis. It wasn't what I was looking for, but I found this internal metronome for editing. You know, do you cut on the line, do you cut on the look, do you cut half way, and you just find there's this intuition that develops on where you'd like it to be done, according to the scene and what the film means. That stayed with me and developed more and more.

And I think *Animal Kingdom* was the real peak of that so far where I feel so much of me is in the cut of that. It's definitely the film they wrote, but it's a much different film from what was on the page, and one that I'm really...It's hard to describe but I guess by seeing the film I feel like whether you notice me or not, I hope you don't notice me, but I feel people walk away with something that's a bit of my DNA.

Do editors leave their handprint on a film?

I think editors certainly leave their hand-print or DNA on a film. I wish I could just erase my memory and watch all these films again without the credits, and just see if I had the same feeling or whether I'd be able to group them. I'm trying to think of a scene in *Animal Kingdom* which I could say encapsulates my DNA. I mean it's a really simple scene. It's a scene with Jay breaking up with his girlfriend in a bowling alley. It's a very slow scene, and it's very laden with tension, and there's a lot of layers to it. It's maybe three quarters of the way through the film. So there's something about the way, the pace of the dialogue is very slow, the cuts are very...there's a lot of off-camera dialogue. You just hold on the one person, and hold on the other, and getting that balancing act right was really hard. But it just feels really organic to me that one. And there's a whole lot of other stuff that happened in that scene that is not in the film, as in other characters come in and out. It had these huge peaks and we just found at that point of the film it needed this sort of plateau.

Editing and the process of sculpting the film

I mean before you can even get to the point of strangling the audience with being too intense, you've got to learn *how* to be that intense, because a lot of the common mistakes that young directors and editors make, they feel like every scene has to finish the way it's written on the page. Writing a scene with a beginning, middle and an end works for a read, but if every scene lets the air out of the balloon you've got nothing left to go on with in the next scene.

And the whole point is, George Millar says this, letting the wave crash. You want to sort of leave the wave at it's peak and never let it crash until you need to. So you want every scene to build and build, and every sequence, and everything to build until you drop it and crash, and then you gear up again. And it's just sculpting in that way that's really important. You know, you've got to learn how to be intense to when let the air out of the tyres, to know when to fill them back up again. You can't get the audience in fifth gear and stay there the whole way. People will just reject you and they won't know why. It's just too much.

Finding the structure of the film

Someone had a really interesting thought on this, I don't know who it was, but they said you do your assembly or rough cut, and then you watch it and that's when you begin to start analyzing it. You've got to analyse but also stay in it, and do that over and over until it becomes what it's meant to be. But you'll hit a patch where it's working, working, working, and doesn't. Then it's working, working...so you've got to start looking at this patch. So just for example, you take that out. It's like dominos. You put a six with a six, a four with a four. And I thought that was really interesting and it made sense to me. Do you know you play dominos? So I think they said this first section and this other section, they go together. So you've got to find the domino that goes between them to make them work. You've got to take that out and start messing with it until the numbers match, and then you've got a flow. So you've got three sequences...and then you look at the next bit. That seemed to be a great way of explaining what's virtually inexplicable to me, and it's been very valuable and I've used it ever since.

How do you define good editing?

People have written books about that one question so I don't know if I can succinctly answer that. But I think it's just revealing a story from a whole lot of other mediums that are dropped on your doorstep that don't resemble anything. Assembling them in a fashion, in a multi-layered fashion, with performance and photography and music and a story. And finding the story that it was always intended to be, even though it was never written or formed that way. So I guess an editor is the ultimate storyteller, the final storyteller.

What are the creative challenges for you as an editor? Are you continually learning?

Every time you start to get a bit lofty about going, *Oh I know it all now I've got stuff that people gave me in an award show*, you get quickly taken down by the next job, all it's challenges, the new people involved. You know it's never just the one thing, and I love that about it.

Digital editing and the challenges of moving away from film

Learning the new tools that are thrown our way every six months, the new technology and updates. A new way of electronic continuity sheets, integrated with the Avid and things like that. Things that are way over my head! I just like the simple old way I used to do it and I'll stick to that way. When I first started as an assistant, or even as a coffee making fix-it guy, it was in the early non-linear days but there were still Steenbecks around. People we still

throwing film up to check conforms and there were still boxes of film everywhere. And I loved that, I loved the look of it and I thought that's the way it was, and I was wondering what these computers were.

I decided to take it on myself because I was right on the cusp of film cutting, editing and digital non-linear coming in. And all of the editors working around me were old legends. Well not old, but they were legends of mine. You've got to be careful how you word that! Anyway, they were telling me about the discipline required with cutting on film because everything has to be undone, you can't just...you've really got to think about things. You might cut something for half a day or a day and spend half a day undoing it. It's now just a hit of a button. So it forced you to think...it's like those two VHS's that I learnt on, you had to think.

So I had a little understanding of what they were talking about. But then, I interviewed Leigh Smith once when he was on the first *Batman* movie. I said, *Don't you miss the old film thing* and he said, *Fuck no, I'd never go back. This is brilliant!* I said, *why do you like that*, and he said, *that's because I like to edit as fast as I can think, and this allows me to do that*. And coming from those film days, I don't think non-linear has diminished his ability to think ahead, but he likes to give himself more options more quickly. So I think he's straddling both worlds really well and that's kind of the way I've tried to keep it in my mind. It's not just a tool to do every version of everything, and just pick and choose and Frankenstein things together. Although that can work for some people, but I don't have the patience. I want to think about it, and that's where I think the DNA and the thumb-print comes back into it. You know, it's back into the process. I don't want to pull that thread because I don't know where it's going to end. So I like to keep it in a fairly disciplined way that keeps me connected to the old school I guess.

Has digital editing impacted on editing styles?

There are no rules I guess, and there are less and less and there's more tools. My thing is, just because it's there you don't have to use it, and I'm pretty content with the way I cut and so I'm kind of set for life. I'm going to be long in the tooth for the rest of my days unless something amazing comes along that makes me edit better. The thing that I've noticed most, and this is not necessarily with younger people, it's with peers of mine who are really into Photoshop and all that sort of stuff. They will sit there for weeks trying to Photoshop a tear down an actors cheek, rather than solving a problem. And I watched this

and it was agony. You've got to work the film. If you've got to put a tear there later, great, but try and work the problem first.

The ability to do that I think is a really dangerous one. It's great but it's dangerous at the same time in the wrong hands. It's like a weapon you know. Put it in a crazy person's hands and that's one thing. Put it in a marksman's hand and it's something different. I just think there are so many options going that I wonder...I'm glad there are that many options because who knows when the next kid's going to walk in and go, *I know how to make Lawrence of Arabia with that thing that you think is rubbish*. Great! That's how we move forward, and that's how it probably was for film technology.

Something would come out: a new pic-sync, or the stand up Moviola versus the Steenbeck, or just having a TV monitor. People must have thought they were new fangle things, but people adapt and use them and it's usually the younger people.

The one bit of alarming technology I first encountered on one of the first Lightworks was a menu setting that had 'random edit', which they used I think on a lot of music videos in the early 90's. That's what's responsible for a lot of chop-pie music videos...pork chop? Anyway...Big Audio Dynamite music videos, yeah!

Has visible editing taken center stage?

I think the audience has probably dictated a bit of that and so has the technology and the people making the things. I think it's sort of all evolved together. I definitely think the technology is responsible for some of that, because of the ease at which you can cut quickly. But you know, cutting quickly on any footage doesn't make it good, but on the right footage it can be exhilarating. I remember with Jill Bilcock, there was a bit of controversy over *Moulin Rouge* in some sections and you know, they were just using the language of the day, of young people, of MTV and all those things. I think they responded, the audience responded. And I don't think Jill really cared what the controversy was, because the audience got it and that's the thing. You're the one who tries to feed everyone that's on the film, feed their vision to an audience and that's really all that matters. The press and the awards, all of that's secondary. Storytelling's at the heart of the audience you intend to get to. And sometimes you're surprised what other audiences respond to as well.

Storytelling verses emotion

Take 1: I don't see the difference, they are kind of the same. There's plot verses emotion. I mean plot's just then this happened and this happened and this happened. But then emotion is the ark of feeling that sits over the top of that.

Take 2: I think storytelling is sort of the culmination of plot and emotion. Plot being first this happens and this happens and this happens, then shock, then this happens... The emotion is the building tension, building tension, shock (!), then an emotional withdrawal, and then maybe someone's in peril. So it's all transposed over the top of each other to equal storytelling, I think.

How do you see the editor's role in the future? Will it become more a part of the filmmaking process?

Certainly in my experience in the last 6 or 7 years working on shorts and features as an editor, I've often been invited or asked to be involved in pre-production. And not just as a sort of, *well lets go though the script and see what can obviously go out*. Really that should have been the script editors job. But I've also been heavily involved in pre-visualisation. That's anything from visual effects work to a two-handed conversation.

With Blue Tongue Films in particular where we began this...in fact we did shoot one entire short film on video first because we didn't have enough actual film, 16mm film, to shoot everything for the entire take. So we just shot the pieces that we'd already cut together, and re-conformed that. And that ended up being a short film called *Lucky*. Just an action film, but it opened our eyes to how economical we could be because we never have enough money. We did get a sense of pride because our heroes like Steven Spielberg and those guys, they don't do a Kubrick where they shoot a ten minute long take from this angle, and that angle and that angle. We just go, *Which bits are we going to need and we'll give ourselves a little bit of handle, leeway*, but we like to figure it out first, make our mistakes first, and then on set maybe you can give yourself some more options. But also you don't make your mistakes on set which is a great thing, and then by the time you get to cut it, a lot of your work is done, or your first draft is done. And then you get to re-examine it with whatever other options have been given to you by performance, actors or you can re-think things by the time you get there. So the sixteen weeks you would maybe be thinking about this stuff from when you begin editing, you're actually sixteen weeks in by

the time you get there. And then you've got a whole other infinite world of possibilities to explore, and you are way ahead of the eight ball.

So I find that is going to be an increasing role and one that I certainly teach at the film school. Get involved early, be more part of the process. Don't be the sort of quiet kid at the end of the process who then just has to take it. It's up to you to want to be part of that, and I think it's far more enriching and it will keep you interested longer. It will certainly expose you to more facets of filmmaking because editing is one of many, and it's important to know the others I think.

The editor/ director relationship

Some editor told me editing is a director holding a gun to his head and the editor going, *No, it's alright, it's alright!* Which I think's quite true. I don't think I've ever seen a director watch a first assembly without turning green, several shades of green. But with experience and more and more features for example, you know that's just part of the process. You don't have to want to kill yourself immediately. Do that down the track if it's no good but it's just a process.

Coming back to the style of things, they want your take on things. I don't think it's a thing you can put on the wall, but it's more like the filter in your brain. But yeah, editor director relationships are so crucial. I often...directors audition you or you audition them. I think it should be both ways. You might like the script, it's the best script in the world and it will win twenty Oscars, but if I'm going to sit in a room with you and we're not going to get on, it's not worth it because it's not going to get to that point, and we're not going to enjoy ourselves and it's just going to be brutal. And sometimes it just happens that way, even with people you love and work with and get along with well. But there's no reason to go into that knowing it's going to be the case. Truly, I would rather have a railroad spike through my head than go through that knowingly.

But yes, its just one of the most crucial alchemies you can get on a film. It's just getting that chemistry right kind of knowing each other, knowing each others best and worst parts and still being able to compliment each other and go ahead on that. And to call each other on stuff. It's like a psychiatry room sometimes. And it's really important to have a de-brief, whether it's going to the pub, or just having a talk afterwards or whatever it takes. Go driving fast cars. I often go to the video game arcade and race. You know stuff like that, it's really important.

Defining the editing process

When the script leaves the room you never look at it again. Now it's a film. Now you work with what you have, pictures and sound. And you add to it, cook it. That's the way to go. I really try to teach them that the script is important up to a certain point, and it's now this other thing, it's born now. You just have to make it as pretty as possible.

How do you stand back as director when editing your own film? i.e Miracle Fish.

Miracle Fish I did because it was such a low budget, and I also wrote it, so I had this pace and this telling clearly in my head. And I only covered it in a way that I thought it needed to be covered. I think I cut one little scene out, but then it was really playing with lots of long takes. And most of the scenes are done in one shot. You know, they start somewhere and they end somewhere else and I wasn't even sure if that was going to work. It wasn't until I started showing people and them responding that I went, *oh, there's something to this*. But I did find it hard cutting my own stuff and I did need an outside input from my collective buddies. But I guess what surprised me most was how little notes they gave me. They were very specific when they did give them to me but it seemed to be bang on the money. But that's because it came from here (points to heart) and went straight to here (points to head), and then to the Avid. It didn't have to go very far but it still went through a filter of different areas.

