

The mediated work of imagination in film editing: proposals, suggestions, re-iterations, directions and other ways of producing possible sequences

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There are hosts of widely divergent sorts of behaviour in the conduct of which we should ordinarily and correctly be described as imaginative. The mendacious witness in the witness-box, the inventor thinking out a new machine, the constructor of a romance, the child playing bears, and Henry Irving are all exercising their imaginations; but so, too, are the judge listening to the lies of the witness, the colleague giving his opinion on the new invention, the novel reader, the nurse who refrains from admonishing the 'bears' for their subhuman noises, the dramatic critic and the theatre-goers. Nor do we say that they are all exercising their imaginations because we think that, embedded in a variety of often widely different operations, there is one common nuclear operation which all alike are performing, any more than we think that what makes two men both farmers is some nuclear operation which both do in exactly the same way. (Ryle 2009: 233)

1. Introduction

1.1. Exercising our imagination

Gilbert Ryle (2009) warned against the mistake of treating imagination as if it were formed out of a gallery of mental images seen inside the head. Ryle's attack on the 'ghost in the machine' was a necessarily destructive ground-clearing exercise for philosophical work on imagination. Our ambition in this chapter is more positive, building upon Ryle's re-description of imagination in worldly terms. We pursue the exercise of imagination in the editing of a feature-length documentary film. The editing of a documentary is concerned with the analysis of video and, in common with the other contributors to this collection, we are trying to teach ourselves more about the analysis of video from other groups whose routine business it is to analyse video. Where a number of those authors have been interested in optical and movement actions of cameras (e.g. switching between camera lenses, zooming and panning) we pursue here the play actions of video players (e.g. winding, rewinding, pausing etc.). These video practices are the skilled handling of images and audio that allow the editing team to see and also edit toward the film-yet-to-come.

While central to the creation of films, the editing process has been a cause for complaint by some directors, compared by the French director Renoir, to washing the dishes after the feast that was shooting the footage (Orpen, 2003). Slow, repetitious, fiddly labour in stuffy rooms, often lacking any windows. Yet close collaboration in the editing suite has been central to the success and originality of many prominent films (e.g. Walter Murch & Anthony Mingella's *The English Patient* (Ondaatje 2002)) During the weeks, months or years that a feature film is in the edit there is a repeated cycling through, and over, of the audio-visual sequences that comprise the emerging film. The editorial cycle is not simply the repetitive work of French-polishing a chair, it is a profoundly reasoned process of drawing the plans, cutting the wood and joining the parts. Then taking the chair apart and building it in a different style; then throwing the original legs away and turning a new set; then, after a miserable week of arguing, deciding that it has to be a table. In each editorial cycle there are

more or less complex progressions of planning, assembling, assessing, proposing, formulating and more. In circling through these interlinked and dependent practices the current assembly of the film is related to in terms of what more it might need. In making sense of a proposal, for how any part of the film could be, its recipient will be required to imagine what this newly proposed cut or sequence or scene might be like in order to be able to accept or reject it. For film editing to begin and to continue, then, there has to be existing filmic materials and a film-yet-to-come. The existing edit is there to be worked upon, to be seen for its relationship with that final filmic object where that object is, itself, constantly changing by dint of the edit's progressive establishment of what it is.

1.2. From the editorial moment to editorial cycles

Though central to the final appearance of a film, editing is an overlooked element of film production (Ondaatje, 2002; Vaughan, 1983). The invisibility of editing is all the more curious given it is the only aspect of film production that is distinctive to film when compared to other performance arts. Unsurprisingly there have also been relatively few studies of editing work by the social sciences (Thornton-Caldwell 2008). Recent work has begun to reveal what is involved in the live-editing of talk and sports shows on television (Broth, 2008, 2009; Perry, Engstrom, & Juhlin, 2010). The exercise of creative imagination in these time-limited settings is perhaps less obvious than it is in the struggles to produce original works in post-production. We can compare the length of time spent in the edit suite: hours for live broadcasts compared to weeks or months for the feature documentary. Indeed, live-editing in some ways departs from other forms of post-production because it lacks the repetitions of the editorial cycle that we will examine in more detail below. Even when selecting amongst action replays, live-editing is completed in an amazingly rapid editorial cycle (see Perry et al. this volume).

Howard Becker was one of the first sociologists to touch on the nature of editing in his study of the social worlds of artists. He explored the 'editorial moment' (Becker, 1982: 198) that involves artists making choices, amongst the tools and materials they have at hand, in order to add, remove, amend, revise and transform what they have created so far. Using mimeos of T S Eliot's poems and Becker's own contact sheets from his photography practice, Becker treated the editorial moment as an internal dialogue with absent others from the art world. One that can be recovered, to some extent, from the traces left on Eliot's mimeo and the annotations on Becker's contact sheets. He points out that artists' assessments and formulations (e.g. 'it swings' for jazz music) are frustratingly vague for the sociologist and yet felicitous for the artists involved. This is because, firstly, it is competence in the practice that provides for the reliable, appropriate and meaningful use of the assessments (which sociologists often lack). While their assessments remain open to disagreement from other practitioners, their application to this or that element of the artistic medium is almost always understood. Secondly, what Becker alludes to, and we will return to later, is that part or feature of the medium made relevant by the assessment being produced at that particular juncture resolves the ambiguity of the assessment that is being provided of it.

