

Choices in the Editing Room:

How the Intentional Editing of Dialogue Scenes through Shot Choice can Enhance Story and
Character Development within Motion Pictures

Presented to the Faculty of Liberty University
School of Communication & Creative Arts

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts in Strategic Communication

By Jonathan Pfenninger

December 2014

Thesis Committee

Carey Martin, Ph.D., Chair

Date

Stewart Schwartz, Ph.D.

Date

Van Flesher, MFA

Date

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Dedication:

To Momma and Daddy:

The drive, passion, and love that you have instilled in me has allowed me to reach
farther than I thought I would ever be able to.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents, Arlen and Kelly Pfenninger, for their love and support throughout this journey. As you have watched me grow up there have been times when I have questioned whether I was going to make it through but you both have always stood strong and supported me. Your motivation has helped me know that I can chase my dreams and not settle for mediocrity. I love you.

Andrew Travers, I never dreamed of a passion in filmmaking and storytelling before really getting to know you. Thank you for the inspiration and motivation.

Dr. Martin, your example as a professor and filmmaker have inspired me over the last three years. I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and confidence under your teaching and guidance. I cannot thank you enough for the time you have invested in me and this work. For all of these things I am extremely grateful.

To my readers, Dr. Schwartz and Professor Flesher, thank you for your time and the effort you both have put forth in my study.

Abstract

This study examines the content of six feature length films, which showed in theaters in 2010 and 2011, from a communication perspective. Five of the scrutinized films are Academy Award winning and nominated films for Best Editing. The sixth film was the top grossing Christian feature film to be widely released within the two years. Utilizing Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery, this study examines and evaluates the composition of dialogue scenes within each film, identifying the functions of shot composition and movement choices within each film, individually. Through identification of a function, assessment and support found for that function, and scrutiny of said function, each film shows unique storytelling techniques that enhance the narrative for the audience. The functions of the Academy films are compared and contrasted with the Christian film and a discussion on filmmaking practices and story enhancement through editing.

Key words/topics located in thesis: Sonja Foss, Visual Rhetoric, Film Making, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Film Editing, Christian Film

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Introduction:

It's a rare occasion to meet someone in the United States who has never seen a movie. Movies have become so much a part of American culture that nationally they contribute \$16.7 billion in public revenue a year (MPAA). They are not something that is required in order to survive but entertainment that inspires and connects with people all across the country. Motion pictures make those connections because the stories they tell have characters and storylines that can be seen and heard, touching people's hearts and minds.

A good script and good actors can help a story come to life in a movie. They are most apparent to the audience. Cognitively the audience members think on what is presented to them on screen and attempt to apply it to their own lives. What many do not realize is that they probably would not enjoy the movie they just watched, as much, if it was comprised of scenes made of long takes. In other words, if the screen they were watching was only a play being acted out on stage with distance between them and the characters. The effects of editing in narrative filmmaking influences viewers' subconscious, more so than other obvious techniques such as scripting or acting.

So in what way do editors make decisions that impact the story of a film? There are two theories that have been used to edit moving images, both film and video. Those fundamental theories are continuity editing and montage editing (*The Cutting Edge*; Dancyger). Though those theories have been around since the early twentieth century they are still being debated today (Messaris; Smith, 2005; Smith, 2012; Aigrain and Joly) and are used together within films in order to convey certain feelings and messages pertaining to their narrative.

The overall purpose of this study is answer the question of: What editing techniques are most effective in storytelling and what techniques are or are not used by Christian filmmakers?

In the following chapters a literature review and methodology will be covered in order to understand both the specifics of early film history and editing theory as well as Sonja K. Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery (*Communication Studies*). Then Foss's schema will be applied to five Academy Award winning and nominated movies and *Courageous*, the most recent widely released, independent Christian film to have an effect on the Box Office at the time of this study. Then each of the five Academy film's editing merits will be discussed and compared to *Courageous* in order to suggest better filmmaking practices for Christian filmmakers.

Within the next chapter a comprehensive look at film editing history, early film editing theories, and visual rhetoric will be discussed, each section building on top of one another in order to help understand the topic at large.

Literature Review:

Film as an art form has a history that has blossomed since its inception. Within the first few decades of the industry, filmmakers they were learning how to communicate with audiences and manipulate emotions through different camera and editing practices. This review begins with an overview of the early history of film editing and the men who created editing practices and theories that are still the base of Hollywood blockbusters being released today. As well I will present a more in-depth look at the early editing theories of continuity editing and montage. Finally I will review literature on visual rhetoric and Sonja K. Foss's schema for finding the function of images, including three recent examples of her schema being used to analyze imagery.