Having done that and feeling I was quite successful with that I decided with my next film, which I've just finished, I wanted to try working with an editor to see if I was as hard to work with as a director as a lot of the directors I've worked with. See if I'd turn into one of them. It was a much different film. It's all visual effects and set in space. But I got my assistant from *Miracle Fish* to edit it, and she hadn't edited much but she did a really great job and I think, you know, we had the normal teething problems and I didn't feel like I was too demanding, but it worked out well. And I really liked that I could pass the baton. She wasn't in the assistant room and we'd talk about it after. We were talking it through as we went. And I really like that aspect of it, talking it through and her talking me down on a few occasions, quite a few occasions.

It's good to have that as you do loose perspective as a director and I think part of an editor's role as well is to be the perspective keeper. The psychologist, the hand holder, the intuator. It's all these different things. It's a marriage. So yeah, while I enjoy editing for

myself, I don't know that I'd do it again in a hurry. Especially not on a feature. If I was going to do it, I'd do it as a last resort and I'd probably do it with someone else as well.

Stylistic Editing and cutting Miracle Fish

Stylistically in *Miracle Fish*, and I only know this from having a couple of years distance and seeing it for what the audience sees, I think the tension building...there's very minimal plot. There are only sort of two real plot points. In the beginning, on the repeat viewing, you can see the gunman outside the front of the school, which a lot of people don't get the first time because I pull focus to it and it's pretty obvious but whatever, it works. And then the kids bullying the young boy. That's really the only plot there was. The rest is sort of milieu and school. And the real tension from then on is the nothingness. Everyone's gone and I think the tension is sort of between the cuts.

I think it was David Mamet that said, the story is really told by what's between the cuts. It's not jump cutting but it's jumping time. Every one of those seems to sort of mount an extra level of tension. I just sort of tried to find how long I could draw that out before the audience would go aghhh (!) or just walk away. And I think I fairly successfully constructed that before I brought the gunman in again. And even then I spent quite a bit of time giving him a little bit of a mysterious prelude. And then it all becomes apparent and then it's too late and you're in the room with him and what's going to happen?

What I did wrong in the construction of it, as I was shooting, I burst the bubble quite close to the climax point. I actually had the gunman's POV [point of view] on the kid, like a mysterious POV, and it suddenly took the film out of the kids point of view. On the page I've got to say that was the bit that the heart leapt into their throats. So like, what's this other point of view? But on the screen it just didn't work the same way, so it was very wisely pointed out to me that if you take that out, everything else will work. And I screened it again without that, and I screened it to Greg McLean, who actually just happened to be in town and that guys made the scariest movie I've ever seen, and he jumped. He freaked out. I asked him at the end is there anything you'd change, is there anything you can tell me. He goes, yeah, *I tell you what I'd change, I'd take your name off the end and put mine on.* And I went, *OK, I think I'm on to something here.* That was the first time I went OK this could work.

What do editors do?

Good editors change the world with good stories...bad editors take out the bad bits. I'll probably come to regret that, but that's my sort of hipster tee-shirt version.

In looking at films, people tend to analyse the story and not the artifact. Story versus the craft?

Yeah, there's the story and then the telling of it. I personally think of editing as a craft but I also see it as an art. It's an art when it's exceptional. But what's exceptional and what's art, and you know, it's this nebulous question.

I like to see it as a craft because I really envy and romanticize the old school 40's, 50's movie factory thing. They're all smoking and going out and talking at the smoke-house across the road from Warner Brothers, and I kind of wish I could be like that. I just want to be one of those old stalwart journeymen kind of guys. So for me it's a craft, I'm happy for others if it's an art. It's whatever it wants to be. I just like it because we're all using a sewing machine basically. It's how you use it and what you're making. We all have the same materials. Yeah, I think that's about as good as I can get.

Personal Introduction

My name's Luke Doolan. I'm a film editor and filmmaker...and this is my new office.

[end of interview transcript Luke Doolan]

INTERVIEW 5 – JACK HUTCHINGS

INTERVIEW RECORDED 27 MARCH 2012

Background

I used to make little skate films with my friends when I was 15, 16, and we used to shoot video 8 around the suburbs. And my auntie had given me a video camera and I used to follow my friends around and we'd just film each other....and then I'd just take it back home and dub it to VHS or whatever and make little skate films with really basic, rudimentary gear. That's not really where I started editing but where I sort of learnt by making little stories out of stuff we'd shot.

And then I went to do a marketing degree at RMIT and I wasn't really enjoying that after a really sort of creative high school and so forth. There was a film course in my year 12 that I really enjoyed...title design and shooting film and super 8 and whatever. And then I was 3 months into a marketing degree and I just remember a lecturer taking me aside and saying to me, *you don't have to be here if you don't want to. You're obviously not enjoying it.* And I just sort of went *wow!* It was like a revelation and I just never went back. the next day I quit and I was like, what was I actually doing, I was hating it. And I think my Mum said to me, you should go do a TAFE course, that one back to the high school that you really enjoyed in Footscray, and do the film course there.

So I went back and it was a good suggestion because I really enjoyed it. It was very practical. It was shooting film, and they just got an Avid in there. They had punch and crunch edit suites, so we were learning all the basics of A and B roll and edit techniques ad dissolves and just the basic sort of stuff. But I already had a bit of a grounding in that from my little skate-boarding films that I used to make and was still making. You know, there were some skateboarding films that I really loved. Like there was one called 'Video Days' by a guy who actually turned out to be a pretty amazing filmmaker, Spike Jones...OK, this guys making interesting films with his mates and that's kind of what we were doing in Melbourne. Not to that kind of level, but we were just playing around with it and having fun. It was just totally free.

And then I sort of ambled along, and then I started cutting freelance in about 2000. I met a guy Glendyn Ivan who I ended up doing a lot of work with. And I became good friends with and a producer sort of gave me a call out of the blue who said, *We've got this music video. We've seen this reel of stuff you've cut together ...*from travel videos

and sort of terrible stuff. And she said, *Look it's no money but why don't you come in and have a go*. And we clicked, you know, it just worked. And then I just did a lot of music videos, which lead to commercials and then short films, or short films and then commercials.

I never trained as an assistant editor or anything like that. I did go and do an attachment with Martin Conner, an amazing editor from Sydney, very experienced and I just worked alongside him or just shadowed him a little bit. I didn't do as much as they would have liked but I was really interested in seeing how a feature film came together. You know, he was every encouraging, and it was fascinating to see all the politics behind the film. I kind of wish I was making a little documentary at the time because it was interesting, some amazing material which I probably shouldn't go into.

I never was an assistant. I went to London and was cutting for a year in 2003 and I was pretty young...I had done a lot of music videos. I had probably cut fifty music videos over in Australia and I was veraciously cutting music videos and then I went over and just found I was back three pegs and effectively had to start again. When left Melbourne I wasn't enjoying music videos, I was dreading every time the rushes would be coming in I would just be like, *Oh what am I doing, I just said yes again*. Then I would kind of battle my way through the material and make something out of it and enjoy it, but still get to the end and go, *Oh not again!* Then I found myself having to do the same work over there, but I was amazed that all the people bringing you cups of tea and all the assistants were way older than me.

If you want to be an editor, you've got to cut. You can learn only so much just watching editors, you've really got to get in there and get your hands dirty and get the material and trial and error. That's how I did it, and that's kind of how I feel like it is. With our assistants here I'll just kind of throw them in the deep end, let them have a play and then maybe come in and give them some guidance. And try not to be too autocratic but essentially, you've got to just make mistakes essentially I think.

Learning in the digital age

There is a little bit more room for playing I imagine because I never worked with a flatbed or film. But I'd like to think that the material dictates effectively what you're creating, and that really is pretty paramount. Whether you're watching film on a screen, whether it was shot on film or shot on digital or whatever, it's still what you're watching is...what am I trying to say. I don't really think it matters what it's shot on, and I don't really think it matters what it's cut on. It really just comes down to the material

and what you want to do with it, and what you can do with it. There's way more room for multiple versions and all of that definitely with digital format. And yeah, you can make multiple...so many more edits than you used to be able to, faster. And I guess it can be a bit of a trap, but I still think it is the same set of skills really. I'd like to think it would be anyway having not really cut on film.

Does the editor determine the style or the film?

I think the film dictates the style. If you're trying to impose a style on it, I don't think it will make for good storytelling really. It's function then form. As soon as it's form first it just won't be working. You might trick yourself in thinking for a while it is, and then you'll eventually go *what were we thinking, it doesn't work!* As soon as you get fresh eyes watching it with you, *Nah hang on, that's just dross. That's just wallpaper. What does this scene need to be, what are we trying to say here?* So style, I think some people might say an editor might have a certain style, but I think that's largely due to the fact that your work gets work. So if you've cut an amazing action film, chances are the next film or two after that will be perhaps along those lines. So you could say, oh that person has a flare for action, that's because that's the work they're doing. I think if they go into a period drama, chance are they are going to be working in the parameters of that style of film, and chances are the style will follow the format.

Is there a Jack Hutchings style?

Well I try and look at each project and go what is this story? If it's a story about 2 guys, a Russian film genre, sitting in a field waiting for something to happen, then I'll be fishing around the areas of that style of film perhaps. And again that material basically informs the style. You could try and bend it into something that it isn't, sure, but unless the idea warrants doing that, why do it? It becomes sort of wallpaper.

Does an editor leave their handprint on a film?

I don't think an editor leaves a handprint so much. I'd like to think they don't anyway. You know I've noticed in some of the research, certain editors say yeah, I can tell who cut this film or that film. I don't necessarily agree with that personally but then I don't perhaps follow so many editors and their work. Perhaps they do, but I don't necessarily think so. I don't think an editor leaves a handprint.

Storytelling verses style?

You can definitely give the same material to 3 or 5 or 10 different people and you will end up with a different scene, or a different film absolutely. And then that combination

of working with a director for the vision of what you are both trying to create definitely will shape how that ends up as well. I mean if you took the same editor and three different directors, and cut the same material three different ways with the vision that this person is helping guide you in part or collaborating with, you might find, depending on the strength of the editor, that they end up fairly the same. Or you might find they will be different.

I usually want to impart, I want to show what I want to show first. The thing that I've learnt is to be very, very open to being completely wrong, because I like to look through the material and present what I think it needs to be. And sometimes I'll feel really good about it. Often I'll say, here's the material I think we need to be fishing in other areas. This is just a first stab at it. Occasionally it's a nice feeling, when you're going down a nice direction, you've got the tone right, perhaps a few scenes right, and then right for the film. But you're still finding it right up to the end. I mean, it's amazing how much it can change from start to finish as well.

Ideas come from everywhere.

Yeah, ideas come from everywhere...I just did a project recently where if I was afraid of moving away from where we started, it would have been a massive pity. And where it ended up was so different from where it started that it was phenomenal. It was only a short film, we're talking 13 minutes, but how different it was from the script was incredible.

The first cut I sent the director in New Zealand was based on the script. And he got back to me and said, just throw the script away. Good to have seen it but let's just throw it away. And then I was sort of floundering for a few days and I had to finally go back to him and say, *OK that's fine but what's the film we want to make now if it's not that theme, it's a different theme and we have to work out what that is?* And we spent literally four to five months working out what that was, and then re-shot scenes.

Every short film I've cut we've re-shot. An ending or something to strengthen the theme, little inserts, usually to strengthen the themes. You know, not just pick-ups, coverage, but something that will make it better. Because it's re-writing. It gets written, dies on the page, comes alive again with actors, shooting it, sort of dies again with rushes and then you're creating it again. We joked at the end of that short film that, you know, they were arguing about writers credits and I sort of threw my hat in and said, *Well you now we've re-written it.* We have re-written all the dialogue, we have used

material that was meant for completely other scenes and you now, its fascinating how much it can change.

Working on short films

Well *Crackerbag* was the first one I cut and that was great collaboration with Glendyn Ivan. We were kind of having alot of fun, and it was a great script. The lead changed from a boy to the girl just before shooting because they couldn't find the right boy, and they just found this girl that was amazing.

A few things were missing from that when we were cutting it. We sort of got close to the end and we needed a time device. Something to say she's getting closer to her goal, so we picked up the calendar, marking off the calendar a few times in the film which we just shot on video inserts to see if that worked and then we picked up on film. Also the scene where she's crying after seeing the bag go up in flames, and turning back. It was all shot in the studio, Greg amazingly shot that in a studio, just blacks and red lights going up here and there.