What Becker called the 'editorial moment' is extended into the 'editorial cycle' by Clayman and Reisner (1998) in their study of newspaper editorial meetings. Where Becker's description of the editorial moment remained one of the individual in the studio, the newspaper editorial meetings studied by Clayman & Reisner bear a close resemblance, in their routine structure, to the editing of feature films. No longer an internal silent debate between the artist and the absent others of his art world, the editorial meeting is a talkative, institutional and potentially lengthy series of practices for establishing what will go into the newspaper and in what order by page, and on the page. On the basis of observing a number of

such meetings in different newspaper offices, Claymen & Reisner break the cycle into four stages:

1. preliminaries,
2. story review,
3. story selection,
4. aftermath

Where the film-editing workflow departs from newspaper editing is around how long and how many times each sequence of the film is put through the cycle. For the newspaper once, but for a film potentially tens or hundreds of times. Film, of course, also departs from newspaper editing through the medium and the practices in which its meaning is realised. In the editing suite there is only infrequently a 'story' to be dealt with. As we shall see editors are usually reviewing and selecting amongst a wider array of features of the medium (e.g. scenes, sequences, quotes, clips, colour, transitions etc.) The media that come together in the film editing suite shape not only the final film itself but, even as they are being reshaped, the very making of that final film. It is a process that overlaps with the newspaper journalist's writing and editing of particular stories, the picture editing, the layout and so on. This is not to say that questions over images and layouts and so on do not arise at all in the newspaper editorial meeting, they are missing from Clayman and Reisner's study because, as they note with some dismay in their article, only having recorded the audio they miss, amongst other things, "the photos, graphics, written story lists and other materials commonly introduced in such meetings" (1998: 180).

1.3. Media for assessment and imagination

While photos, graphics and the other media required for editing were missing from Clayman they have been studied by a number of researchers studying architectural practice. Murphy (2004; 2005) examined a routine problem for architects and their clients posed by the materiality of the plan of a building: it is flat. It thus requires the exercise of imagination to visualise the project-relevant elements of the three dimensional building-that-is-to-come, such as corridors, doors and stairs. In an educational setting, Lymer's (2009, 2010) again focused on plans but in his case on how plans are assessed by tutors and lecturers during crits (i.e. presentation, review and criticism). Both Murphy and Lymer helps us to understand the centrality of the media to the work. Similarly, Monika Büscher's (2001) doctoral research on landscape architecture captures how multiple media including plans and samples of building materials are brought into the exercise of imagination in visualising the landscape-to-come. Büscher points out that the language and gestures around materials are vague and that it is the materials that provide details of texture, colour, dimensions within the gestalt of the speech situation. Quite how the building materials are to be assessed is accomplished through, not only what is said about them, but also how they are "picked up, turned, held or placed to be compared with others or with pictures in the product information catalogues" (2001: 123). From, Murphy, Lymer and Büscher's work we can then begin to draw out how imagination is required to find in the current media of plans and samples, the building-yet-to-come and the role of media as both media requiring imagination for their assessment but also providing resources central to the joint exercise of imagination. They show the work that needs to be done around the plans and the posters to make available what might be wrong with the plan for a building now and to see alternatives for what the building might become (Lymer 2010).

Having introduced three studies of architectural practice to help underline the centrality of media, it is worth reminding ourselves briefly of what differentiates the media of film from that of the architectural plan. The first is a flat paper plan over which meetings

pour, and the second is an animate and 'sounded' medium which is played during editing. In other simpler and more familiar words, video is audio-visual. Editing video involves assembling multiple media: camera shots, text, graphics, animations, CGI, foley, voice-over, music, and more. Those multi-media aspects of video are of less relevance to our purposes here than that video is, for lack of a better phrase, play-able. As a play-able medium, video provides for a variety of actions; it can be cued, played, replayed, paused, looped, interrupted, scrubbed, rewind, moved through frame-by-frame.

In and through its playing the characteristics of video are made available to its viewers: its duration, its sequencing and its lamination of multiple media. The centrality of montage to understanding editing that dominates the work of Deleuze (1992, 2005) and others, emerges from the study of finished (for practical editorial purposes) films. The focus on the cut in the theory of montage has eclipsed our understanding of the practice of editing as it happens. During the edit the montage is still in process, quite what will be cut to what is still being tried out. The piecing together of the film requiring the manipulation, configuration, assembly, dis-assembly and re-assembly of multiple playable media. How, in editing-as-it-happens, the film is produced given that the editing team do not sit back like the film theorist to play through the film and perhaps replay certain scenes. Three buttons are central to video-actions that produce the film during editing: <<, >, & >> (on a keyboard they are usually 'j, k & l') and around these editors have quite a few more keyboard shortcuts at hand. The three buttons allow video to be played forward, backward, speeded up or slowed and stopped. Video-actions produce the appearances of the section of emerging film that is being edited and their appearances are part of the imaginative work of the editorial team in their proposals, assessments and decisions about the film-yet-to-come. Perhaps because, even in the age of video recording and playback devices (from VHS to VLC), videos still tend to be viewed after one touch of the play button, close examination of video-actions beyond 'play' has been more apparent in studies of video-data sessions (Tutt & Hindmarsh, 2011; Tutt, Hindmarsh, Shaikat, & Fraser, 2007) which also required playing, pausing, replaying, rewinding etc.