Early motion picture history dates back to 1890 when Edison Laboratories invented the first motion picture camera, the Kinetograph. The technology at the time marveled audiences and was shown all across the world. Edison's Kinetograph became the beginning of a revolution of new media. Soon after the Kinetoscope, the viewer for the moving images, was traveling the world showing moving pictures, these were called "peep-shows" and "nickelodeons". Once the Lumiere Brothers, based in Paris, enjoyed the Kinetoscope they began looking into projecting films to a screen. These inventions were the beginning of what has become one of the biggest industries in the world (Ogden and Sanders, 147-158).

In the beginning of filmmaking history the only editing practice was how long a shot was held. "The first film makers simply photographed what interested them or amused them. They held a shot until they got bored or the film ran out" (The Cutting Edge). One of the first developers of editing in a narrative form was Georges Méliès, a professional magician who wanted to create movie magic. Although within the scene structure of his films he did not do

much editing in order to change camera angles, Méliès introduced early narrative principles to film such as fading in and out, cross dissolves, and stop motion photography, creating longer narratives. The narrative form has been built upon over the years from Méliès' early success, including his first one-film reel *Le Voyage Dans La Lune* (A Trip to the Moon), inspiring many early filmmakers, including Edwin S. Porter and M.W. Griffith (Ogden; Cook).

Edwin S. Porter, an employee of Thomas Edison, enjoyed Méliès' length and style of storytelling, but he wanted a more dynamic way of telling such a story. Though he did not pay attention to shot lengths he did use cuts within scenes to reorganize his footage and redirect the audience's attention. *Life of an American Fireman* became the first film to be cut together from different scenes in order to form a narrative through "invisible" continuity editing, though keeping each shot intact from beginning to end and requiring audiences to experience repetitive viewing from multiple perspectives. The invisible cut "is a technique of continuity editing, the illusion of continuous action maintained while cutting to different angles of a simultaneous even presenting the action in successive shots (Ogden, 148)." Invisible cuts, both in *Life of an American Fireman* and, Porter's second film, *The Great Train Robbery*, created heightened tension and moved the story along by continuing the actions of the event without finishing the event within one shot. As well, intercutting from one scene to another was introduced and psychologically the audience was able to connect the ideas of each shot (*The Cutting Edge*; Ogden; Cook; Dancyger; Manley).

"D.W. Griffith was the first great filmmaker to understand the psychological importance of editing. Working a decade after Porter, he did more than anyone else to advance the storytelling tools that Porter had developed (*The Cutting Edge*)." He is known as the father of modern film editing.

His influence on the Hollywood mainstream film and on the Russian revolutionary film was immediate. His contributions cover the full range of dramatic construction: the variation of shots for impact, including the extreme long shot, the close-up, the cutaway, and the tracking shot; parallel editing and variations of pace. All of these are ascribed to Griffith. Porter might have clarified film narrative in his work, but Griffith learned how to make the juxtaposition of shots have a far greater dramatic impact than his predecessor. (Dancyger, 5)

Through continuous experimentation Griffith enhanced the audience's emotional involvement with his films. Moving the camera closer, to garner emotions of panic, or extreme wide shots for establishing scenes or creating psychological distance between the audience and the scene. Two of Griffith's greatest works are *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. Both films exceeded any length of film created in that time, being more than two hours. Also they contained all of the narrative principles that Griffith had discovered constructing a gripping story for audiences (*The Cutting Edge*, Dancyger). D. W. Griffith was a man influenced by early narrative storytelling who in turn influenced many people, including those who led the Russian film revolution (Ogden, Dancyger).

One of the first Russian revolutionists, Dancyger discusses, is Vsevolod I. Pudovkin who developed a theory of editing that would allow filmmakers to create powerful stories utilizing more than the shot composition and fragmentation techniques of Griffith but integrate desired emotional responses through the ordering of the shot. Pudovkin argues that his theory begins with the recorded film, which is the building block behind the power of a narrative:

This material from which his final work is composed consists not of living men or real landscapes, not of real, actual stage-sets, but only of their images, recorded on separate strips that can be shortened, altered, and assembled according to his will. The elements of reality are fixed on these pieces; by combining them in his selected sequence, shortening and lengthening them according to his desire, the director builds up his own “filmic” time and “filmic” space. He does not adapt reality, but uses it for the creation of a new reality, and the most characteristic and important aspect of this process is that, in it, laws of space and time invariable and inescapable in work with actuality become tractable and obedient. The film assembles from them a new reality proper only to itself. (Pudovkin, 89-90)

Pudovkin carried out his editing theories throughout his films, cutting different shots with different scenes to evoke the intended emotion not from the actor but rather from the presentation (Dancyger; Pudovkin).