And there was another feeling, I felt like we weren't close enough to her at one point in the film. I just really wanted to get in her head and how she was feeling. So we sort of wrote a little scene where she was playing with the firecrackers, lying back on the floor and we kind of got in her world, and that was a great little pick up scene as well.

You are always learning something with editing, so you might learn something on that film and then four or five or six years later you might go, Oh we need to get closer in this boys world or this characters world. And look through that material and *Oh, it's not there or there it is!* It's the same lessons that you've learnt, you come back to them, and I find that fascinating. Sometimes you forget them for a while and like (click!), *Oh of course!* It's easy in retrospect you know.

And then *Natures Way*, they sent me the script. They were unfortunately not having a good time. The editor was having some family issues, so they sent me the script and I just went, *That is amazing!* It's a Raymond Carver novel, it's really great, really dark. I loved it. On the page it was incredible. And they sent me the rushes and I sent them back a cut probably six weeks later. I was just cutting at home and I sent it on a Wednesday and I was expecting to hear on a Friday, whether they loved it or hated it, and then I got a call on Monday and I was like getting all worried. And they rang me up and said, *Oh no we saw it on Friday and we got really pissed and just went to the country and we were really happy and excited, and we've got a film!* And I as like, *Oh you could have told me on Friday night not dragging me out until Monday!*

Anyway, that was a pretty dark little film and very satisfying to be in the cinema and hearing people saying that was terrifying. You know, people sitting next to you, no idea who they were, just going *Oh I was terrified*. I remember I got a good kind of feeling from creating something out of...taking people in to a dark place. And I can't remember what lessons I learnt from that one??

Attributes of being a good editor?

I always say to people who come in and are chatting about editing, for me it's a kind of rule of three. A third storytelling skills, a third personable skills, soft skills and then there's a little bit of technical skills as well. And then some people are stronger in any one of those you know. Not so technical, but I like to think you need skills in all those areas. Too technical, maybe you loose focus on story, or too personable you might just bend and not be forthright in some of the things that you believe strongly in. Just fold easily. Too strong and people won't want to work with you I guess!! I think they are among some of the main attributes definitely, and a lot of patience as well, lashings of patience.

Attributes of being a good editor - Take 2.

I think the skills required to be a good editor are a good sense of storytelling skills, and then personable soft skills. To be able to put yourself in other people's shoes. It helps for storytelling as well as just working in a room with all kinds of different people. And then there's some technical knowledge that's required, and then just heaps and heaps of patience.

You've got to know when to lighten the mood and then you've got to know when to assert some authority and just kind of, *Hang on guys, this is what we need to be doing*. So yeah, it's a very flexible skill set of personable skills I think to run a room like that, definitely. All good editors have that ability. But then you do have to be able to take ideas from anywhere. It's that thing, if you're not open to the person coming in who might be bringing you a cup of tea and goes, *I don't get it, or, have you thought about this?* You have to be open to taking those ideas from anywhere.

You know it's that classic thing that people always say that you do need fresh eyes to sit in with you and watch things, to see things fresh. And you do. It's amazing how as soon as someone sits in with you on the couch, and you play and you start inching for the, you know, OK I just want to stop here, and you start making excuses for the material that you need to be making changes. You know straight away if you're off track.

Editing feature films

The Last Ride was the first narrative feature... I can't remember the order... *The Last Ride* for a narrative feature and then I was one of three editors on *Bastardy*, Amiel Court-Wilson's documentary which was an amazing experience. Just because it was seven years of footage. He brought it in on a Mac laptop with Final Cut and four hundred drives, just all daisy chained off each other. There were phenomenal amounts of footage, and beautiful material, and very heart-wrenching as well. And harrowing in some areas as well, some pretty harrowing stories.

That was a challenge because it was so bower-birdesque. It was sort of material all over the place and it was trying to find, build a story out of essentially interviews. It was a documentary obviously, and that was my kind of first take on that. Some things went really well, and other things were incredibly challenging. But you know, it ended up a great film, and we kind of hand-balled it. So someone started it, I took over, it got hand-balled to someone else for a little while to do some work, and it came back to me for the fine-cut again at the end. And we never met, none of the three editors met during that process. So amazing.

What is the difference for you cutting on long-form as opposed to short films and commercials?

It's the same lessons that you've learnt in the short form I felt, they also apply spanning 90 minutes. I kind of found that, I just had to... the process essentially... I talked to an editor in Sydney, Alexandre de Franceschi. He's actually a great friend I've just never had to say his last name.... And he just sort of reminded me of a few things and talked to me about his process. So I got a bit of help with process. Just how you get through material. When rushes come on for a scene, just cut the scene don't worry about the rest of the film. Just cut that scene, cut it a few ways if you want. You're looking for great performances obviously. It's essentially just cutting the script version of that film, or see something really interesting there. And then from that comes the assemble which runs super long. Don't be worried if it runs super long, just make it really baggy and put everything in there, and then from there get really depressed and then start re-cutting it essentially. A lot hits the floor and then you're combining scenes, making new scenes, you know characters get dropped completely. It's an amazing process.

But it's the same process for that as it is for a short film. It's just longer, obviously, but there's still the same lessons that I learnt. Whether they've been short films or longer films that journey's been... that's what's amazing because you have this bond with the

director that you spend a lot of time with, and that might be over skype or it might be in the room or a bit of both you know. I do alot remotely.

But essentially it's amazing how you kind of post-theorise what you're doing a little bit sometimes. You'll work it out and you'll have this epiphany and you're like, *Oh yeah of course!* And then again, it's easy in retrospect when you're sort of *Oh of course...blah!* You know, this sort of frustrating thing where they're just little wins along the way. And then you'll also have these things where you think you've got it right and then you've squeezed the balloon and you've kind if got it right here and then it's gone pear-shaped elsewhere.

There's constantly highs and lows and yeah, it can be a battle to find the film and what it is, but it's an awesome one. It's incredibly rewarding once you get there. Some of the hard points are when you think you're getting close and you have a test screening and people are sitting in and you're like, *this is not going well* (laugh!), and having to basically battle through that and make it right.

The Last Ride

I remember with *Last Ride* I kind of got frustrated with the first third and really wanted to hack into it. I wanted to get it moving and we did a test screening when we kind of felt that was the direction to take it in, the first test screening and pretty obviously it wasn't right. And the producer Nick was like, *Wwhat are you guys doing?* Just relax, just trust the script a bit more, you know. And we went, *OK, cool.* We still jettisoned a fair bit, but we went back to the script and trusted a little more and it was ultimately for the better.

I think again though the same thing applies. When you want that classic film script kind of style, theorizing, inciting an incident to happen at a certain point. With a long film, with a feature film, you don't want it to happen too late. And with a short film it's the same. You want to hook people in right? It felt like it was happening too late, but we just tried to bring it right in early on, but it was never going to be that. It's always a thinking mans or thinking persons kind of thing and it wasn't as easy as...how would I describe it? It wasn't as simple as have it smack bang right early on. But the process of working out where it needed to be was what needed to happen. It was just getting there. It's the getting there which is the fun part.

I certainly remember them from *Last Ride*. It was an interesting process. There's still things you'd like to change, yeah (laugh!). Also I know that Glendyn would like a scene in: *Oh, I've always wanted that scene with the camels you know, back in there just to*

have a break. [Jack]: Well you know there's a lot of boy wandering around the environment, I don't think we need any more of that. But there's always that struggle of you now, trying to keep the audience with you as well as putting in everything that you love.

And it's classic that thing when people say *Oh you know, you kill your babies.* Always some of the best shots or the best material doesn't end up in there. But I'm also of the belief that if it's been shot and committed to film, then it's helped the film whether it's ended up in there or not. For whatever reason, it might be the actor had to go through something or...I often think it's for the greater good, committing it...When a film is actually truly working, the material you've jettisoned has helped you get to that point. And so, it happens every time.

What are the creative challenges for you as an editor?

It's just the material and you alone you know. Kind of in a room initially, trying to make something out of just a random image, and a random sound. So, that's what you're doing effectively, that's where the creativity comes into it. And I kind of go by gut, intuition. I sort of go by gut and then I try and look for truth in a performance.

I mean challenges, there's so many challenges. That's a very tough question because there might be the challenge of, are the actors listening to each other? And if you can make them listen, then you'll make the performance better. Bad editing often can be as simple as the performance isn't great. And it might be that it needed to be looking further or actually playing it off the other person, or a third thing entirely. So, it's kind of hard to say good or bad editing, I don't know. Creative challenges, that's incredibly open-ended which is good, but that's how it is you know. You're kind of alone in a dark room you know...

What's unique about the editor's job is that it didn't exist before film.

The one thing that is fascinating about editing is that it's the only job that was entirely created because of the film industry. I mean there were cinematographers, there were photographers, actors who were on stage plays, there were directors who were directing actors in plays and so forth, and there were musicians creating music. But editors came along because there was a role that needed to be filled. So it's an unusual profession because there really isn't a need for it outside of film at all. And it wasn't there before film, whereas every one of those other roles were. Which is something to think about, whether it's all related...hmmm.

Creativity in editing

One of the things with picture and sound is that they can cancel each other out, if you are laying one on too thick with another. So it is like painting. So one of the lessons I learnt early on was essentially, that if you are going to do something strong with image, perhaps don't do something strong with sound and vice-versa. So you are creating tension between those two elements. And that can be used to good effect.

Examples in short films, there's plenty in *Crackerbag* and *Natures Way*. I mean suspense is the kind of...can be used to good effect in psychological thrillers or whatever. But I think it can work in all genres so to speak. Yeah, if you're laying it on too thick, sound and image, they can cancel each other out and it becomes too much, and you can take your attention away from what it is you're trying to say or do with a scene.

Is an editor a co-creator of a film?

Yeah I really feel strongly that cutting and editing films is totally an integral part of making the film the best that it can be, or whatever it can be. Yes, it's totally a co-creator. At various times you're a sound designer, at various times you are taking on writing roles and direction roles, and that's fine. That's what an editor does. It's very broad ranging, a psychologist, a counselor, whipping boy, you know! It's essentially, you're definitely co-creator of the film.

Sound design is something I'm really passionate about too. Like I really try to make sure that the sound design I've done through the cut for a short film or whatever, a commercial, will go to the mix. At least a jumping of point for, *this is what we consider to be working*. I like to express the idea that it can be built upon and made better, great. Often it can be, but sometimes you just need to go back and just sort of say *Hang on, what were we trying to do there?* I like to have a big hand in that because it actually isn't finished, the final cut. You do need to have influence in the grading of the pictures, to keep it in the world it needs to be, and then also the sound mix. So staying across all those things to me is really important. I like to become involved in those if I can be, and so far I have been lucky enough to always be involved in those things and really help make it be the best film it can be.

The editor/ director relationship?

As an editor you learn from a great director. So if you want to learn to be a good editor, work with good directors. It's amazing how much they can teach you, and it's weird.

Look it does then apply the other way. When you become experienced working with less experienced directors, maybe you might find slightly more knowledge going back. But you have to stay open to that if only because early on in my career, people were helpful to me.

And every job I've learnt something, without fail, and generally that might have been from a director or from the material, or coming up with a solution to a problem, that you do, both of you sort of mull out or perhaps you come to it on your own. But often it's two people mulling it out, bouncing ideas around, and standing up and working it out in the room and going, *OK what are we trying to do here?* Reminding ourselves there are crux points. You know the ones where you do need to flesh over it and theorize it, and then other times you're just trying things and going, *yep, that's it*. There's the theorizing, and there's the actual doing and seeing, trying things you know.

Watching rushes is always a good way to come back to, *hang on let's take a break and watch rushes*. And that lesson I learnt from a director. It just sounds basic but often you've just got to step back from to material and watch rushes. Even if it's just to take a break, you know. So the amount of things I've learnt from directors, it's endless. And every job again, you learn something.

It's an amazing relationship. You end up...you do end up becoming friends with these people. You spend a lot of time with them. And you go through some highs and lows, so it's this sort of bonding experience. Some of the people I work with, when they're at the top of their game it's very hard to show them an idea that they haven't thought of already, and that's what I love about it. Because you are trying to put something on the table that they haven't thought of, and when you get those little wins and you do manage to it's like, wow! That's a great feeling, and the challenge is to do that. That's what sort of drives you to keep going and keep doing good work. I think if you lose that passion, then perhaps you...I don't know, I hope I never do that. I hope I never lose that passion.