In the edit, because the film is still in construction and still being formulated, clips, sequences and sounds need to be viewed and re-viewed in skilful ways by, and through, playing sequences that may not only be unfinished but also have parts missing. Continuing the work of assembling the film and identifying what it lacks are accomplished also in the talking and gesturing in, around and over the playing, replaying, winding and rewinding. For the field of conversation analysis there are intriguing parallels between how talk and video are both constructed sequentially and the fact that video editing utilises the sequential properties generated by cutting from one clip to another and from one scene to another. For the assembled filmic object that we will observe being edited later in this chapter, it has already been built up through earlier editing creating sequences: this goes after this, this is before this. When these two things (clip+clip) are paired, a relation of adjacency pairs is created for the viewer/hearer (Jayyusi, 1988). Moreover the assembling that is done in editing puts audio to picture, laminating one to the other (see McCloud 1993 for a similar relationship in comics between panel and speech-bubble). Later the clips and the audio will be watched and heard as a gestalt, however while in-the-making the gestalt is constantly disassembled and re-assembled into its parts to consider other possible assemblies.

1.4. Imagining the film-to-come through proposals and assessments

Early work on invitations, requests and proposals (Davidson 1984; Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1987, 1990), when it has been taken up in institutional settings, has tended to be in medical settings (Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Stivers, 2002). There are a number of differences in the institutional setting that is film editing, not least the project and objects involved. However

the pertinent distinction is the standardised relation pair of patient and health professional which are oriented toward and produced in medical encounters. The editor and director are on a much more equal footing as members of the film-making profession and each may well have done the other's job at points in their career. Maynard's recent study of real estate agents and misdemeanours court trials (Maynard, 2010) does provide us with comparable negotiation around proposals between peers. He delineates a set of responses (the snappily titled 'defer, demur, deter') arising in negotiation. His work provides us with a sense of how proposals can be met, not only with deferring, demurring and deterring but also with counter-proposals. The counter-proposal connects with Büscher's (2001) studies of imagination-in-action, though with the crucial difference that in Maynard's research negotiations are between opposed parties from different teams. For Büscher's landscape architects and, in this chapter, for the editor and directors as part of the same production team, with a shared project, they are not trying "to develop the most advantageous positions they can relative to each other" (Maynard, 2010: 140).

Of most direct relevance to this chapter in terms of media, Broth (2004, 2008) examines the proposal-acceptance sequence in live editing in television production. He shows how camera operators propose shots by swinging their camera, zooming and then bringing into stable focus a particular person during a live TV debate. These are inescapably visual proposals because the camera operators remain silent throughout the broadcast, using only the movements of the cameras to offer shots to the director. In terms of the previous section, these are particular camera-actions that are being used to propose shots and, in fact, the camera can be used to produce a wider array of actions such as acknowledging, confirming and agreeing (Broth, this volume). In the case of this chapter, video-actions are inter-twined with talk and bodily gesture because the editor and director have no need to remain silent nor hidden during the playback of edited sequences. The connection between assessments of the current edit and offering of proposal brings the interests of this chapter into connection with Mondada's (this volume) examination of the relationship between directives and assessment of the shots produced by camera operators.

While live editing and surgical camera-work bring us close to the organisation of film editing the crucial difference is that the sequencing of the cameras draws upon either the organisation of the live event as its fundamental resource (see also Mondada 2009) or the workplace tasks of surgery and instruction (see also Lindwall et al. this volume). The feature film has no such primary tasks, it can sequence itself as it pleases, drawing upon the grammars of story, scenes and montage and the conventions of genre or indeed the organisation of everyday or institutional conversations. As we noted earlier it is the very exercise of imagination in editing that results in the many months that film-makers spend in the editing suite. Where the editing of a TV debate takes roughly the time of that debate as an event, the editing of the documentary that we will present next took nine months. That is the time that it takes to map out a broad structure, to review and assess clips, sequences, scenes, transitions and revisit and transform that broad structure many times over. It is the time that it takes for the careful consideration of alternative clips, sequences, transitions, soundtracks, animations and more that might yet become the finished film. It is in these editorial cycles over nine months that we reconnect with Clayman and Reisner's newspaper editorial cycle (though even that cycle seems like the flight of a mayfly compared to the complexities of movie editing).

1.5. A brief apology over the difficulty of the data

For the editing practices that we will turn to in a moment, the media have grown ever more familiar to the editor and director. Relatedly, the cyclical nature of cutting means that there is a shared and evolving awareness of where we are now in the process of making the

documentary. For the ethnographer (Laurier) studying the production, this insider knowledge of the film as project and object presented a number of challenges in following the work. While a basic training in film editing helped Laurier in terms of understanding what was happening, following the making required an ethnography in itself that involved joining the edit for a couple of days at a time, from the outset of editing until its final fortnight. For the reader of this chapter coming to this nine month project from the outside it is both hard then to follow the action with an unfamiliar object and project but also to appreciate the film-makers' intimacy with the footage, structure, argument, tone and more, of the film-to-come.