Pudovkin’s contemporary, Sergei Eisenstein was an intellectual and filmmaker. The ideas he portrayed on the screen within the Soviet Union were seen as too academic and not realistic enough for the real world. Though at the time he was seen as too individualistic, his films have become artifacts for early montage pieces. Eisenstein, throughout his career, created the theory of montage by continuing the ideas of D.W. Griffith and Karl Marx. “Beginning with *Strike*, Eisenstein attempted to theorize about film editing as a clash of images and ideas (Dancyger,

16).” His theory of editing contains five components that will be discussed later in this literature review (Dancyger).

Each of the historical filmmakers presented are known as the forefathers to what modern cinematic editing is today. Though there were other practices that have been experimented with and other ideas that have worked on different levels for film connoisseurs and critics alike, the men and ideas being presented in this paper have stood the test of time to remain relevant within the art of film editing. Next I will present an in-depth review of the theories mentioned earlier and the definitions of the common film editing grammar.

As mentioned earlier, Edwin S. Porter is known for his discoveries in film continuity editing, also known as the invisible cut.

Invisible editing is a cut that is hidden by strategy – a match cut where a prominent action within the frame is continued over the cut so the event is embraced by both Shot 1 of this moment through Shot 2. This phenomenon allows the creator to present a flow of images that tell a story without reminding the audience they are watching a motion picture. Where to make the cuts – outgoing of Shot 1, incoming of Shot 2 – demonstrates the very essence of the invisible editing concept. (Lobrutto, 43)

When the viewer does not have to consciously think about what is happening next in the film but rather subconsciously understands the space and time of the scene from cut to cut then the invisible cut has been executed properly.

Tim J. Smith, a doctoral candidate at the University of Edinburgh, wrote a dissertation entitled “An Attentional Theory of Continuity Editing”. Within his research Smith described

continuity editing as it is generally explained above, as well as elaborating on what are generally accepted practices of continuity editing, such as focusing on a constant within the scene, expecting visual changes and directing attention internally for the audience. Smith's goal was to identify empirically a theory of continuity editing from the question "How does continuity editing ensure that 'continuity' is not violated as a consequence of the cut?" What Smith found was:

The results indicate that expectation, distraction, and saccadic eye movements all influence the perception of temporal continuity across cuts. Expectation minimizes the disruptive effects of a cut. This supports the editing convention of cutting on action. If a cut is not expected and the focal-object does not relocate across the cut, viewers will be distracted by the cut resulting in a large degree of variability in perceived duration. This makes it difficult for an editor to compensate for perceptual distortions. To avoid distractions the focal-object should change location across a cut. This unexpected relocation captures attention and leads to predictable distortions of perceived duration. This supports the editing convention of reverse-angle editing. (361-362)

The viewer needs to see a spatial and temporal shift when the cut is represented in order for the psychological change to smoothly come about. 'Visible' cuts, or jump cutting, creates a distraction that requires the viewer to think about what has changed. This along, with second and third dimensional positioning, is important to remember in order to maintain continuity within the mind of the viewer.

In the summer 2012 edition of *Projections*, scholars wrote in on their ideas both of continuity and Smith's ideas of a continuity theory. First Paul Messaris comments on Smith's dissertation by stating that what makes the study valuable is its "contribution simply by virtue of its emphasis on the relationship between cinematic continuity and real world vision (28)." Messaris goes on to discuss that the understanding that Smith brings with his results can help editors discern the rules of continuity and what will happen when the rules are broken. He continues in his article though to argue for the possibility that continuity editing does not matter as much as filmmakers think, he asks, "Are violations of continuity rules really that inconsequential? Are the rules just a collection of finicky prescriptions that make the lives of directors and editors more difficult than they have to be (29)?" Some research done by Messaris shows that even in cultures that have little to no movie experience audiences still have a positive response toward the cut and continuity. Though it may be true he still finishes with:

The fact is that we still know very little about how viewers really do respond to Hollywood continuity rules and to their violations. We also still do not know all that much about how exactly those rules related to real-world visual processes, but it should be evident that this relationship must be a crucial factor in viewers' responses to editing. (33)

Messaris agrees that Smith's work is important to cinema yet he seems to be stuck about whether continuity is necessary.

Montage editing is a more broad form of editing which was introduced through experiments done by Lev Kuleshov during the Russian revolution. His most famous experiment presented an actor, a bowl of soup, a woman inside of a coffin, and a child playing. Kuleshov

intercut a neutral close-up of the actor with the bowl of soup, then did the same with the woman, and ended with the same neutral faced actor and cut in a shot of the child playing. Even though it was always the same footage of the actor, audiences were amazed at how he changed his expression for each of the scenes. The order and placement of the shots created different ideas and emotions for the audience. The effect, known as the Kuleshov Effect, sparked new ideas for filmmakers, most notably Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, and montage editing theories began to form (Dancyger; Gillespie).

