

**FILM
EDITING**

**AND
CHANCE**



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MY EXPERIENCE

- EDITOR OF 4 FEATURE FILMS
 - Free Range (dir. Veiko Õunpuu, 2013, premiere: Berlinale Forum)
 - In The Crosswind (dir. Martti Helde, 2014, premiere: Toronto IFF)
 - Roukli (dir. Veiko Õunpuu, 2015, premiere: Tokyo IFF)
 - Portugal (dir. Lauri Lagle, 2018, Locarno First Look Award)
- DEBUT FEATURE DOCUMENTARY “Sundial”
 - World Premiere Visions du Réel 2023
 - North-American premiere HotDocs 2023
- EDITING LECTURER AT BFM
 - Kinoeyes Movie Masters “Feature Film Editing” from 2nd to 8th intake
 - AV Media BA “Art of Editing” 4 years

THE PROCESS OF EDITING IS COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN

Roland Barthes Punctum

In “Camera Lucida”
Roland Barthes separates
two layers of a
photograph:
studium and punctum.

STUDIUM

The *studium* indicates historical, social or cultural meanings extracted via semiotic analysis.

PUNCTUM

The *punctum* points to those features of a photograph that seem to produce or convey a meaning without invoking any recognizable symbolic system.

The photographer can not put it in the photo, he/she can only witness it.

To give examples of *punctum* is, in a certain fashion, to expose my deeper self.





WHAT COULD BE PUNCTUM IN FILM?

What does the editor not have control over, what is the element in film editing he/she can only witness? What goes beyond construction?

Could the search for Punctum be a method of filmmaking?

My main interest - what is the relation of chance and story? How does chance-seeking affect storytelling and dramaturgical structures?

CHANCE-SEEKING

- Being purposive without being predictive.
- Emanuele Bardone: “The main goal of a theory of chance-seeking is chiefly related to understanding how we come to utilize luck to our advantage. By “luck” I don’t mean something necessarily chaotic or random. I simply mean something *we can’t anticipate*.”

When does chance-seeking take place in film editing process?

- THE PROCESS OF VIEWING THE MATERIAL - identifying what is important, what makes an impact. What belongs to the film and what not. Similar to scientific research or any learning process.
- PROCESS OF EDITING ITSELF - two shots, scenes, even sequences happen to end up next to each other and carry a new feeling and a meaning. Similar to painting.

CODE-SWITCHING

- Film Editors acquire the identity of a narrative constructor from school, editing is taught widely through this perspective
- My personal experience of code-switching - “Roukli”
- What happens if an editor practices code-switching from narrative constructor to a chance-seeker?

My method

ARTISTIC RESEARCH

THREE RESEARCH QUESTIONS,
RESEARCHED IN PARALLEL

FILM HISTORY

Godard on film editing:
“Its chance transformed into destiny”

Question: How does chance-seeking affect the narrative storytelling in film editing?

Framework: tradition of working with chance in modern cinema, art, photography

Method: literature review (including interviews, diaries, notes of filmmakers, access to materials is crucial)

Concept: canon of “chaotic editing”

PRACTICE OF FILM EDITING

Outcome: Documentary

Question: How did you switch to chance-seeking and how did it affect the narrative storytelling?

Framework: creativity, narrative strategies

Method: documentary film (a semi-structured interview based, with examples from their work)

Concept: dialogue between professionals

PEDAGOGY OF FILM EDITING

Outcome: suggestions for
methods

Question: What happens if the students switch their identity from narrative constructor to a chance-seeker?

Framework: pedagogy of film editing, creativity, heuristics

Method: mini-ethnography, auto-ethnography, grounded theory, experiments in editing classes

Concept: peripheral thinking, code-switching

Data from the classroom

First experiment: recorded 51 feedbacks for editing exercises. Feedback only with adjectives or understandable editing tasks.

How to measure the results of editing?

Qualitative analysis of the findings:

- When a scene has little impact, the feedback is one-two words like *calm, dense, depressing*
 - When the scene has a high impact, the feedback becomes poetic: "*I feel like grandfather's soul belongs to his garden*", "*this boy is going to be traumatized*"
 - When the scene touches something unknown, the feedback overcomes dualism "*I feel as if they are lost and in the right place at the same time*", "*they are looking for something but at the same time as if they are not looking at all*"
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Student feedback

1. "I now feel free when editing"
2. "I can now deal with what is allowed, not with what is not allowed."
3. "I feel that focusing on chance gives the film credibility."
4. "I have an ever evolving punctum detector in my brain"



So what?

This research helps to shed light on film editors tacit knowledge as well as the thinking process.

Thank You for
listening.

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