A related difficulty in analysing and presenting this material is in following two courses of action: those being assembled in the documentary and the editing team's courses of action that the former provide a resource and object of, and for. For example, we have to understand the transition between scenes that the director and editor are reviewing and understand the reviewing of that transition as it unfolds. To help make following the action simpler we will work through a single five-minute revolution of the editorial cycle, from the review of a recently completed sequence to the agreement on what to do to this sequence next. This will then provide a more easily understandable description of editing practices while also offering a detailed description of how imagination is exercised in the editing suite. In terms of our focus upon the proposal sequences and the uses of media it shows features that are routine in all parts of the edit. However by the nature of the edit as a project unfolding over several months the relationship of the part to the whole changes: at the beginning the whole can change dramatically but by the end it is locked-in. The working relationship between director and editor evolves over nine months. Of perhaps greatest significance for our concern with imagination we are in the midst of the editing process so the film-that-is-yet-to-be is yet to be. By the final weeks (which we also studied) the film is almost finalised, though the editor and director still exercise their imagination in seeing what even the final film lacks and what else it might need added.

2. Video as the object and resource for reviewing and assessing

First, a general remark about the workplace organisation of the edit: the majority of proposals of how any sequence should be cut were made by the director and almost all of the actual cuts are made by the editor. Yet while such a broad description matches with the institutional account given during interviews with film producers for our research project¹ of who makes initial proposals and who then transforms them into edited media, it misses the actual organisation of how edited sections of the film are jointly reviewed, assessed and how new proposals emerge from the current sequence (that is in itself a form of proposal) for further revisions, additions, deletions and so on. Activities that both examine the existing sequences and their constituent clips closely in order to grasp what they are and also edge the film forward toward the film-yet-to-be. This is the work that calls upon and constitutes the intersubjective editorial imagination.

As we join them in their editing suite, the editor and director have been working for about six months editing the documentary. The documentary is on the dangers of celebrity culture to the individuals that become celebrities, to journalism, to charitable work and to other members of society. The director and editor have collected and assembled most of the material for the film, though there are still several more months of editing ahead. During the morning of this particular day they have already had a preliminary discussions about their

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day's work. After working for an hour or so separately, the director suggests they review a recently re-edited transition which takes the film into a section of the documentary where experts on the history of journalism discuss the rise of celebrity stories.

Once he has begun playing the sequence the editor waits for the director to provide an assessment or intervene in some way. This is an abiding organisation of their editorial roles, the editor assembles and the director assesses those assemblies. Abiding, yet it is more complex in its accountability, as we noted above, because the sequence as it stands is one made on the basis changes proposed by the director and editor during their last review of the two sequences and their transition. The editor and director only watch twenty four seconds of the footage before stopping to begin their assessment and review. This brief viewing takes us from the close of the previous section (which is of a member of the paparazzi sitting in a van) to the opening of the new section where an expert on journalism is showing the director newspapers in his shed. The transition continues with the same expert sitting at his desk in his study, standing by the study door and talking over a newspaper headline at which point the director interrupts with an 'eh' (see Transcript 1).



Transcript 1: Interrupting playback and re-playing. (Editor's speech bubbles from left and director's from right. Audio from video is in square bubbles. Where bubbles overlap the speech is overlapping)

In this first part of our examination we come upon the complexity of making sense of what editors and directors are referring to in 'playable' media: when the video is paused all that is visible is the frame where the playhead currently lies (and the audio is silenced). To try and understand the problem of reference, a comparison with paintings is useful. If this were a painting, when the one interrupts the other's viewing, then the one interrupting need only point with their finger to locate the part of the painting they are assessing (Heath & vom Lehn, 2004). In video and film it is as if, when the author and editor stop viewing together, the painting disappears leaving only the last tiny section that they pointed at visible. It is thus not surprising that the editor has to seek clarification "see what, what news" (panel 3, trans 1)

when the clip the director's commenting on has been several shots back and the 'eh' happened when a newspaper image was on screen (see panel 1 of trans 1).

Moreover, the editor's initial response to the director's "eh" was not to pause the video immediately but to look away from the playback and toward him to try and locate the reason for the interruption. The director continued to orient toward the monitor in response to the editor turning toward him, thereby re-orienting the editor toward the monitor. A common way for viewers of TV to assess broadcast media is to simply talk over the ongoing TV programme (Gehrhardt, 2008), though with the growth of pause and rewind functions on 'live' TV this may change. However, as we have already noted, the director cannot talk-over the footage because the newspapers are now off-screen and we have cut to a close-up of the expert in a room (panel 2, trans 1). By the editor's confusion over what newspapers are being referred to we can begin to see that assessments are made sense of in relation to what is currently playing or what has immediately preceded them as providing the object for their assessment. The assessment by the director is complicated by the fact that there are at least three candidate newspaper clips that have been in the last few clips so he has then to expand the formulation of the object ('newspapers') by adding ('newspapers in the shed').