I'll always under-sell and say, 'here's something I've done and it might not work'. But you know there might be something in it that I really am proud of and I do want to try and bring to it. Always, you know almost always, when that sparks something that's a special thing. That's great, you've helped take it to another place or be the best it can be or better.

Glendyn said to me when I sent them that shitty reel of crap of home video footage and super 8 around England and I look back and it's embarrassing...but he said to me

afterwards, *I knew that if you could take terrible material and make something of it, if I gave you decent material you'd make something good.* So, you know that's why I got my first gig.

The impact of digital editing?

My whole take on the digital versus analogue editing is that it's not actually the fact that an Avid or digital editing came along and superseded film or an analogue way of cutting. It's that the whole world has progressed by its very own nature and we are now exposed to digital things everywhere, and content on iphones and all these...It's not that digital editing changed the way we view things, or the way editors cut things, therefore changing how we see things. It's just the very nature that there's now material everywhere and we can view it so many different...we don't just go to a cinema and sit in a dark room and leave. Now it's on your laptop, it's on your computer, it's walking through the mall on a huge screen, it's on your iphone, it's on your whatever phone, and it's progress that's changed, not analogue to digital editing.

Having said that, I'm sure editing did change for assistants and editors when they went from having to hang trims in bins in a dustless room. And taking a while to make up a different version, or put a super on something, or put a title or you know, create another way of cutting the scene. Because you're having to re-stitch back trims and then re-edit the scene. So generally you want to make sure your first cut is close to being what you feel will be the best cut, so you're not wasting your time and assistant editors time. Whereas now you can go, I'll just cut the scene 15 different ways and watch them all and go like that (points), if you wanted to. I mean I don't necessarily work like that but it has changed the way people edit, but whether it's changed the way the viewer then responds to or watches material I don't necessarily agree with.

The impact of digital editing in finding the story?

I do it anyway, I like to take the time because there's this weird thing where once you lock a cut, even if it's a soft lock, once you let the little cuts like basically get scabby and start healing, you can come back to it and go...Like I did this recently, I cracked open the cut and we had a look at it and we were, *no, hang on we were right. That's what it needs to be. We don't need to go back in and change things.* It's good to be able to do it, but it's good to let things heal, not watch them for a bit and just let the cuts sit, and then come back to it and see it fresh. Just to take a break you know.

And I guess that digital editing now does mean people want immediacy, and they want to see these 15 versions perhaps the next day. And you can get lost if you're not

careful in a quagmire of different versions and which is the best one? It can be harder to tell because there are more versions and more options.

Editing Last Ride

With *Last Ride*, I would definitely... rushes would come in and I'd cut the scene and then I'd just fish around and cut alternate versions of that scene. Really simple, because one of the things you find when you cut a scene is that if you get too... Let's just keep it really basic, but if you get too cutty, it might work for the scene but as soon as you butt up another 3 scenes it's all sort of *whao, whao, whao!* Just give me some space. So you might want to cut it a few different ways just to see how it can work. I mean there's challenges in a scene, crossing the line and all those things, you might want to avoid that. Try and make it seamless with eye direction and eye scan. Make it work as best as possible. Depending on how that scene sits next to another scene, you really can't tell. So it is worth trying different ways of assembling a scene and I'll do that too.

It can be helpful too when you're on a limited amount of time and you've got a director who, for instance, have something harrowing going on with the family. You know I've had a director with a copy of rushes, bins going here's my selects from an ailing fathers bedside. So as full on as it is in a terrible situation, the technology can allow you to move through the material and keep going. I don't know what would have happened previously, probably just tools down. Let's just wait. Maybe that's a better thing.

Digital futures and editing as part of the production process?

With *Last Ride*, editing during the shoot was helpful as Glendyn's out there, I'm assembling the film and I'm thinking, there's a lack of shots where the four-wheel drive pulls up in the vista, and we see it in the landscape, and helps the journey aspect of where they are traveling to and from. And so a bit of email about that. You know, they're in the middle of Australia and get the email and jump on the satellite phone: *So something like this?* Glendyn gets out with his digital camera, takes a few shots: *Yeah, yeah, that would be good. Maybe more like that? OK perfect.* Then jump out, shoot the shot. It's in the film. I mean it's definitely a help.

That immediacy is really important, especially on a feature film. I mean you've often got talent who won't be available later on. The lead actors who have got to get it, try and get those shots there. And while you're assembling, if you are missing something... Another thing with *Last Ride* where Hugo (Weaving) doesn't drive. He essentially doesn't drive, for whatever reason. And it's a road movie with him driving through the

whole film. On the page you go, *Hugo drives, Kev drives to the...* So I'm wondering why all the rushes are coming back with Hugo getting in the car and then cut! It's like, *at some point Glendyn you've got to get him driving the car. Oh like, he doesn't drive. Oh shit! Ok, well you've got to get around this because he's got to be in the car while its moving you know. I want to see him take off or pull up, you know.'* So feedback, they push him into frame, push him out of frame. It ended up being important you know. It definitely felt too cheated to me. And I'm sitting there in a dark room going, I don't know what's going on out there, which is that classic thing.

The editor as the objective eye.

The benefit is that you are seeing the material completely fresh, and yeah you're hopefully the objective eyes. And it can be really, really important. Yeah, I never want to be around set because for instance, the most expensive shot in *Last Ride*, we cut it. It didn't work. Had I have known it was the most expensive that required a crane to get sent in, maybe I would have been more influenced to put it in. In the end it was actually the producer that suggested, you know on of the little voices in your ear, like just sort of a suggestion of, *are you sure we've got the right ending?* (Jack), *Like actually do you know what? For this film it's not the right ending!* Just taking that little idea from anyone, and obviously the producers not anyone, an incredibly experienced producer too, Antonia Barnard, lovely...But just the thing, you don't want to know how long it took for someone to get something. It's often a little cutaway shot that Greg (Fraser) shot of some little flies buzzing on some water that he was sort of like, *that's nice*, that becomes really helpful too. That's what's fascinating about the whole process. These little snippets that can be made into something become really important, that we just act on a whim. That's what makes a good cinematographer too.

The filmmaker as auteur.

I mean Amiel (Courtin-Wilson) is an amazing example of that with *Bastardy*. All the films he's made, he's lived with them for seven or eight years. Every one of them. He is a modern day auteur. He lives it and he always has. I've known him for 10 or 15 years and he's always been like that. There's no pretence and it's fascinating. He goes out there and he becomes so close to that subject, the documentary kind of world, and now in the feature with the narrative films he's making as well. That he's sort of so borrowed from reality that it's hard to separate the two. A fascinating filmmaker.

I think there have always been filmmakers that have been like that. There certainly have, and there's always going to be filmmakers like that. Then there are filmmakers

who are more part of a system. There's a big long train of caravans of people who are helping to make that film. It's just depends what kind of film you want to make. It kind of comes down to what kind of filmmaker you are, what kind of story you want to tell and also money.

I mean it is art and commerce. It's the ultimate marriage, and sometimes it's a battle between the two. Sometimes I feel like even the things I've worked on could have been better if they weren't a hybrid of both. If it went truly towards, *let's try and forget about trying to make money and go to the art side*, or *let's go commercial*, and it's straddled between the two. And sometimes that's an interesting conundrum...

Has your role as an editor changed since you started?

Well the changes I've seen are the hi-def thing. Cutting on high definition which is great for longer form things. Now my role is not just about cutting obviously. I'm also running a small business and part of that is nurturing, or trying to nurture other younger editors.

So I've had one assistant who's now an amazing editor in his own right, going on to edit commercials and great short films. And you know he's flying. And then there's another guy who we've taken on recently who you know, he's got it, he's got a sparkle. He's got the personal skills, he's got the story-telling skills. He's just young and he's got to make more mistakes and learn from them. And that's been a big part of what I've been doing recently is just trying to nurture those people and put them in a situation where they can feel good about making mistakes and have those wins and feel great about that you know. So that's been really amazing.

It's a massive different set of skills, because at the start I just wanted to get in there and go, *no just do it like this!* And I've had to really restrain myself to sit back and explain the why you might do something. And I still find that difficult, because a lot of it is intuition and it comes from within, and explaining why you've done something or why you might be looking to do something is the real challenge. And you know, that's when you become truly good at your profession when you can teach someone the how's and whys. Yeah, I'd like to think that hopefully I can get there one day.

What do editors do?

Myself as an editor I'm trying to make the film the best it can be and trying to take the vision of the director and all the other people that are part of that film and my own vision for it and impart that on the material and bring the material to life, and make an audience feel something, and think something, and make it the best film it can be.

Personal Introduction

My name is Jack Hutchings and I'm a film editor.

[end of interview transcript Jack Hutchings]

INTERVIEW 6 – JILL BILCOCK

INTERVIEW RECORDED 15th NOVEMBER 2012

Background

How I became an editor. I went to art school. I was at Swinburne which was in the '60s, late '60s. So it was that time that Brian Robinson was teaching art. And he decided in the third year of the Diploma, or Degree as it's now called, to start a film course. So seven of us went into it and we were the first year of the film course. So we're all art-trained. And I had to pass life drawing and costume drawing to get my film course through.

Yes, the visual arts was definitely my background. And we really didn't get a camera until about the last week of the four-year course because it was a new course that was introduced. I think people after me - Ian Baker came in, Gillian Armstrong - early people, but that was the beginning of what is now the VCA course really.

So editing was not actually on my agenda. I was chosen by Fred Schepisi to go and work at The Film House. And that was due to him being an examiner. Philip Adams was an examiner and so was Alex Stead. So those three people together were kind of instrumental in what happened to us.

So Fred gave me a job. And I went to Film House, and I produced for about three months and hated it because I loathed having to take things back to Myers that were broken. I hated having to put on the wet t-shirt to fool the policeman that, *yes we're here because we want to be here and we don't actually have permission*. But Fred used to do terrible things as jokes to make us go and make sure that we could maintain the filming and keep it going, something that certainly wouldn't happen today (laughs!).

So producing wasn't much good, and I did things like produced a Hush Puppy commercial over the Christmas holidays. I forgot to take down the rigging and they got the bill three months later at great expense per day. I had to talk my way out of that one. So I decided anyway I'd move on. Fred said, *do whatever you like. Be a director, be a DP* [Director of Photography].

Coming out of film school we were all trained in all areas at that time. It wasn't like we were only able to study editing. We were just seven kids fooling around making five-minute films. That was the limit of what we were allowed. We had 100 foot of 16 mm film to use for our exam film and that was it.

So I made mine on human rights to do with the aboriginal question in Australia. And I went to Lake Tyres to the settlements. I went to all of the pubs with Jack Charles as my escort around town, to do all the still photographs and interviews. I was very politically minded at that point.

So anyway, I ended up with Schepisi and my second choice was, *Oh well I'll just move around the building* and moved into editing. But when they were cutting commercials then they only had a Moviola and it had no sound. So we only cut picture and then put the soundtrack on afterwards and then fiddled it, but there wasn't sync sound at that time.

So that was the beginning of how I started to do editing and I didn't stay. I never was an assistant. And I then left there after a year and worked with Brian Kavanagh on a one-hour show on *Procol Harum* and *Manfred Mann*. So I got into music straightaway. That was fantastic. I loved the music side of it and that was 16mm.

And then I decided that I had to see the world. I was just about to turn 20 I think by then, having finished my four-year course and worked for a year and been to China. I went to China with a 16 mm camera during my course. Between third and fourth year I bought a camera off Brian Robinson and went to Red China, when it wasn't open during the Cultural Revolution, and travelled from the south all the way up to Beijing by train. I was 18 at the time.

So I was there when there were only two other westerners in the country, which was a New Zealand poet and an American journalist. I shot that film, came out, and was approached by networks from all around the world - CBS, NBC, foreign networks - to take the film. I thought they would do terrible things with it, and having a very leftwing background, I hung onto it. They used to shadow me around the streets of Hong Kong and follow me everywhere. So in the end I went in to see Bernard Cobb from CBS and he let me do a commentary over my footage. And it obviously went to air eventually in America. They probably took my commentary off it, who knows?

By then film seemed to be part of my way of life. And then I came back and started to work more in editing.

Why editing?

I think that what actually sank in when I was editing was the fact that I loved film. I loved the look of it. I loved the feel of it. I loved the shapes, the compositions. And I felt lucky that I was always working with people who were very artistic or experimental. So

I was graphically led for quite a long time. And particularly as there wasn't any sound on the Moviola although I used at the time. That was the first introduction. No sound, just pictures. So I was making stories with just pictures. And then I went on to make, then I did music with synch sound. Loved imagery, always have. And found it really important the way different shapes in different set-ups would cut together and the direction of people leaving frame, coming into it etc.