The montage theory of editing is, according to Sergei Eisenstein:

Representation A and representation B must be so selected from all the possible features within the theme that is being developed, must be so sought for, that their juxtaposition – the juxtaposition of those very elements and not of alternative ones – shall evoke in the perception and feelings of the spectator the most complete image of the theme itself. (*The Film Sense*, 69)

Montage editors keep in mind the overarching subject matter and theme that is to be addressed when looking at seemingly unrelated material and through cuts they create new meaning.

Continuity editing can also be considered montage editing as it works with shots that share visual material, whereas Kuleshov's montage connects shots of dissimilar content.

Sergei Eisenstein was one of the many who was inspired by the experiments of Kuleshov. Because of that inspiration he both practically and academically studied the different assumptions of montage editing. In his books *The Film Sense* and *Film Form*, Eisenstein discusses film theories from his observations and presents the basic function and five components of montage. He says the basic function of montage is:

The need for connected and sequential exposition of the theme, the material, the plot, the action, the movement within the film sequence and within the film drama as a whole. Aside from the excitement of a story, or even its logic or continuity, the simple matter of telling a connected story has often been lost in the works of some outstanding film masters. (*The Film Sense*, 3)

This basic premise helps to outline the purposes of montage that he discusses and the components that Eisenstein argues are important for those who study montage.

Over the history of film there has been a mix of both continuity and montage editing. Each has its own purpose, to either present a story or invoke emotions from the audience through intercutting and pacing. These are the most basic of editing styles that Hollywood uses today, of course, there are many nuances and tricks that storytelling editors have that will be discussed throughout the rest of the paper. I will present one final thought from well renowned editor Walter Murch before reviewing the literature on Foss's Visual Rhetoric.

An ideal cut (for me) is one that satisfies all the following six criteria at once: 1) is it true to the emotion of the moment; 2) it advances the story; 3) it occurs at a moment that is rhythmically interesting and "right"; 4) it acknowledges what you might call "eye-trace" – the concern with the location and movement of the audience's focus of interest within the frame; 5) it respects "planarity" – the grammar of three dimensions transposed by photography to two (the questions of stage-line, etc.); 6) and it

respects the three dimensional continuity of the actual space

(where people are in the room and in relation to one another). (18)

Each piece of the rules presented is important in deciding the cut, though Murch explains that the emotion is key and everything after it in the list is less important in descending order. So if one take respects the three-dimensional space of the scene yet does not advance the story then the take that will advance the story, even with spatial problems, should be the chosen one.

Intentional editors and directors use processes that help forward their stories and have effects on audiences. Each clip within a film has a function that in the mind of the viewer is supposed to represent an idea or meaning based on what is happening within the story. If an editor fails to include clips that are to be expected within specific scene types they can distance the audience from the story. For this reason it is good to understand what meanings audiences give to different editorial choices on screen. To help define those meanings in a more concise way Sonja K. Foss's theories about visual rhetoric and the function of images can be utilized. In the following section Foss's literature and research will be discussed, including critiques and example research.

An attempt to understand visual artifacts within the communication field, from the historical and arts arena, really began to develop in the late 1950's (Bathes, 1957; Hall, 1959). Semiotics, spatial and nonverbal cues became subjects of study for scholars in the earlier days of visual inquiry. As visual studies became more and more prevalent not only communication scholars attempted to interpret visual pieces as something communicative but anthropologists did as well (Barnhurst et al.). The influence of the many different types of visual studies has become far reaching and for a while was looked at as its own separate grouping or entity from the most basic and classical form of communication studies: rhetoric.

In 1993, Sonja K. Foss published an essay which set a basis for Visual Rhetoric entitled “The Construction of Appeal in Visual Images: A Hypothesis.” The essay, which was a continuation of M. Griffin’s study of connections between rhetoric and architecture, presents a basic structure that eventually becomes Visual Rhetoric. The outline that is proposed contains three elements that “contribute to the construction of appeal to in a visual image – technical novelty, decontextualization, and references to new interpretive contexts (223).” Thus was the beginning of an attempt to help rhetoricians explore the process of visual artifacts for further research. Though the basic concepts that have been presented and will be presented in this paper have become accepted practices, Foss dealt with scholars who thought visual imagery was not for rhetoric:

I am aware that my interest in the topic of visual images makes me somewhat suspect in the discipline of speech communication; in fact, one of my goals in this essay is to encourage a greater acceptance of such work in our field. The committee on rhetorical criticism at the National Conference on Rhetoric recommended in 1970 that the scope of rhetorical criticism be expanded to include nondiscursive subjects such as architecture, rock music, and ballet. But even the recommendations of the prestigious committee had little effect on scholarship on visual imagery in speech communication. (210-211)

Many arguments were made against allowing non-speech based ideas within the study of rhetoric, even after the suggestion made. But Foss’s approach to the subject took into account the idea that times were changing in the 1990’s. Visual media, on screens big and small, constituted

a primary piece of the rhetorical environment and the sole public speech culture was long gone. Foss's argument for an extension of rhetoric to include visual imagery concluded by stating, "To understand and influence culture, to teach students to respond critically to the symbols around them, and to discover how to create effective messages, an understanding of the process by which visual images appeal is necessary (211)."