Having identified the clip in question the editor then brings it up. They re-watch it but the editor also prefigures and instructs their viewing (Goodwin & Goodwin 1997) by providing a capability question with a tag question pursuing it: "you can see lots of boxes can't you" (panel 4, trans 1). The question does more than inquire into the capabilities of the director of course, it is a response to the director's negative assessment of the clip of the shed which fails to show newspapers. It accepts the absence of newspapers but brings in the relevance of the boxes as nevertheless making visible an abundance of newspapers. Having replayed the clip that he is asking the director to re-assess, the editor only gets a non-committal wave of the head. It is not the full disagreement of a shake of the head nor, though, is it an agreeing nod. In response to this half-hearted acceptance the editor continues with a second attempt to secure the acceptability of this clip as successfully setting the scene for the newspaper expert. This time he directs the director's attention to how the dialogue will establish what can be seen in the clip: "he says they're newspapers". The director then provides a second, if also mitigated, negative assessment "a bit muffled" of what can be heard. In fact, bringing up the muffled quality of the audio does double-duty because it is also accounting for the director not having heard what might have redeemed the clip (hence the "sorry") and "muffled" begins a shift toward technical problems with the sound.

From examining the reviewing work that is done around the clip we begin to gain a sense of the ongoing problem of reference to media that requires playing. One method is to analyse talk's timing in relation to which part of the video was currently playing. We also examined how the editor's work is to quickly find the section that is being referred to so that it can then be played again to be assessed. With the director's concerns established in his negative assessments we then followed through on how the editor sought to reshape the director's reception of the opening sequence through technical solutions and emphasising qualities of the media that the director might have missed. The media of picture and audio is providing a resource for the director's negative assessment, but is also configured by that assessment. Moreover, the editor's combined defence and video-actions (e.g. playing, rewinding and stopping) relies upon being able to re-inspect the sections being negatively assessed by replaying them.

3. Playing to defend the 'intro'

We have worked through the problem of assessing media that requires playing and the skill of the editor in bringing up the media while also beginning to defend both its visual appearance and its sound. In the next transcript we rejoin them just where we left off, the director having assessed the audio as ‘muffled’ and the editor continuing his defence:



Transcript 2 Pausing and proposing

In panel 11 the editor discounts the director’s earlier negative assessment of the audio (trans 1, panel 9) with an ‘oh’-prefaced solution and a professionally meaningful action (Phillabaum, 2005). “Lift” means being able to ‘lift’ the speech out of the surrounding background noise, thus making it less “muffled” and whether such a thing is possible turns on an editor’s knowledge of the technical problem that leads to the audio problem. The ‘oh’ also serves to “involve the second speaker’s epistemic priority in the matter being assessed,[where] these

turns also involve some qualification or disagreement” (Heritage, 2001: 204). The priority is secured by the “lift” which indexes the editor-director standardised-relational-pair (Watson 1997). The editor has epistemic priority (Heritage & Raymond 2005) in relation to production jobs such as sound and colour correction. By stating that the sound can be corrected the editor then also provides an agreement with the immediate problem of poor sound even as it forms part of the ongoing disagreement and defence of the boxes in the shed clip.

In replaying the clip (trans 2, panels 10-18) the editor resets and equates their access to the sequence of the clips. His replay thus equalises their authority to judge by sharing their access to the section of the medium which is under assessment. Looking in more detail at the video-actions we see that the editor shapes how the video is to be received by the director. He pauses the video just after starting it (panel 10) to defend the audio, so that their re-assessment of the video can then continue with the audio problem set aside. The editor then continues the video of the newspapers in the shed but again pauses leaving its tail-end still unplayed but thereby visible, and relevant, on-screen. He pauses to provide his positive assessment of the video-sequence so far which is greeted with a neutral ‘okay’ from the director. The editor then provides further grounding for his positive assessment of the clip by underlining through reporting, the expert’s remark “just a few” (panel 15) before then playing the tail-end of that clip which then cuts to the expert’s desk which is visibly heaped with newspapers (panel 17) and the expert also now says “I’ve got stacks of stories”. A cut from “few” to “stacks” which the editor emphasises by gesturing over the screen in time with the cut to the heaped newspapers. It is an impressive defence of the clip which he has produced through crafting together playing, pausing and quoting the the clip itself.

Having defended the relational pairing of clips between the shed shot and the desk shot the editor turns his attention away from the screen to the director. From the director he receives a nod (panel 18). With that minimal gesture (which might be a limited acceptance and/or a go-ahead) the editor then tracks backward to the clip of the paparazzo that precedes the shed clip. He does not play it however but instead talks over the image. Where before he only remarked that the audio can be corrected, here he calls upon the director to imagine the music associated with the paparazzo that will come to an end, preceding the newspaper shed clip (panels 19-20). In response to this he receives an agreeing “yeah yeah yeah” (panel 20). The editor then again his technique of quoting to underline the paparazzo’s words and, immediately after, artfully plays that same quote. Building then on the director already being engaged in imagining the film-to-come from the music to be added, the editor is extending the work of imagining by asking the director to hear how well that quote, made in the clear (e.g. without background music or noise), will then form a paired relationship with the clip of the newspaper expert approaching the shed. This work of helping the director notice what he might otherwise have missed: what value there is in the current edits, what might be added through analysing what is currently lacking and of considering what alternatives there could be is all part of the intersubjective editorial imagination at work.