So even today when I look at 3D I think, *oh how stupid*. There's nobody actually moving the right way. Or the picture doesn't cut to the next shot very well because they're not used to doing it in 3D. They just don't kind of see the rhythm of how things should be with 3D quite yet because of that strange depth of field thing. It really creates a different sense to the feel of the composition in the shot.

Graphically trained definitely. Sound came into it. I became obsessed with sound. Love sound too. Then the two came together and I just never seemed to leave the editing room. I didn't seem to go any further, and it turned out I was actually good at selecting down things. I'd always been even very good at school at just the common thing of précis with words as well. I could always easily bring down a paragraph to one line, yet I didn't realize that that would translate into images as well but it does. The art of selection, or being able to find what is bogus and throw it out, is I think one of my major talents.

The same with choosing people around me. I get terrible intuitive things about the kind of people I could work with. Same with my work. When it comes to material I am looking at I can instantly go, *Out, that's going to go out*. It's a fairly quick process.

Yes I'm very intuitive with what I do in all areas.

Do editors develop a style that is evident in their work and do you have a personal style?

With style I can't merely watch a movie and watch the editing. The only time I watch it is when it disturbs me or I feel it's lazy or bad, but generally I'm carried away by content. And as I get older I tend to choose content that I'd rather see, as opposed to when I was younger and saw everything and just loved it. Where I don't particularly want to see a lot of particular genres don't interest me, so I won't go and see them.

So style I think is not very easily noticed except obviously if you gave an editor, 25 editors 25 shots it would all turn out differently. So there would be something in there that would maybe distinguish the way someone would work. I think probably style can be...if somebody's got a rigid style that only cuts by the book or conventionally like an American

style, which used to be classically Hollywood and continuity based, that says okay, that's a style.

But I think all editors can change their style. I don't think nowadays they'd stick to rules the way they used to. So style is not distinguishable by saying, *I know that's Jill Bilcock's style*. Except for example when I do films like *Moulin Rouge* or *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Strictly Ballroom* there's obviously a personal style in there that originally was distinctly mine, because *Romeo and Juliet* was criticized by other editors severely for what they said was an MTV style or far too commercial for them, as they'd worked their whole life to develop the hidden art of editing. And suddenly somebody comes in and explodes with all this unconventional style, which at the time was as I said, severely criticized. And people felt uncomfortable, other editors did. Yet directors like Oliver Stone stood up and applauded it because it still was storytelling. It still always comes back to storytelling. And of course that style now, they'll say 'what it is' more that you'll cross the line or that they'll be quick cuts in the middle of something when you don't expect it.

So I think that possibly that is one time when you say, *Oh that's definitely cut by me*, but I do think it's actually the content and it's the collaboration of Baz Luhrmann and his excitable nature and his desire to have a climatic feeling in every scene almost, not just the whole movie. Like a picture will start and he'll say, *And then, and then they're going to and, and, and...!!*.

So his excitement builds me into a frenzy because I'm feeling hyperactive, and I like to see that happen and then know that I'm not going to stop at the end of that sequence, even if it goes to something much slower. It's still connected to the last part and it only drops for a second for an emotion and then it might build again. So that style is a collaboration of minds and we absolutely adored working with each other. I think Baz and I were the perfect team for that trilogy and probably that's why *Australia* looks so different because I'm not part of it. I'm not part of that pushing the excitement and he's not part of pushing me to go further.

So that style, as I said, is distinctly a bit Bilcock, but then I overlapped with *Road to Perdition* and suddenly was given a film where an extreme talent like Sam Mendes who has the intellectual ability to understand sizes of shots mentally in classical form like POV's or crossing the line. That never comes into it with him. He understands it all. He knows it intellectually.

And coming from the theatre he would put most of his actors from beginning of line to end of line on camera like you were watching it on the stage almost. So, there what I'm dealing with say in *Strictly Ballroom*, where we've got a non-actor and a great dancer in Paul Mercurio and then that great actor but not necessarily the best dancer in Tara Maurice, so what I'd do is whenever somebody's starting to not quite be credible, I let the other person listen to them. I'll throw to them and their line picks up by 20% in performance by the fact that somebody's reaction is helping push that performance.

So that was slightly different when I worked with Sam Mendes because he didn't really like that. But then again I was lucky because I've got some of the best actors in the world, so there wasn't a problem there. But the only thing that I found bogus in *Road to Perdition* was the fact that Tom Hanks had a squeaky voice. So I cut around that and also I pitched him down to help him.

Editor/ Director relationship

So they're all things that editors do, just to go along with what the director really wants. It was another collaboration and you've got somebody giving you material that is carefully thought out, extraordinarily shot on *Road to Perdition*, exquisite. So you just know you're not going to cut away in the sequence with the shooting of that character [Tom Hanks looking out the window scene]. And all those reflections in the glass, it's just exquisitely thought out.

As opposed to being given, you know, enough footage to fill the whole of Melbourne to cut *Moulin Rouge* from every angle. So that I've now got this thing that I love most of all which is the kaleidoscope of movement, color, imagery. It's a painting for me but also it has to go somewhere.

Do you find it creatively challenging moving from one directors style to another in terms of montage versus a more classical style?

Each director brings with them something that creates a whole new challenge. I just want to go backwards for a second.

The fact that I was criticized so much for my use of montage in *Romeo and Juliet* is really laughable because you know in 1925 Eisenstein invented it. It's not like it was new. He was the master of A plus B equals C. So it's funny, style, isn't it? It moves around. Does it come in and out of fashion? Maybe, but I think it doesn't matter, it really doesn't matter and I try to go with each director. I literally want to try and find out how they want to go with their movie.

First of all we've got to have a story that's going to work. Sometimes you find in the material a secret about that director that's not actually on the page, which is the way that they shoot it or that they have a good eye for detail or they don't. Or they favor one actor or they do something else.

So for example with Shekhar Kapur with *Elizabeth*, with that there was a script with all this intrigue of people rushing around. You know, the Roman Catholics tried to overthrow the Protestants and all this sort of thriller aspect to it. But the problem was what happened was this young actress, Cate Blanchett, who was not approved of by the producers of the film as a first choice, turned out to blossom, and it turned into a character piece.

So what happens there is that what was possibly a different story on the page turned out to have gold in a performance. So for me looking at it, when you see that you realize *okay, let's just obliterate half this intrigue nonsense which the director's not particularly putting the focus on anyway or bringing it off as well as he possibly could. So let's concentrate on Elizabeth and do it that way.* And I don't think anyone really knows what happened with all those people who used to rush around and go to Rome and do this and do that and go down corridors. They go, *Whoa look at that shot. Look at that shot. It's fabulous. Look at her.*

But actually his secret to the whole film was the fact that a monarch is somebody that's never alone and they are always looked at. So everything is shot through screens or through material or patterns. So it's a visual thing again. And that created a style that gave her or us an in to the fact that we could follow her with the continuity of his style, and he gave me all the freedom in the world as well. He didn't mind that if I wanted to jump cut things. That I still worked on the story of her character and the development of her from a young girl through to the virgin queen. And a lot of it is with montage, like the end sequences with montage. And there we have a beautiful requiem.

You know, because the other thing I say to a director when you're making a film is, *don't know you.* Bring me all the music that you like, that you listen to on your iPod or whatever. And let me put it on my machine so I can get to know what you think about music even if it's not the style of music we're using.

With the end of the movie I've got all this footage of her dressing up, just mute footage. So I said to Shekhar, *What do you really like?* He said, *I like this Requiem.* We grabbed it, put it on the machine and the assistant made a mistake and transferred it at the wrong speed. I cut it very quickly, like in an hour, the whole end of the movie and

everybody fell in love with it so much that no one would change the speed or the cut. So then we had to go and re-record an orchestra to do the requiem at the wrong speed. *[Laughs]*. So anyway, that's just a little thought, a little sidetrack into what can happen. It's fun though.

Do you leave your handprint on a film?

I don't leave a handprint I hope that's stylistic. What I do leave is an extraordinary attention to detail for beginnings of films and ends of films. And why they work is that I would never give up on the beginning and the end of the movie, and usually a major scene that happens possible 20 minutes in or somewhere that's crucial in the movie. I will give a hundred times more time to these areas because that's how you start a movie, how you get to stay to watch that movie, and also what keeps you in the center of the film. Like on a graph, where you're going. And at the end you have to leave a movie feeling you've seen something and that you can then you can talk about it. That's probably the biggest thing I bring to all movies, I think, is that they don't fizz usually in those areas.

That's so evident when we look at things like *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Red Dog*, or *Moulin Rouge* or any of those things...*Elizabeth* the same. It opens really violently and ends with that dressing which is *The Requiem*, which is montage totally.

The choreography of a film?

I am aware that like in the theatre, there's a time to tell a story, and you have to choreograph the whole thing. You have to get people stylistically happy, even if people say that it has no style. You have to know that it has no style and that's the kind of movie. Or know it's going to be hidden style or it's going to be obvious style, or it's going to be no dialogue or more music than usual, or it's unique stylistically. You have to feel as an audience comfortable where you actually settle into the movie. And then you've got to maintain it, but you have to choreograph it in a way that it doesn't stop. For me movies start at the beginning and they end as one shot. So the end has to bring something far more than the sum of the first two-thirds.

Storytelling...is it the focus of the edit?

The story is always really important, but when I first started out I never read the marked-out script. I still don't really read it. I tend to look at the material and strip out lines. I've become probably a little cavalier about that, thinking that I can get away with

it. And I tend to get away with it. If I feel that something's bogus I'll get rid of it straight away.

The story is important. You have to start off strongly. And you have to arrive somewhere. The way that the director supplies the material starts to give you a clue as to as to what's a best to serve story and whether or not the director has created character too early and not let them evolve. Whether you need to see less of a character, or if an actor's not working and not helping the story, take the lines off them and give them to somebody else in another scene and make sure it happens during the shoot.

Editing and intuition, and what makes a good editor?

I think intuition and editing is, first of all, it's just naturally what you select as what is credible or what is bogus. That is terribly important. If you can't pick a performance or feel it. If a performance is meant to be emotional and it's not getting through to you there's a problem. You've got to be able to see small details in faces occasionally and intuition and I just think life experience helps you with that emotionally.

Being observant or being quiet as a child and being more of an observer rather than an up front of the class type of person probably helps make a good editor.

I think that your intuition has to stretch to how you see the director and what the director wants as well. It's not just in the material. It's actually understanding who is leading this collaboration and what it is they're trying to say, and pushing them further and surprising them by giving them what your intuition and rhythm brings to a movie. And I think that's always exciting because you don't know it yourself when you start. It's something that comes out of being with somebody and learning. And even the things that they ask you to do sometimes are really strange and you don't feel that's the right way to go. Yet you do it and you find that it doesn't quite work, but you've learnt something about where they're trying to go and how they like to tell their story. And then you add to it, what you can bring to it and hopefully please and surprise I think is the best way of doing it.

How much of the editing process relies on a good Editor/ Director relationship?

I think if you don't have a good relationship with the director you loose your confidence and it whittles away at you. Editing is something that's so strange because you're looking at things over and over again, and if somebody is undermining you and you go

home and you try to sleep and all of the negativity of the scenes that you tried to cut spins around in your head over and over again, it drives you slightly crazy.

It's like digital editing leaves an imprint that can be very destructive I think if you're not having a good time with the director. And it's very hard to pull yourself out of it, as opposed to just going to work in the sandwich shop and forgetting to put butter on the bread one day and being told off about it. It actually gets into...if it's not going well it can really destroy your whole creative purpose I think.

So the relationship with the director is really important. I don't choose films on story. I've never chosen them on story, even though a lot of the stories I've wanted to do. But I have to feel that I can work with the director.

You know, I really have to feel that the director is sympathetic to my input, and likewise I have to feel that for them. That I know that I really want them to make the best film that they ever could and that it's a new challenge. So it's extremely important that relationship. I would never go down a just path because I wanted to make a film about the Gippsland Earthworm.

And the other thing that I find with directors is, if they come and just tell you to do something I can't do it because I don't understand why I'm doing it. I need them to say, *What I want out of this character is that they're more sympathetic.* I need a generalization. *I feel that the movie is not quite working in this area. I don't know what it is. I feel something's missing.* And then I like to problem solve.

I can't just be told take 33, shot 10 take 2 is the one to use without being told what it is they actually feel is different about it than the one I chose. I just need a little bit of a clue and I need that collaboration.