In 1994, Foss published "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery" in order to propose three processes that prove the function communicated by a visual image. Foss discusses the downfalls of the studies that came before her schema, some coming close to what a rhetorical theory and "seem more closely related to the concerns of rhetoric turn out, on closer examination, to be unsatisfactory (214)." Because of the drawbacks of the theories that were current, at the time, she then claims that there is a "need for a schema of evaluation that allows for judgments to be made about images from a rhetorical perspective. "I propose that judgments of quality about visual imagery be made in terms of function of an image (215)." The function of an image, according to Foss, denotes whatever meaning the critic gives an image rather than the artist; "the anti-intentionalist stance, which undergirds my proposed schema, suggests that a work, once done, stands independent of its production, and the intentions of artists or creators are irrelevant to critics' responses to their works (215)." Foss's view has been backed by other scholars, such as Gillian Rose, "much of this work in visual culture argues that the particular 'audiences' (that might not always be the appropriate word) of an image will bring their own interpretations to bear on its meaning and effect (Visual Methodologies, 11)."

The schema Foss proposed contained three parts in order to determine the quality of the function of an image. First someone must identify the function of the image. Intrinsicly, the identification of the function of an image is subjective to the views of the audience. Once the

function is identified by the scholar then they must make “an assessment of how well that function is communicated and the support available for that function in the image (Rhetorical Schema, 216).” This step involves connecting the identified function with what is presented in the imagery. Finally, “assessment in the schema involves scrutiny of the function itself – reflection on its legitimacy or soundness, determined by the implications and consequences of the function. This assessment is made according to the critics initial reasons for analyzing the image (217).” Looking through the lens of the issue or subject that brought the scholar to the point of studying the image and comparing it to what was observed clarifies the legitimacy of the function stated by the scholar. Therefore, by the end of Foss’s rhetorical schema, one should be able to identify whether their initial perceived function of an image is justified by its contents and legitimacy.

Overall, in her work, Foss defines the purpose of studying visual artifacts within the rhetorical tradition:

Visual rhetoric, as it is employed in the discipline of rhetoric, has two meanings. One refers to visual images themselves – visual communication that constitutes the object of study. The second meaning references a perspective or approach rhetorical scholars adopt as they study visual rhetoric. Together these two senses of the term point to the need to understand how the visual operates rhetorically in contemporary culture. (Theory of Visual Rhetoric, 150-151)

Within a culture of media and constant symbolism, Foss’s theory of visual rhetoric can help scholars interpret and understand the artifacts put before them. Olsen et al. discuss this idea more

by explaining that when the words “visual” and “rhetoric” are understood separately in a cultural context and then refused together Visual Rhetoric can be broadly defined as “those symbolic actions enacted primarily through visual means made meaningful through culturally derived ways of looking and seeing and endeavoring (Visual Rhetoric, 3).” Understanding the culture of oneself and the piece can help define the visual artifact being studied.

Foss’s theory has continually been used and solidified over the years and rhetorical theorists have accepted the ideas of visual rhetoric. “This framework is not simply a framework for an understanding of visual rhetoric, however, but also for transforming discourse-based rhetorical theory. As rhetorical theory opens up to visual rhetoric, it opens up to possibilities for more relevant, inclusive, and holistic views of contemporary symbol use (Defining Visual Rhetorics, 313).”

Valerie V. Peterson continued the work of Foss and created an alternative to the schema presented earlier. Within her article, Peterson disputes not the contents of Foss’s schema but rather changing the starting point of analysis:

Starting the critical process with visual elements and not larger complexes at least potentially expands and democratizes critical discussion. Unlike images, which are more subject to both individual reader interpretations and cultural master narratives, visual elements offer sensory starting points and a firmer (though not solid or indisputable) basis for criticism. This shift in starting point does not take assessment or evaluation out of the hands of rhetorical critics nor does it eliminate interpretation and associated difficulties. But it does demand more accountability to other

audiences and readers of visual rhetoric by exposing assumptions of the critic that can then be more easily challenged. (Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements, 25)

All in all, Peterson appeals for scholars to find the common language of the visual art that they are analyzing, as well, scholars should help their audience understand the vernacular of the medium to help make sense of whatever phenomena is the subject of study.