4. Proposing changes with, and to, the audio-visual media

In the previous two sections we briefly mapped out the assessments to and defence of a newly edited ‘intro’ section of the documentary and how playing, pausing and continuing featured in that work. What the review establishes is what is there in this part of the documentary-yet-to-be that can then be drawn upon for providing the suggestions, instructions and proposals that the editor will then follow in the next cut of this sequence. It is in the suggestions,

instructions and proposals that the editorial imagination becomes more visible because it is in this stage that the director and editor supply new possibilities for what the film could become. In delivering what the current edit lacks, proposals have acceptance or rejection as their relevant response whereas assessment have agreement/disagreement as their relevant responses (Davidson, 1984). This does not rule out agreement or disagreement occurring on the way to accepting or rejecting proposals and, as we have seen already, the editor and director are not in a straightforward agreement about the current edit. When invitations are not immediately accepted, subsequent versions are then provided (Davidson 1984). In the editing suite the current edit itself forms the medium for proposing how the opening sequence should be. As in classic conversation analysis studies of subsequent versions, the proposer may add further ingredients, incentives, reasons for coming and so on.

After the review the other party proposes how the current edit could be re-edited, they then becomes the one that searches for acceptance from the other - equally that other is then expected to provide acceptance or rejection (though as Maynard showed there are other possibilities in deferring, demurring or deflecting). Direct proposals are seldom fashioned as directives (despite one of the agents in the edit being called a 'director') but are more likely and appropriately done as 'suggestions', 'requests', 'musings' (Wasson, 2000) or, as is common in creative settings, as formulations (Büscher, 2001). To return to Davidson's (1984) studies of proposals, when they are not immediately accepted, the initial proposal or suggestion is usually treated as, either the source of some as yet to be revealed trouble for its recipient, or insufficient to be accepted by the other. What offering second or third versions of proposals provides is a place for either belated acceptances or actual rejections. In editorial work (as with other creative studio practices) this elegant and economic method that Davidson documented for dealing with one proposal is built upon to generate further proposals that may undo, delete, revise, supplement or accept the current proposal (i.e. edit)

Reviewing the existing assembly of each section of the film is then not neatly divided from working out what the editor should do with that assembly next, because, firstly, suggestions and ideas can, and do, emerge in the midst of assessing and, secondly, because they are inferentially rich, suggestions can be treated as assessments and assessments as suggestions. In our case we can see how neatly a switch between the two occurs with a go-ahead nod from the director, the editor had added the final sequential qualities by talking through and playing through the opening sequence (trans 2, panels 12-16). This skilled interweaving of video play and talk then accounts for the editor's completion and upgrade of his first incomplete formulation (e.g. "I think it's quite a nice...") to "I think it'll be a really nice little intro" (trans 2, panel 16) which had the director nodding in agreement. What the editor also did was to switch tense from the present to the future. The future tense presages a shift from reviewing to proposing that the clip remain part of the documentary-yet-to-be. However the director has not yet provided either a strong agreement or indeed acceptance of what is now more clearly becoming a proposal to take forward.

In the previous section we left the editor in the midst of building his proposal by examining the closing clip of the previous scene with the paparazzo. We will return to his presentation of that section. In transcript 3, the editor now slips in some further proposals about this part of the documentary-to-come even though they were not initially reviewing the closing of the preceding scene. He makes relevant the structure by gesturing toward the timeline. The timeline standing for, by contrast with the monitor (displaying the image), the structure of the documentary. His division of the screens becomes still more apparent for us when he then follows this up by gesturing toward the monitor to provide a third recommendation for his proposal:



Transcript 3 Working across the screens and multiple proposals

At panel 24 where we swap to a view of the editor and director sitting at the two screens, there are already hints of a lack of acceptance by the director. He leans back and away from the editorial huddle around the monitor which then also indicates a shift in his stance on the edit (see Goodwin, 2007 on embodied shifts of stance). Meanwhile the editor furnishes his own tentative acceptance of the sequence as it stands (e.g. “I- I think that’ll work” - panel 24). The criteria are also somewhat cautious, the sequence will ‘work’ (versus won’t work) rather than whether it is good or not. He follows this up by turning away from the screen toward the director. This move marks a potential closure of the editor’s proposal and assessment which then waits on the director’s reaction. The director remains leaning backward and when the editor then begins to produce a further account for the edit (panel 25) he is interrupted by the director. The director targets the original clip that all of the editor’s

discussion has notionally been about with a conditional 'if-then' acceptance on the basis of the earliest suggested technical fix. The editor accepts the condition and then attempts to bring their attention back toward the uncompleted proposals he is now making about the transition out of the previous scene (trans 3, panels 27-30). In the ongoing environment of only mild local agreements the editor holds onto his position of the proposer by firstly, going for the controls and, secondly, replaying the a tiny part of the section that closes the paparazzo (panel 28), where the fade-to-black would actually be, once again drawing on their imagination to see that part of the clip and add the fade to black.

Playing the final section of that final clip leaves it then as relevant for a further alternative proposal which is to "leave him" and "have a shot" (panels 29 & 30). These brief bursts of playing of those section make relevant the ending of this sequence. The editor's finely timed gestures across the two screens animating this section and helping visualise his proposal. "Leave" gesturing towards the timeline and, thus, the overall structure of the film and then, on the very next word, gesturing toward the monitor to orient them both toward the visual. If we recall his earlier proposal we can see that the gestures here have the same pattern though this time there is no musical aspect to how the clip will end. The editor, then, is calling upon the director to see both the value in the current edit and use his imagination to see what it lacks and what might be added to deal with that lack.