And the same way, sometimes at the end a director will say, *Is there anything you don't like in the movie?* And I go, *Yeah.* And they say, *Well why didn't you change it?* I say, *I thought you liked it.* And you realize that was dumb. Get on with it. Just say what you don't like.

Sometimes there is an area in a film that when you're showing the public and you feel like, *oh I think I might just duck outside in reel two. I don't want to see that really bad CGI again.* Or what are called CBB's 'could be better', because the money has run out and you feel like, why do I have to tolerate seeing this again? I can't bear it. And the director feels the same way, and you just don't want to be in that situation where there's a part of the movie that falls below par. So you've got to have a good

relationship. You've got to be able to fight and say okay, *let's spend the extra money and get that done, whatever.*

The art of editing: to quote Karen Pearlman, *Editing is the art aspect of cinema.*¹

I see editing as art definitely, when it's done well. And it's choices, good choices are made that visually create a tapestry of imagery and sound. I think it's extraordinary if you can get content with all those things working beautifully, with a rhythm that's comfortable for your audience. I think it's brilliant.

So you find that very satisfying?

I mean if I look at the tango (*Moulin Rouge*) I feel very pleased with myself except for a couple of the big close-ups I might have put in which I felt suddenly just wrecked the rhythm. But that as a piece of art I think is very close to being probably the best thing I've done because it tells such an emotional story and it connects.

I love to come from the heart. I think art has to affect the heart. I'm not very good with the brain. But I love to go through to an emotional experience. And I think that piece of editing is one of my best because it's so difficult to play all those stories at once and put them together and it's not hidden. It's definitely not hidden art. It's literally Eisenstein. It's montage and jumping around through all the different stories and collating together emotionally imagery and sizes of shots that connect you right here in the heart.

So that to me is more fine art as film, and I always feel very blessed to be able to have beautiful imagery and beautiful movement, and dance does that. And so does well-framed and well-lit imagery with extraordinary music. I think that to me is heaven.

The tango scene in Moulin Rouge (Take 2)

The tango in *Moulin Rouge* is definitely one of my most satisfying pieces of work and emotional storytelling.

Has digital technology had an impact on your work stylistically?

Digital editing has definitely changed my life. When I cut on film, for example *Strictly Ballroom* and *Muriel's Wedding*, with *Muriel's Wedding* I used to get so frightened sometimes that I wanted to keep shaving shots and cutting them, and then I'd have to

¹ AoTG: interview Karen Pearlman: Editing is Not Invisible but Magic 2011

stick them back together and I'd be worried about the splice line that people would see on the screen. And the filth, the fact that I walked all over it and dropped it. It actually intimidated my work, to be quite honest. The physical nature of film.

I always used to have the window with single frames that I'd take them off because I liked to change my mind constantly and trim and trim. Trimming is one of my most favorite delights in editing. It's bringing things down to make them work quicker. I can't get over how little you can use of a shot and still get some storytelling into it. But on film it was very inhibiting the fact that when you changed your mind, if you wanted to put it back or go and find that piece, it could be hard. And there are assistants running around and you'd have to have the rule that a shot is never lost. You'd have to find it. It would be in the trim bin somewhere and it was difficult I think from that aspect. As much as I loved holding the film, running it backwards and forwards. What I would do is play the same soundtrack piece of music, even if it was a dialogue scene sometimes all the way through on the Steenbeck just with the mute rushes, to look at it and see things. I still visually try to pick out stuff that I thought was interesting or would make a nice cut to the next scene.

With the Steenbeck, the speed of it was lovely, but with digital I just was in heaven. Once I got into that and I got over the fear that the machine wasn't stealing my shots or eating things or losing stuff, that it was myself that was making all the mistakes, and that I have to remedy, that I have to make mistakes with the digital material, it became liberating and it was so easy. So that I could try anything I liked. I can send my assistant off to say, *Cut that four different ways and come back to me with it.* And I look at it and then incorporate that into something else, and share the creative process with my team much more. And I think that's a huge benefit in this day and age.

It's not quicker. It's slower, but it's still fabulous and I love it.

Why is it slower?

It's not slower because people ask for different versions. It's slower because people shoot more and the transcoding takes longer. Rushes aren't a simple process the way you just went in the bath and it came out the next day and you saw it, and you sat with people to watch the rushes etc. It's much slower.

Technology is not fast. It's only fast up to a point. The cutting is much quicker, there's no doubt about that. It's certainly not the choices that worry me. I don't necessarily have to look at everything, but I can do what is called *one liner*, which the assistant

does, so that where the performances are weak I can see the one line in every set up. They cut them together one after the other, so that the choices I make are much quicker and I can compare it.

I would never be doing that on film, chopping everything to shreds like that. So it's definitely quicker editing. It is just technology hasn't caught up.

I mean I've been cutting digitally since *How to Make an American Quilt*, which is a very long time ago. It's just that the filming of it is only just catching up, and the supply of it to the editing room. Now finding the people to be technically qualified to deliver stuff on time is not as fast yet. It will be. It will be great one day.

Question: Do you have a preference if it's shot on film or digital?

I don't really think what it's shot on anymore because what ends up on here is what I cut, whether it came in off somebody's iPhone, whether it was 16 mill, it will integrate and I'm not worried about the fact that things vary in the way they look. That's just another challenge.

Question: Editing on Lightworks

The equipment I use being the Lightworks is a very visual medium like film. It has a controller like a Steenbeck. It doesn't have grey columns of written material about shots. It's all visuals, so this is what suits me. This is what suits Scorsese's editor Thelma Schoonmaker. This is the best system for music and for somebody who comes from an art background, definitely. And it has all of the necessary ability to tell a story as well. It's not just visual, it's a great machine for me to use.

Question: In your experience, do Australian screen editors have a different approach/sensibility to European or American editors?

I think editors around the world obviously they all come to make work that's either good or bad. It's not necessarily defined by one country who's better or worse. But I think Australian editors have a bolder approach, and they come from a broader place.

Like for example in England there are a lot of editors that come through the BBC, so they seem to have much more of an academic approach to the content of the material as opposed to say being so visual. And that makes them very intelligent, wonderful editors and great fun as well, usually with a great sense of humor.

Then you go to America where there are so many film schools and so many people who want to be in film that the competition is so extraordinary they have to get there through various ways. And they are not as impulsive as Australian editors. It seems to be a harder path, and I think they get a little thrashed by having to have good behavior. I don't think they can be as outspoken as we can be. There is more of a kind of an echelon the top editors and getting there, and not really speaking out of turn. I think they're a little bit more restricted through just extraordinary competition.

They also give editors a lot of you know like, *Whoa, the editor is a really important person*. But if you don't quite hit the mark you're out the door and you're replaced and the film doctor's in and they turn them over like that. They move them around as the main cause of what's wrong with the movie, and I think that's a very frightening situation to be in in America, that you're only as good as your last job. Somebody can take offence to how you're working, and they think the director didn't quite make it or something else could have been wrong. The editor is the first person to be replaced in the big picture. So they kind of have to watch their P's and Q's more.

English editors are safer, although that's happening there as well. People are brought in to look at their work (like a certain person did on *Tinker Tailor, Soldier* although that was a Swedish editor, so it was different on that). But Australian editors are more truthful because they haven't kind of caught up with the mainstream of how difficult it can be out there. So I think a director gets a much more intuitive, honest response so far. That's probably the main difference at this point in time, but they all do great work. Good editors rise to the top, whatever country you're in, I think.

Do editing styles come and go and is visible editing the style today?

I think today because of most visual content being narrowed down to a smaller screen whether it's your iPhone or iPad or any other system that you choose to take, and the accessibility of being able to edit yourself makes it a different looking medium. So you will get bigger shots, closer shots. You will get more visual editing with no rules because you just work with what you've got. If you're going to do a home movie you're just going to have to jump cut through the shot rather than wait for, you know, your little toddler to get into the wading pool you know... If you can do it yourself it will just naturally become part of content I think.

That is what is acceptable and that's what's out there. But I think there's still room for all styles and people like it. Some people can't take a camera moving all the time, it makes them feel sick. Some people can't watch 3D. Some people only like, you know,

video games. So they're all visual styles and the future, you know I think it makes it harder for the film editor personally. I think it gets harder and harder for them. Even though you'd think it should be easier it's not. I think it's harder for the good editor to come to the top.

The future of film editing?

People aren't experiencing a big screen as part of their way of life. That is not classed as entertainment anymore. Films aren't made like *Lawrence of Arabia* or even *The English Patient* when you've got these huge expanses because what's the point of looking at that on something small. So it's not entertainment the way it used to be. And that's changing the style of editing. The wide shot is at risk!

I think we're a little confused at the moment as to being the audience, the general public, as to what it is we want to go and see. I think those that supply the entertainment, like the fact that there is so many kind of senseless running around shooting movies or vampire movies, you know genre films that are visually kind of sensational, is been confused as to what people want.

Where you can't help but go and see something like *The Intouchables* and feel that was a fabulous film because it's a real story about a man with a disability. You have a guy coming from a strange background and a black and a white guy, so you've got all this content and it makes you feel great, and it's beautifully done and it's not even in your language but you're happy.

I think it's hard to get as many as those kinds of films in the public domain now because America looks confused. It's also depressed by the recession. So it's trying to make things that it feels are safe and sure and not giving us the scope that we used to get. England hasn't got the money to go out and make great big wide screen movies. We're getting it more from Asia. The beauty is coming from Asia. So we're looking to another cinema whether it's going to be Bollywood, China, Thailand, Korea. The interesting visual material is coming from somewhere else. And in their cultures they still love to go to the movies as an outing. It's the only time there's going to be air conditioning. The only time you take the whole family and have a great night out. We've lost the art of going to the cinema I feel.

Question: What do editors do?

Editors are responsible for the final draft of the film, the script. The first one is writing it, the second one is directing it and the third one is the collaboration of the director and the editor re-writing it again, after the fact that it may have rained in a shot that should have been sunny, or changing scenes around to create the story to work at its best. So it is the final draft.

Personal Introduction

My name is Jill Bilcock and I'm a film editor based in Melbourne, Australia.

I'm Jill Bilcock and I'm a film editor.

[end of transcript Jill Bilcock]

INTERVIEW 7 – JASON BALLANTINE A.S.E

INTERVIEW RECORDED WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST 2013

Background:

Well I did the usual thing of leaving high school and not really too clear as to what my vocation would be. Found a safe haven in doing a Visual Arts course, Bachelor of Arts in Adelaide University, which was 4 years of creative discovery. That was everything from finger painting through to color-photography which was my particular interest.

But they had a film video branch to the course and that was my really first inception. It was the late '80's so video recorders were available to households, but not necessarily as popular as they are today. I didn't have one, for example. But the school, they were available to borrow on weekends and things, so there were a small collective of friends and we shared a common interest in video making.

They had a competition, an annual competition, a Young Film Maker's Award which was a state body and I won consecutive years. And from those short films came work experience, and from the work experience came employment opportunity with a post house in Adelaide.

It was really there that I realized that editing wasn't just the formulation of joining a shot to the next shot. It was a means for storytelling and communicating. Watching those experienced editors cut what were commercials, yeah it really opened my eyes to the power of editing. The power of manipulating through imagery. That really took my interest and that's where, I guess, the germ was born and experiences continued from there.

Early career to present

Well, I was fortunate enough that one of the first Avid's landed in the country which was around '92. And this company bought one. And me being the king dubber, the most expendable, they said, *Hey you, do you want to learn this computer operate for local editors and directors?* And I took to it like a duck to water and loved it.

It was the best editorial training ground because they were editors like Denise Haratzis and Tanya Neimy - Adelaide-based, well-renowned editors who would come in and I would press the buttons for them. And they would teach me editing terms and requirements. And it gave me a great opportunity to learn the etiquette of cutting rooms, director and editor relationships, and things like that. Although in those early days there was no creative input, I was definitely in the heat of hearing those discussions, and it was really valuable.

That continued for a couple of years of operating for local editors. And there were a few television commercials that came through that I had an opportunity to cut myself. But the real

turning point came when Kennedy Miller who, at that point to me, I had no idea who they were, called to inquire about hiring the Avid for 52 weeks of the year for this film that they were making called *Babe*, the talking pig. And so I politely said to them, *well to be honest, you're probably better off buying your own than renting ours because you will have paid for it*. And back then, they were expensive machines, \$150K. So they said *thank you* and hung up. And little did I know what the hell it was, that opportunity that just passed before me on the telephone.