In 2004, Mullen and Fisher conducted a visual analysis of prescription drug advertising utilizing two of Foss's rhetorical techniques. The evaluation of images and their functions was one of the techniques used to evaluate the imagery. In their assessment of the function of the image they found that each piece of the image was effective in helping express the function of the drug advertisement, "The aesthetic, production, and interpersonal visual elements all contribute to the function of associating the drug, Zyrtec, with natural and motherly connotations (194)." The image contained a woman with green eyes, wavy auburn hair, and was surrounded by flowers with a background of a blue sky. Mullen and Fisher found through the multi-colored wildflowers a connection with a diversity of people, almost a multicultural effect; as well the natural imagery invoked a reconnection with nature. Because the woman is in the wilderness and is supposedly using Zyrtec, a hay fever and allergy symptom reducer, its proposed function was assessed by Mullen and Fisher and found legitimate according to their analysis.

Another study conducted by Veil et al. employed Foss's evaluation of imagery by identifying and assessing the function of the Oklahoma City National Memorial, in remembrance of those who died on April 19, 1995 when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed. Though Foss suggests that the intentions of the creator of a visual image is not necessary for the assessment of an image (Theory of Visual Rhetoric, 146), Veil et al. were able to follow the

thought processes and difficulties of creating the symbols and imagery to memorialize the victims, the survivors and their families, “The agonizing process of choosing the words, symbols, and themes resulted in a memorial that we assert invites survivors of the attack, family members of those who died, and all who visit the memorial to join in a discourse of renewal (Memorializing Crisis through Renewal, 165).” Through this understanding and the actual mission statement of the team who created the memorial, observations of what symbols and emphases on the mission’s themes, such as healing, reconnecting values, and learning, showed that the function of memorializing those effected by the crisis was effective through the imagery presented.

Finally, Abigail Selzer King used Foss’s evaluation of the function of an image on a drawing of Paul Revere as a Klansman. The image shows Paul Revere riding a horse, both dressed in the white robes of Ku Klux Klansmen, across a field from the church that the two lights were presented. Utilizing the framework presented by Fuss, King concludes that the image’s function is in order to “leverage anachronism to rewrite the history of America in a move for establishing historical legitimacy (41).” Using the contextual and historical data presented she assessed the function and finds legitimacy through the understanding that more than just the Ku Klux Klan used historical figures to essentially attempt to rewrite their history. Each section of the evaluation process addresses and identifies both issues that are the focus of the proposed function.

Within this section I reviewed the early history of film, including the work of Méliès, Porter and Griffith and their early history of continuity editing and narrative form. As well a brief portion of this section looked at Russian revolution filmmakers and their contributions to modern film editing through montage. Once the key players of film editing were established I

presented continuity editing and montage editing in more detail before thoroughly reviewing Foss's theories of visual rhetoric as well as her schema of the evaluation of visual imagery and its function. I concluded with three research projects that properly used Foss's schema. In the following section I will discuss and present the methodology that was used in order to conduct my research on visual editing functions within dialogue scenes of major motion pictures and independent Christian films.

Methodology:

In the literature review I discussed early film history, editing theories, and their founders, as well as some more recent discussions on the topic of continuity editing and montage. Also Foss's schema for Visual Rhetoric was discussed and outlined with examples of the schema being used in studies being presented as well.

Within this chapter I will lay forward the methodology on how to tackle my research questions: Using Foss's visual rhetoric, what are the functions of the editorial decisions that are shown within the dialogue scenes of a completed film by Oscar winning and nominated films? What functions does *Courageous*, as a representative for "Christian film", give to those editorial decisions within dialogue scenes? And how do the different functions compare to one another?

Following is a discussion on why a modified use of Foss's schema for the evaluation of visual rhetoric should be used in order to create a framework to assess the editing style of every film. Also a rationale for the use of *Courageous* as the Christian film artifact for this research because of its success, its values and the amount of time it has had to make a difference in the Christian and secular film markets. As well five Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences award winning films are given and supported as the artifacts to be used for the theoretical framework that *Courageous* will be assessed by.

Through the use of Foss's rhetorical schema while observing each Academy Award winning film listed below, identifying patterns in shot composition choice, timing, and camera movement within key dialogue sequences, I was able to answer my research question. Patterns were identified and organized and compared to the patterns of editing within the dialogue scenes of the final cut of *Courageous*.

