Turning Points

Editing, Engagement and Edification
“the fact that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of the juxtaposition.”

Sergi Eisenstein
DIFFERENCE

From Norman Hollyn's book 'The Lean Forward Moment' 2009
All drama is about change.

Every scene should have a reason for being.

And so every scene should embody change.

Profound, Subtle, Complex or Simple.

A scene can change a little or a lot but it should change!
There are two key spheres of change.

- Change of Perception:
The environment, fortunes and events of the world around the characters changes whilst the characters remain essentially the same. Yet through that change of circumstances the perception of the viewer changes toward the character.
  
  eg. Dracula, Citizen Kane, Borat.

- Change of Character:
Through changes in circumstance and fortune the characters themselves are changed. They are re-formed anew (for better or worse) and are no longer who they once were.
  
  eg. The Godfather, Ghandi, 1984
LEAD AND FOLLOW

The Editor’s job is to construct and orchestrate change at a shot-by-shot and scene-by-scene level.

Three Questions for Editors:

What comes Before..?

What comes After..?

How does Before shape the Now and influence the After..?

In every scene the editor must identify what it is that changes?
TURNING POINT

Three-Phase process for Editors:

Establish a *Status Quo*?

Identify the *Turning Point*?

Present a new *State of Play*?
VISUAL PERSPECTIVE

Who Sees What?

Does the viewer see *more* than the characters see?

Does the viewer see *only* what the characters see?
KNOWLEDGE PERSPECTIVE

Who Knows What?

What does the *audience* know?

What do the *characters* know?

Does the viewer know *more* than the characters?

Does the viewer know *only* what the characters know?

*Who* is the scene about?
HOLLYN’S TECHNIQUE BREAKDOWN

ANALYSIS
1. Discover high points (action/character)
2. Discover arcs and turning points (action/character)
3. Discover intent (text/subtext)

EDITING
1. What angles do you want to be on at the high points and turning points?
2. Which takes of these angles do you want at these moments?
3. Which performances must be used and where?
4. Decide upon straight cuts vs. L-cuts

SCREENING
1. How well does the scene fulfill intentions?
2. Where are its successful moments? Its unsuccessful moments?
3. Is the flow clear? If not, where/why?
4. Which problems are solvable? Which need to have the intentions/analysis readjusted?
5. Which lines of dialog or beats of action are not necessary or harmful to the intent of the scene?
6. How does the scene fit within its surrounding scenes? Can it be moved?

Adapted from Norman Hollyn’s Editing Course Handouts - USC
http://www.norman-hollyn.com/535/handouts/Syllabus-08Fall.pdf
Creating 'lean forward moments' (podcast)

12 tips for better film editing
http://digitalfilms.wordpress.com/2008/12/16/12-tips-for-better-film-editing/

Editing the Soprano’s. Interview with Conrad Gonzales by Tom Soper
http://ifsstech.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/conrad_gonzalez.pdf

Murch and Dymytrk : editing principles
http://ifsstech.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/murch_and_dmytryk_editing_principles1.pdf

The magic of movie editing (video)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=508MHvMGWEg

Interview with the Director of Children of Men
http://www.moviemaker.com/editing/article/alex_rodriguez/

The lost art of film editing

Best film editing sequences of all time
http://www.filmsite.org/bestfilmediting.html