But they rang back a couple of weeks later and said, Well, we took your advice and we bought an Avid, and Marcus Darcy the editor would like somebody to teach him how to use it on the job. So he would trade skills. If you teach him how to press the buttons, not creatively of course, just the pure operational side of things. Then he'll teach you how to become a film first assistant editor. And, *how would you like to come to Sydney?*

I had family there and so it was somewhat of a no-brainer. And the nice thing that correlated prior to that experience was having an opportunity of long format, doing a mini-series where I was the assistant editor for Denise Haratzis. And I kind of realized that the commercial editing world was a lot of people that were justifying their involvement in the room, creative executives etc. And people weren't necessarily working for the same goal. Whereas on this film set, the miniseries, directed by George Ogilvy, I kind of realized that there's 400 people all working for the same creative intent of the betterment of a story. And I really kind of took to that and thought, I like that, it sounds good. And it worked well too.

So then when the feature film opportunity came along, then there was no question that it was the right thing to do. And so I packed my trailer and headed out in January, the long weekend of '94. And that was the start of my film career. And then, fortunately, that coincided with Fox studios opening in Sydney. And there was such a huge run of fantastic films. And for a long period I had the best run of assistant editing. It went from *Babe* to *Dark City* to *Babe 2* to *Moulin Rouge* to *Star Wars*, etc. It was a real flourishing time. It was great.

But that process of assisting did come to an end in the terms of - I like the fact that with assisting, it was black and white. It was in sync. It was out of sync. We knew the daily tasks, some editors were easier than others, but generally speaking, they're all nice people. And you go home and you forget about your job. However, as nice as that sounded, there was a brewing creativity that needed to be met, and that was initially met during those assisting days of offering to cut people's short films for free, and entering into Tropfest and things like that was a great platform.

But the greatest hurdle that I faced, which I think still exists today for assistant editors wanting to become editors is, how do you get that first break? And I get asked the question all the time because it really wasn't that long ago that I was facing the same problems. And the greatest hurdle I faced was myself, and that was to truly believe that I could do it.

Directors and producers are only wanting somebody that they can trust. And if you can't believe in yourself then they can't believe in you. And so once I had the confidence, which came through the minimal experience that short films offered, once I felt confident that I could look somebody in the eye and say, *I can do it for you*, then nobody's going to not believe you. So there is that leap of faith.

And so *Wolf Creek* was the first feature film that I had to cut and fortunately, it did really well. It blew open doors. There was no requirement to wear the assistant editor's hat again. And then one job just follows the other. And there were certainly periods of time in the earlier part of my career that it was more about gaining credits than choosing credits. There were a lot of times that there was one job on offer and so that's the one that I did.

But I was always really true to only cutting films. And it did mean that there were periods of unemployment. And I'm probably the worst freelancer there is because I get panic stricken about a day into my new job as to what will I do when this one ends? When am I going to eat? But things happen. They continue.

And so that's carried all the way through to today, where I do believe I'm riding the peak of my career. I hope it continues. But for me, co-editing *Mad Max* is a dream come true. And every experience from there, the smaller ones to the larger ones, have all led to this opportunity. It's been a long time. This is the 11th film. There was a period of assisting for 12 years and now editing for 8...and it's been some pretty hard work too.

Digital verses film

The earlier films that I assisted on were film handling where we, the assistants, would conform the word print to match the editor's Avid edit. So although I'm not totally naive to the film handling experience, there's one thing that I do know and that is that I'm so happy to have been born into the digital world, because I really do...it does amaze me as to how a film editor in sense of the traditional older sense of handling films, would have cut their films.

I guess a lot of pre-thought would have gone into the formulation of a scene. And maybe it started for them in the more traditional sense of wide shot, working down to close-ups or whatever. There must've been some pre-formulation as to scene structure that they must have operated within.

Because the way I come at the digital technologies today is probably less organized in a sense. I allow the discovery to happen. And I don't particularly care where I start because I know that after the journey, it will end right. And so, because of the speed of – I guess the thing that I find most encumbering with the thought of cutting a film on a flatbed would be that the speed of my

thoughts could not be – I couldn't realize the idea as quickly as they're coming to me. Whereas with the digital technologies, they can.

If I think, *oh that shot goes there, whoop try it. No, whoop, put it back. Undo, kind of thing.* Like 2 keyboard clicks and it's reverted back. Or, *I like this cut. I'll just duplicate and go off down this path.* And the thing is, I just feel uninhibited. I can choose any path of discovery and 10 or 15 minutes later, feel that that avenue is exhausted. Perhaps it was successful. Perhaps it wasn't. And then try something else.

And with the film handling days, I think I would have been thinking at the same speed, but not being fulfilled, because I would have been asking for a particular role... Matthew Lawrence's at the wrong end. And I see him there for the 5 minutes while it winds back to the head and I probably would have lost my chain of thought. I would have lost my enthusiasm. I would have lost that vibrancy of the *now*, of just things happening.

And that's what digital technology to me offers. And I 'm sure other people, other editors must think the same, so kudos to those who had no choice but to physically handle the film. But I do wonder whether they think now, in today's technologies, whether really they could have chosen different avenues perhaps. Time restraints will always impede you, no matter what the technology.

Are editors co-creators of the film?

The question as to whether an editor is a key creative - they certainly are. The problem for editors, and to some degree to directors as well, is that their contribution isn't necessarily tangible in the sense of a director of photography's images or a composer's score.

The other problem too, is that even as an editor, judging other editors' work, you really can never know what the background story is. What was the coverage? Were editors boxed into corners? Were the performances bad? Are you polishing turds? Or was it the worst performance experience ever, and the poor film is directly an attribute of the editor's abilities? You'll never know what could have been. Only the editor and the director and perhaps the producer for each project will truly know the nuts and bolts, the background, the time limitations to perform a cut, those kinds of things. There are so many misnomers that an outside audience would never know.

As far as talking, generalizing, a good read is absolutely not a good watch. So the editor is effectively the device. The director's torn between what read well and what will play well in the cinema. It's the editor's skill – I think, one of the most valuable assets that the editor has on the production, is they're truly the only crew member who can serve an objective view like an audience member.

Because the editor was never involved with the set. They don't care whether the actor came out of the trailer that day or not. And they don't care whether they used the \$40K helicopter aerial that the producer prescribed that day. And so the editor is driven by telling the story and for all the facets that culminate in the betterment of the story telling. Everyone else has some kind of tainted perspective. And the editor doesn't, shouldn't.

The editor, obviously, being a human being, will have personal preferences and things like that. And the greatest hurdle in cutting, particularly on long format projects, is to keep a fresh mind and to revisit the material that you've seen over and over and view it with a new perspective and a new story determinant. That's the greatest challenge is keeping that objectivity.

Does an editor leave their handprint on the film?

Does an editor leave their personal fingerprints on a film? Stylistically - I guess, being a human with preferences, you'll have choices that are your choice as such. And so I guess that becomes a determinant as to what you might choose over the next editor.

I do find it fascinating that you could have 10 editors cut 1 minute of footage, you'll truly get 10 different deliveries of an edit, all doing their job and telling the story... So there must be some degree of style in an editor's work because it's purely just based on their personal preferences, their best guess at what's doing the job.

I would hope and think that most editors wouldn't come to a job with a preconceived idea as to what rate a film will be cut, how many edits there'll be in spool 2, disassociated from its content. So I really believe that any good editor can cut anything. It's the experience that in the particular field that might help them in the pacing, not terms of on-screen pacing, but personal pacing, emotional pacing, and the pace of delivery. A cut for television drama is a way faster requirement than cutting a drama for cinema. So there's a learned skill in that.

I don't think that... I couldn't watch a series of films and guess what editor cut them. And I think that those editors would probably be happy to think that!

Story-telling verses style, and is storytelling the main focus of what you do as an editor?

Is story pertinent to editing? Absolutely, it's the core principle. Style is dictated, I believe, through people's expectations of the film. I wouldn't, I'm sure it's right to say and it's true to say, that an editor wouldn't come to a project with a preconceived style. However, you would be very aware, or should be, for the style that's relevant to the story you're telling. And that really just comes down to marketing - having a sense to what audience is, who your film is intended to be seen by.

And so...the norm of particular genres, some strike particular or common elements in their cutting rhythms. So I think you would be silly not to have that in the back of your mind. But some directors will purposefully tackle a prescribed genre willingly in a different manner, which pertains to cutting rates or something like that.

I think that you can't cut by a metronome but I'm always intrinsically aware that there's one ticking. And each scene, irrespective of genre, will have its own internal metronome. There will be slower pacings and faster pacings. It can even be as simple as looking at your timeline, and your first pass will derive a cut that feels right. And I think that's the first determinant, *does it feel right?*

Which can kind of be analytically equated to – you'll see the rhythms in your timeline. The cuts are generally so long each. I wouldn't go to the point of measuring to the frame, but you'll start to see that, subconsciously, I think you're clicking. That's why sometimes, if you've been through a rhythm of longer shots, it may be a purposeful beat that you suddenly have a long breathing shot after a series of quicker shots because there is a particular story heighten point to be made in that shot. Or if something feels out of rhythm, then it's usually just purely the mathematics of the length of the held shot. It could be that also.

And so they're all derivatives of style. And I think that they are one, but they're also very different. And story always has to command. And style, style is important. But if your audience is emotionally engaged in a story, then you could have your pictures upside down and no one would notice. And there's a lot of kneejerk reactions to people talking about MTV generations which now must be at least 2 decades out of whack anyway, but nonetheless, people are sensitive to style and immersed in story, and so you want your audience immersed.

Intellect verses intuition

An editor's intuition is critical to their ability to derive a story. I do believe that editors require some level of emotional intelligence. I don't think that you necessarily have to be smart mathematically, just so long as you got a beating heart and you're willing to be involved emotionally. And ironically, I mean, in the cutting room as much as on the screen.

The cutting room is a safe haven for the director. Most directors, even experienced directors will be nervous to the situation and you're their safe house. If an open conversation can't be derived in that moment, then you're the last line of defense. It's you and the cinema.

So there's an emotional engagement that's required in the task of editing, discussing story with your director. But then there needs to be an emotional sensitivity to make judgment upon performances. And you know there's emotion in camera moves, there's emotive compositions,

the score for example. The color, the grade affects. Everything has a purpose, and that purpose is to ignite emotion in the audience.

So that can't be learned, because it's personal. And possibly life experience can be drawn upon. And I would think that the more life experience you've had as a person, that will help bring a sensitivity to certain scripted situations. You just can't learn - you just can't read a book and cut. There's a mechanical nature to cutting. And reading a book will teach you how to implement that shot follows that shot, or how to dissolve it for whatever frames. But you could not possibly hope to edit from reading a manual.

What are the attributes of a good editor?

The skills of a good editor. There are personality types that might be attracted to the film industry for reasons other than an editor searches for. I think editors are generally quite reserved people, quite content in having a contribution that isn't necessarily acknowledged at most times in newspaper, journalism, or even their friend's awareness. I think that you have to be content in that because if you carry a larger ego than your role allows, I think you will quickly get unstuck.

There's a great internal satisfaction for filming and cutting that I don't think I would find in other roles. It's the close relationship that I enjoy the most. I think most editors are nurturing people - you need to be - and somewhat subservient, in a sense.

Editing is a service to the director. It's serving their purpose for getting their story on the screen. You're one of a few creative contributors to their vision. And I think that you need to be mindful to that that as much as you want to enjoy the experience, learn, and gain from the opportunity, you are serving a role.

So patience is a huge attribute. It takes a long time to find the best and somewhat of a thick skin too to not take things too personally, because at the end of the day, the choice is somebody's personal opinion. And what you feel is right may not be what the director feels is right. And again, it plays back to the grounds that it's their film and so you will relinquish and wish them all the best with their next editor.

The editor/director relationship

The relationship of the director and the editor is critical, I think, for the success of a film, as with any of the close working relationships that the director will have during the making of the film. It really just comes to one-on-one, you and them. And you're in a confined space for a very long period of time deliberating over nuances. And so, if either has a personality trait that itches the other person, it could be detrimental. It could be detrimental to the editor's employment or it could be detrimental to the outcome of the film.

So I think that you need, as an editor, you are employed to have an opinion. As to how far you hold that opinion is your own professional choice. I think that you have to be sincere. You have to be honest. I think some honest medicine may be a tough pill to swallow at that moment, but I think if the director is truly involved in wanting to make the best film, then they'll listen. But again, it's their choice as to whether they act upon it or not.