First, in order to define what each shot type means, i.e., its function, I utilized the schema that was presented in the literature review, Foss's schema for evaluating visual rhetoric. Based on what I saw within the Academy Award winning footage I defined the function of the types of shot compositions and other shot choices, such as cutaways and camera movements. Foss's schema assisted in validating the framework that I found and presented, as it inherently guides whoever is using it through a process of function assessment and fidelity. But rather than using just one visual artifact, as has been the common theme in studies past (Mullen; Veil; King; Thinking Visually at UNL), to assess I used five industry recognized examples to define solid definitions of each function. This then clarified the framework that that I could use in order to analyze *Courageous*.

By using Foss's schema in this manner I have attempted to pave a new direction for the application of the schema and understanding of visual rhetoric. From all of the studies I have seen, both scholarly and as class projects (Mullen; Veil; King; Thinking Visually at UNL), only one artifact has been used to define the function of a visual piece. This is likely because rather than identifying a conceptual visual artifact they are observing one piece and identifying it on its own, without other artifacts to help assess the function. Through my assessment rather than postulating what is the individual cut's meaning in a film I used multiple sources, i.e. the five films, to create and build support of the functions of the types of cuts and shot choices.

I have chosen to analyze *Courageous* because of its Christian message and the values of the production company and editor. As a Christian myself, I believe one of the most important mediums to touch people's lives is through motion pictures. Throughout history there has been an economical difference between Christian films competing within the secular film market in the box office. On the other hand since the early 2000's there has been a growing trend of widely

released Christian films, in theaters, based on historical retellings of Biblical stories or value embedded narratives (Box Office Mojo; Johnston).

As well *Courageous* has been a successful film overall as a Christian film under Christian terms. Sherwood Pictures, the producers of *Courageous*, has created a positive reputation for itself in not only Christian culture but also the film culture. With the production and release of *Fireproof*, featuring Kirk Cameron, Sherwood Pictures was able to make a name for itself with a story that touched the hearts of many people across the country, as well as profiting sixty-six times as much in the box office as was paid to make the movie. Because of that earlier success *Courageous* had a platform to work off of, using the phrase “From the Creators of *Fireproof*” as part of the marketing used to sell the film and gain a following.

Therefore I have chosen *Courageous* as the film of choice because of the far reaching implications it has on Christian filmmakers. It is one of the most successful widely released Christian film produced by an independent production company, having three years to make an impression on both the secular market and the Christian market. As well it grossed seventeen times the amount of money that was budgeted for production, spending \$2 million and receiving \$34.5 million. Under these parameters I am able to use a film that is notably different, so that a focus on what independent filmmakers do with their editing and not just examine big production and post-production houses, such as Disney and Fox. It should be noted, the motion picture *God's Not Dead* has recently, as of the writing of this essay, surpassed *Courageous* at the box office but, at the writing of this methodology, is still showing in theaters and it is not clear what effect it has had on the industry as a whole.

There are five films that I analyzed in order to identify and assess the function of their editing styles and attain an understanding of the common storytelling patterns that work so well

with audiences. These five films have won and/or have been nominated for Academy Awards in both Best Picture and Best Film Editing in 2010 and 2011. They are 1) *Moneyball*, edited by Christopher Tellefsen; 2) *The Fighter*, edited by Pamela Martin; 3) *The King's Speech*, edited by Tariq Anwar; 4) *The Social Network*, edited by Angus Wall and Kirk Baxter, also awarded Best Film Editing in 2010; and 5) *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, edited by Angus Wall and Kirk Baxter, and awarded Best Film Editing in 2011.

There are several reasons for using the five films. First, being nominated or winning for an award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (the Academy) is widely considered the pinnacle of achievements in the motion picture industry, because of the process and scrutiny a film must go through to get to that point. A ballot within the Editing Branch of the Academy is taken, each member voting on five films from that year. Once the top five films have been nominated each member of the Academy then votes for the winner of the award (Rule Five: Balloting and Nominations). The members of the Academy, voting on the motion pictures, have distinguished themselves within the film industry with multiple screen credits of the highest standard and years of experience (Joining the Academy). The prestige of the voting party creates credibility for the edit of each picture.

Another reason I believe each of these films are good artifacts to use, to both define the functions of editing decisions but also to compare as a whole with *Courageous*, is that they all came out within a similar time span. I believe it is safe to assume that the editing styles of all of these films having been created within the same media culture and in the same historical period generally have the same influences and are theoretically comparable.

Finally, each of the five listed films is considered to be a part of the dramatic genre, linking them back to what *Courageous* is, a dramatic film. Cinematic dramas can be portrayed

using varying stylistic choices, but they all share basic premises. Tim Dirks defines dramatic films as “serious presentations or stories with settings or life situations that portray realistic characters in conflict with either themselves, others, or forces of nature” (Drama Films). That does not mean that the stories cannot have parts that are funny in them, of course, but they all deal with serious issues in one way or another.