The director does now finally respond with what then makes what seems to be request "could we go back to the quotes" (trans 3, panel 30) but might also be a counter-proposal. If we add a little more of the hearable emphasis: "Could we GO- could we go BACK to the- the quotes". What this request does seem to be doing is requesting that the editor locate and bring-up (see similar work between surgeon and camera operator in Mondada, 2003) a known-in-common part of their assembly. In hearing this phrase the editor does indeed search and then display "the quotes" and in doing so takes us out his work of defending the current sequence through his finely crafted playing and pausing of the video. We turn in the next section to then consider the director's counter proposals and how they are accomplished

5. Director's proposals, editor's collaboration and animating text

Throughout editing the film, various newspaper stories, photographs and headlines are relevant to the film but as a medium within the film they also consistently pose a problem. They are by the editor's criteria 'dull'. The motion of the film stalls when a paragraph of text appears because viewers are transformed into readers and enough time has to be given, with the text either static or scrolling for the it to be read (in films like Star Wars, they appear before the film proper begins). Newspaper pages when simply scanned into an image file are one of media within a multi-media film that do not need to be played. For the editor and the director they need do nothing to make the text available because it is all already there on screen. Yet if they do too much to the scanned image to make it into a motion-image or animation it becomes unreadable.



Transcript 4 Animating the text

Before the quotes appear on screen the director provides a first account of his proposal - “to give it extra emphasis” (trans 4, panel 31). Once the text is visible to them both he quotes the

paparazzo in the van saying “an onlooker said” (panel 32) and then he goes on to gesture and talk over the text that also has phrase the “an onlooker said”. The director helps visualise for them both how the text might be animated by describing the animation’s movements while providing a further sense of their character by motioning with his hands across the screen. He possibly anticipates the editor responding to his hand movements by pulling the zoom slider on the software system when he adds “not now” to the end “we could do something” (panel 33). This seems all the more likely given what happens next. In response to the orchestra-conductor-like raising of the hands by the director the editor does then try and manually create the cut the director is proposing by dragging the playhead from the newspaper clip to Kev’s quote allowing them both to see something of what that cut would look like (panel 36).

The director’s unfinished formulation “as though that’s our” (trans 4, panel 37) which deals again with the abiding problem of how to close the previous scene is left unfinished by the editor. Instead the editor rubs his chin (doing ‘thinking’, Streeck, 2009) while this time he plays through the short section of the newspaper text which we means they see it now with the audio playing over it (trans 4, panel 38). Playing it now changes how the newspaper text is be assessed because it is seen this time as a medium with duration. The director again talks over the text with an unfinished and vague assessment (which the editor does not provide an agreeing assessment for him). Meantime the editor is re-inspecting the newspaper text while it plays. Having considered the newspaper text for another time-through he provides a definite and potentially disagreeing negative assessment of the visual qualities of the newspaper text as a filmic object.

Visual qualities are one of the abiding concerns of both the editing process and, in the workplace distribution of film production responsibilities; these qualities are primarily the concern of the editor (Laurier, Brown, & Strelbel, 2011; Murch, 2001; Reisz & Millar, 1968). However the director’s proposal does not receive a straightforward rejection because the editor moves on to question how it might be improved (trans 5, panel 39). What this seems to miss is that the director had previously provided the solution in his manual enactment of animating the text. However the editor repairs the object of his assessment by dragging the playhead back to two cuts earlier in the sequence where there is another newspaper scan (panel 40). They then have another newspaper that requires their imagination to avoid the problem of dullness (in fact, there is a third newspaper text “Freddie Starr at my Hamster” close by in the next scene when the newspaper expert is speaking at his desk). In this case we see the director run up against the limits of his imagination at this point with his again vague “something eh visually” (panel 40).

In shifting from the editorial work of reviewing the existing edit to proposing changes we have seen how, echoing Büscher’s (2001) studies of architects, a flurry of proposals and assessments arise as the filmmakers compare amongst alternative possibilities for what the documentary could become in the next editorial cycle (and beyond). The current opening clip of the shed preceded by a fade-to-black, or by a long shot of the paparazzo’s van, or by an animation of newspaper text. These do not sit as three completely separate options in that various aspects of what might be done may be shared such as ending the music as one scene ends. However there is a different action that each achieves in its sequencing and overlaying of the media. The editor is suggesting they say goodbye to their current character while the director wishes to underline the idea of “an onlooker said” and made-up quotes in newspapers. Throughout examining the editorial work, we have continued to describe how the editor and director use the media, configure it and imagine how it could be in presenting their proposals. The editor throughout had direct access to the playhead, the play, pause and rewind and artfully used these in presenting his proposal.. For his part the director with only indirect access to the media via the editor, again voicing for the paparazzo and then using

gesture to animate a static image. This asymmetry around who has the play button is typical of the editing suite, yet we see how the proposing work is nevertheless accomplished with this asymmetrical access and the editor's ongoing work in making the relevant clips available for their assessment and imagination.