And so I think from an editor's standpoint, where you're asked to bring opinion, to bring your experiences, the wealth you hold and your skill, to remain authentic, as a character, as a person. It's a working place. So there's all those governing's that you hope hold - that there's respect. But in the clause of your role, you don't have the final say. And so there will be times that possibly, if it was your film, you would have done it differently. But hey, you're not the director. So that's how I approach editing.

That time with the director is really a beautiful time. It's a journey that neither you nor they know where it's headed. You can only have faith in your experience that it will end up in a good place. But that's a part of the fun too is stepping on board not really knowing.

For 100 years of making films, there could be a prescribed formula, but I've never seen it. That's the fun. The fun is the unknown. You can only do your best. Derive what you feel is the best cut from the available resources and wish it well.

Do you choose the directors you work with?

Do I choose the directors that I work with? It's only through a recent confidence in, I guess, feeling comfortable with what I contribute in my editing as well as reputation, I guess, to be blunt. But yes, I am now comfortable in having opportunities, choices. So it does become a choice. Nowadays it's, *is the project worth the effort?* Because for our work, a lot of effort goes in. There's the physical commitment, but there's a massive emotional commitment too. And that's a real consideration now.

I mean, personally, with a young family also, because every hour sitting here is an hour lost watching the youngsters grow up. Whereas it would be true to say, early in my career from assisting to cutting, it wasn't so much about choice because there was no choice. With 12 films made in Australia a year, if we're lucky, with a plethora of a huge swimming pool of vastly experienced editors over myself, it didn't mean there were too many opportunities coming by.

I had for my personal determinant in my career to only stay true to films because I've seen through the experiences of other editors, those who have to eat go off and cut reality television or whatever they get for the fulfillment of the in-between jobs if that's what they choose to call them, they'll get pigeon-holed. And so I do see that in the small Australian industry that you have to keep true. And I want to cut films. So I will only cut films and that does come at the detriment of employment. So in these latter parts, I've been really fortunate that the directors that I did work with were really nice people.

Directors you've worked with?

The first experience, Greg McLean, *Wolf Creek* and *Rogue*, were fantastic. We were - the beautiful thing about that particular experience, *Wolf Creek*, was that every single head of the department was, for the first time, in that role.

So everyone had...I had an experience as an assistant editor, cutting. Greg had directed short films. This was his first feature. The DP hadn't done a feature before. The composer hadn't done a feature before. But they had all worked in – they'd all honed their skill in some field close to that. But what it did was it culminated in a passion that we were similarly passionate to make the most of this experience and it worked.

In fact, out of the 11 films today, 8 of them had been 1st time directors. I think that correlation is because of my age. I am similarly attracted to a similar-aged person, and thus with them. And because we are both infants in our long careers, that it just formulates. I mean, the direct correlation there too is budget. A young first timer is not going to be given \$100 million which would accrue the attraction of the more experienced editor as well.

So it swings around about. Everyone finds their little niche in editing. Editors in a small industry are not necessarily vehement enemies. Everyone finds their place. So, looking back through the other directors - Mark Lee, wonderful experience. John Soto. Bill Bennett was a really fantastic experience because it was the first opportunity to work with an experienced director.

Do you choose the directors you work with? (Take 2)

Nowadays, I guess I have the fortune of choosing the director. Well, it's probably more polite to term it as I have an opportunity to choose the story they want to tell. The attached director usually has the upper hand in choosing the editor.

You definitely are aware as to the personalities of the people that you have to work with. Some directors might have a reputation and some may be new to the game and the dark horse. Early in my career I didn't have choices. So I took the film opportunities that presented themselves. Fortunately, they all worked out to be wonderful experiences. Not necessarily wonderful films, but truly wonderful experiences with beautiful directors. And some of those directors, our relationship must have been good enough that we worked again together.

It's only in the last credits that I've had an opportunity to work with very experienced directors through a formulation of a relationship based in assistant editing days. So I'm very grateful that Baz Luhrman, having assisted on *Moulin Rouge* and *Australia*, then gave me the opportunity of co-editing *The Great Gatsby*. And likewise with George Miller, having assisting on the 2 *Babe* films and *Happy Feet*, to then be given the editing opportunity, co-editing opportunity on *Fury Road*, *Mad Max 4*. I'm pretty happy about those opportunities, because they're rare. And they took career-long relationships to form.

Is editing the art aspect of film?

Yes, I do believe editing is a modern day art form. It's not in the traditional sense of painting. It's an intangible art in some sense, unless you're involved. And I do understand that people find it hard to understand, what's involved. There's one quote that I really love, and it's succinct for this question: *Editing is the skillful manipulation in the withholding of story information*. And I think that's pertinent to your task. As I said earlier, a great read is not a great watch. The editor is the instrument between those 2 devices. That manipulated withholding of information is critically the editor's skill.

At what point should either through scene rearrangement or scene deletion, oversaturation of information... There's that rule of thumb that *deliver information three times for it to sync in with an audience*. But that doesn't always fly, sometimes that can be too much.

So that's the art - is how to succinctly tell a story that emotionally is communicated to an audience through a pretty flat picture plane and surround sound, maybe if you like. That's the skill. That's the art.

Do editing styles come and go?

I certainly think that editing styles - pacing really is I guess what we're relating to - has changed over the years. I don't think that the advent of digital technologies meant that because you could cut faster, you did. I think it's, again, more of what audiences are requiring. In today's technologies, your smart phones etc, it's all about immediacy. I just think that people get bored quick. Again, cutting, pace, style, if you term it that, directly relates to the target audience. If you were cutting a film for prescribed 50+, it probably has an intrinsic tempo that's different from something that's targeted at teenagers. I think that's the editor being sensible, not the editor being dictated because they were born in 2010 and not post-war or whatever.

I think the 70's era produced a real determined style. Screen wipes, fades for example, I guess they're out of fashion today. It would be interesting to see if they come back. There's that adage, *if you can't solve it, dissolve it*. And there's certainly times I've wanted to put a bit fat dissolve on something, but it's not the - it's not the trend. So yeah, editing choices, somebody's personal contributions. And so therefore it's going to be influenced by external sources.

Has digital editing impacted on the editing process?

I think the editor's expected role has broadened with the inception of digital editing. I think initially it produced perceptions that because it's instantaneously accessible you'd derive a cut quicker. I think the machinations of performing an edit are certainly quicker, but you still require thinking time.

I've had plenty of experiences of punching the air, walking out of the cutting room of an evening, coming back in the morning going, *what the hell was that?* So it's that overnight thinking time. It needs space. Maybe in the future when we're moving cuts around like this, we'll have even less mechanical time. But we'll still need the laboured consideration.

And perhaps the film or handling days would have given a lot more opportunity to think things through. I personally, probably as a derivative of digital technology, would rather see it to believe it or not believe it rather than outthink myself, *well, that's too hard to perform and don't please, don't undo that edit because I don't want us to stick it back together again.* So I find it incredible liberating to just flick a duplicate. *Try it again? No, it doesn't work. Wipe it off.*

Because in my opinion, that journey...it's not necessarily the benefit of gaining a new story plot that's wonderful. It might even simply just be the cut between 2 shots. And, *Oh, that works. I will snip it out and work it back in,* and work in that fashion. So the flexibility is key. You choose to cut at the speed you want.

I guess the great thing about digital technology is that you're not now limited to the speed you want to cut. You could cut as fast as you can think. Or if you don't want that pressure, go for a walk, have a think, and come back.

How do you see the role of the editor in the future?

How do I see editing in the future? I don't think that the mechanics of editing will change. Perhaps we'll discover the 4th dimension. There'll be some new marketing device that we will need to attune our skills to.

The biggest, probably even so much as the scariest consideration I have for the future is, today, I see it as a dying breed to hold cinema in some encapsulated little beautiful bubble. I think that online content and those requirements are fast coming at us. And it is even true to say today in mid-2013 that quality television drama is now becoming more popular than cinema. And even so much to say, this US summer 2013, has seen an incredible backlash to the Tadpole films. And so I think the studios want to have to give huge consideration as to blowing shit up all of the time for maybe the benefit of a simpler narrative.

So there are changes afoot already. But the online content is obviously something that will be...there'll still be the need for storytelling. So I can rest on the laurels of knowing that my previous experiences will see me through the unknown future. But to hold the silver screen as the *be all and end all*, I think could be detrimental to the longevity.

I do believe that editing is accepted by the film industry community as a necessary role, but totally not understood. But that's kind of okay too. Where it's not okay is where it directly correlates to paid hours or expectations of workloads, those kinds of things. But from a creative point of view, that's fine.

I'm personally not out to change the world of people's perception and that I think goes back to the strong attributes of an editor. I don't think that an editor, by nature, is necessarily seeking the limelight in the community anyway. I mean, like most people in any field of work, they just want the pleasure, get personal fulfillment and feel appreciated. And I think that you can only really seek appreciation from those who knew what you did, which are the director and possibly the producer, if they were creatively involved.

And outside of that, if you are an editor seeking broader appreciation, then you probably shouldn't be an editor, to be honest. The industrial matters surrounding an editor is a problem. It's not going to be solved overnight. The best thing that we can do for those matters is bandy together and collectively have a voice. I think that's where the A.S.E comes to its strength.

Its other strength is creating a community to realise that hanging out in a dark room all day, that the next editor is in the same situation as you. Dealing with the same concerns of freelancing and all those other things. And to find comfort in knowing that you aren't alone. You might sit alone, but your skill is not alone.

The difference between working on low budget films and big budget films?

The difference between a small budget film and a big budget film? Principally, the editor's role doesn't change, which is to carry a fierce responsibility of finding the best story. But budget, obviously, dictates so many parameters that govern your job, the length of time that you have to do it. *Wolf Creek* for example, from memory, shot for 5 weeks and then we had an additional 5 weeks to lock the cut. Whereas – well I can't talk of *Fury Road* because we're still going, but *Gatsby* shot for 5 months and we had an additional....

The difference between working on low budget films and big budget films? (Take 2)

So yeah...big films and little films, big budget, little budget. The editor's role is always the same, is to derive the best story that can be told. But the budget obviously directly impedes many facets to what you have to manage. Ratios, obviously. A low budget film will shoot for 5, maybe 8 weeks. And a big budget film will shoot for about 6 months. And so, even multiple cameras, too of course. A low budget film will have one and the larger budget films might roll 4 consecutively. Or action sequences - *Mad Max* has 10 rolling on a sequence. And some of them are even, literally, disposable DSLR's that are to be destroyed because they may just produce a fantastic image of a wheel smashing into the lens.

So in going back on that responsibility of deriving the best cut, the only way you can do that is to know your footage. And it takes real time to sit and watch it. A film in the traditional film sense, will shoot 12:1 ratios, whereas now, *Mad Max* is around 400:1. And so it takes a long time to sit and watch 5, 600 hours of material, and so that's why the schedules are derived.

And the other thing to is the visual effects componentry, it takes a long time to turn those around. Gatsby had a post-production period of around 15 months, just for post. And it was massive. Creating 1920's New York in 2010 Sydney obviously required the odd background replacement. And so it's an evolving cut. You put forward your best cut based on green screen, get the images filled in the background in a loose form and then you go, *Whoa! I didn't realize that there was going to be a building there*, and so it influences as you cut. You turn it around and spin it off again.

Each end of the spectrum truly has positives and negatives. The positive for a low budget film is generally, I'm autonomous. The creative, you and your director, are generally left alone to derive your cut. Whereas, at the other end of the scale, studios have huge investments. They want it yesterday. And they want to put their paws all over the story. And so to some degree there's less creative resolve in the editor's job.

But then a big budget film, you can buy your way out of any problem. If you need more time, *Sure!* You may not be told that at the beginning, but at the end of the schedule when the studio starts getting comfortable with their marketing opportunities, then suddenly money just comes out of the woodwork. More crew are thrown on, it always works. Whereas a low budget film, there isn't a dollar. There's probably no overtime. You have a strict requirement. It must be done in that time, and your motive to get it done. But they're both fulfilling.

What do editors do?

The job of an editor. Well, according to my friends, I watch TV all day. And I love it. According to my onset friends, an editor merely cuts off the slate boards. An editor, in serious terms, well, story. It's all story driven. It's how can a story be best be its most succinct emotional delivery? That's it.

An editor, right, well, story. It governs every decision. What can best emotionally move an audience. Full Stop.

Personal introduction

I'm Jason Ballantine and I am a film editor.

I'm Jason Ballantine, and I was a film editor. No, I am a film – well, at the moment I am but next week I just don't know!

[end of transcript Jason Ballantine]