6. Using the push of the play-through to make relevant acceptance or rejection

To complete the editorial cycle we would like to move to the final stage where one or the other of the proposals is then accepted. Houtkoop-Streenstra (1987) breaks acceptance into two sequential elements, firstly confirmation of the proposal and, secondly, what will, or can, be done to accomplish the proposal. As we have argued earlier, the proposal-acceptance conditions in the editing suite are distinct from earlier proposal-acceptances studies of personal relationships (e.g. between friend-friend, mother-daughter etc.) but also of professional-client (e.g. advice-giving, medical treatments). We have a professional-professional pair in the relationship and, as we have seen, both of them make proposals and assessments in relation to the current edit. In the long project of editing a feature film together, the sequences will be revisited, removed, adapted and built-upon through further rounds of assessments and proposals. In the workplace relationship of director-editor, it is the editor that will then act upon the proposal that is accepted but is also the director that has the last word. What we will examine now is how the last word is produced.

From the extended series of proposals offered by the editor, and then the director, an environment for rejection and acceptance has emerged, and thus also a selection from amongst the current alternative proposals. What the editor does next appears not only to recognise this but make it a relevant response to his video-action. He plays the whole sequence through:



Transcript 5 - Play-through, proposal acceptance and detailing

By doing this play-action the editor re-establishes the sequential context of this section of the documentary and is then also soliciting their joint examination of the entire transition. The earlier proposals can now be imagined in relation to the longer sequence of the transition. In other words, the editor is using the un-interrupted play to make an acceptance of one of the proposals relevant. It is not only un-interrupted play of the transition there is also an absence on this playing of the video of either assessment or proposals from either party. As the sequence reaches the newspaper shed clip that initiated the negative assessment from the director and their analysis of the current edit, this then is also a relevant point for a potentially final selection from the director. At this point he does indeed interrupt the playback again ("no no no", trans 5, panel 42).

The director's interruption at just that point might then be taken as referring once again to the newspaper in the shed with a rejection of it (compared to saying 'yes' as it is on-screen) so the director is then required to clarify what his repaying 'no' refers to through summarising the alternate proposals he is deciding between. Interestingly the newspaper shed appears to have slipped out of focus for the next edit and instead the director is revisiting the transition through either the newspaper text or the shot of the van driver. He rejects his proposal and selects "saying goodbye to Kev" (panel 43). At the end of each part of the director's acceptances of the "fade-to-black" proposal the editor provides 'yeah' agreement tokens. In fact the director's acceptance of "saying goodbye to Kev" allows for two editing techniques to achieve the proposal: fade-to-black or a long-shot of the van and it is that latter

possibility that the editor raises as an alternative technique (trans 5, panel 44). Around how it's done the director continues to accept that alternative editorial solution, and in an upgraded, closing assessment "absolutely". While director has 'the last word', the editor is being left with discretion in how he will fulfil that decision. As we leave them then, we now have a richer picture of their collaboration and yet also an insight into how the director has the last word. A last word though that has been made relevant by the editor's video-action pressing for it.

7. Play-actions and the film-yet-to-come

While we have only followed one editorial cycle, it is a typical one. A cycle which shifts from viewing to assessing, to proposing, to accumulating multiple proposals, to decision-making and then, finally, to detailing how the proposal can be achieved. A central part of our examination has been the series of media-actions born out of video. It is not these are pre-existing actions that then find themselves materialised in a new (or old medium), these actions arise out of this medium and make this medium available. As we noted at the outset of the article, these video-actions are then similar to the camera-actions documented by Broth (this volume) and Mondada (this volume a or b). Where the camera can be used to produce zooms, pans, nods and shakes, video can be used to produce plays, pauses, re-starts, rewinds, forward-winds and stops. At the heart of the manipulation and configuration of video is playing it. In the edit, playing video has the referential utility, and indexical richness to it, of pointing with a finger in picking out photographs. We saw the referential power of playing video throughout the previous sections. For example, when the editor played through a section in response to the director's assessment, skilfully pausing and re-starting while both editor and director talked over it and, in the final section, in using an un-commented-upon and un-interrupted play to push for a decision from the director.

The courses of action in amongst which we found the media-actions were assessments and proposals, courses of action familiar to ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Davidson 1984). They are not quite the competing proposals that we find in newspaper editorials (Clayman & Reisner, 1998) nor real estate deals (Maynard, 2010). The editor and director are not offering competing proposals in a strong sense, they are imagining the film-to-come from the details of the media made available and relevant through their playing, interrupting, pausing, freeze-framing and more. Being skilled and creative professionals the director and editor look for what is missing from the current edit and provide an array of alternatives (Raffel 2004). We have come a long way from imagination as a mental process that is only indirectly accessible and as the same process nested in each individual creative brain. We have instead examined the editing suite a place for its intersubjective exercise. In exercising their imagination, the director and editor might be taking one thing away in an early edit and then later bringing it back (Laurier & Brown, 2011). They are ongoingly assessing, proposing and re-assessing the visuals, audio, dialogue, sequences and other elements of the existing film in working toward the film-to-come. Through all of this we come upon the centrality of the media, and Gustav Lymer provides a valuable phrasing for this: filmmakers in their editing suite have "an attunement to certain material arrangements" (Lymer, 2010: 121-22).

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