Within this section I addressed the methodology of how I conducted my study in order to answer my central question: “Is the editing style of Sherwood Pictures’ motion picture *Courageous* the same as or similar to Academy Award winning pictures from the year before and of the release of the film?” I presented how I believe a modified version of Foss’s schema for the evaluation of visual rhetoric can be used to help create a framework to identify storytelling trends through editing, by using more than one source to understand the function (or meaning) of editing choices, such as shot composition, timing, and camera movement. I then gave my reasoning behind why I believe it is best to use *Courageous* as the Christian film to evaluate because of its success, its values, and how it has been given time to make a difference on the industry. Furthermore the five films that were used to create the assessing framework were listed and defended as relevant sources because of the prestige of their awards and nominations, their timeliness, and how they all connect through dramatic storytelling.

Within the following sections I will define the terms I will be using for each of the types of cuts based both off of technical definitions as well as the functions I will find within the movies. After that I will present my results, based off of the observation I made from each film. Then a discussion will be presented about the research overall and the implications it has for Christian filmmaking and editing practices.

Results:*Introduction to the Results:*

In the previous section my observation process was explained. Through the utilization of Foss's schema for the evaluation of images, I have viewed each of the six designated films, focusing on the dialogue scenes, and identified the functions of the editing choices within them. The editing and shot choices, for key dialogue scenes, attempt to deepen and further the plot of each story by enhancing relationships and emotions in the mind of the viewer.

The succeeding subsections are divided by film. The first three films are the Academy Award nominated films *Moneyball*, *The Fighter*, and *The King's Speech*, followed by the Academy Award winning films *The Social Network* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. The final section is *Courageous*, who's editing practices will be compared to the five preceding films.

Each subsection begins with a brief story and character summary, highlighting the lead characters and the main story of each film. The function, or underlying theme, of the key dialogue scenes is established and then assessed and supported within the next sections. Then the overall success of each function is scrutinized as it pertains to its enhancement of the story itself. For definitions of shot types see Appendix.

*Moneyball Section:***Story and Character Description:**

Moneyball is a film following the Oakland A's general manager, during the 2002 Major League Baseball season, Billy Beane in his attempts to create a team that could compete against the teams with more money. What made this year unique in the team's history is the use of

algorithms and computer-generated analysis run by Billy's assistant manager Peter Brand. Throughout the story Billy and Peter are met with resistance from all areas of the team management. In the end their work is successful and create a team that contends for the American League pennant.

Identification of Function(s):

The key storytelling element that the editor focused on during the dialogue scenes of *Moneyball* was based on Billy Beane's isolation and relationships as a leader. As well the concept that his words meant something to those who he was speaking to is shown visually through the shot choices within the film. This was done through two types of consistent techniques throughout the film. The first technique utilized was through the separation and unity implied by specific cuts during each situation that Billy is discussing something of great importance to him. The second technique, that shows the importance of words on others, is by overlapping the dialogue of the actual speaker over the recipient of the message being communicated. This technique shows the audience the reactions of the receiver rather than the emotion of the speaker.

Assessment of Functions and Support Found:

Separating Billy from those around him is important to the story. After a devastating end to a decent season and the loss of three players he is looking to pick up and work on something fresh. During his first scouting meeting it is apparent that he is fed up with the old ways of Major League Baseball recruiting. Cutaways of recruitment and player information establish the scene in a conference room filled with scouts, as dialogue begins. There is talk about new players by

the scouts, as they are presented in group shots of primarily 2 and 3 medium shots, discussing the pros and cons of each player being brought up. Billy, on the other hand, is exhibited on his own with close and medium shots showing his reactions to what the scouts are saying to one another. Though the speech is slower, because of the age of the characters, the cuts are quick between the scouts and Billy in an attempt to build the growing frustration that Billy feels. Though Billy is surrounded by twelve people working for him there is still an apparent separation between him and the group.

The idea of separation that Tellefsen edited in to the film is apparent soon after that first scouting meeting. Billy visits the Cleveland Indians' recruiter and is led in to an office filled with the recruiter's team. Billy is placed in the middle of the room, shown through an establishing wide shot, then discusses trades with the recruiter. Billy, essentially being surrounded by an enemy team, is still shown on screen as someone who is isolated. Cutaways and medium shots of the Indians' recruiter and his scouts are shown during the conversation to show they are paying attention but are not on board with Billy. As well, the recruiter is seen from over the shoulder shots with Billy's shoulder at the edge of the screen, giving the audience the idea that someone is with the recruiter and he is a part of the group. Yet when the camera turns back on Billy his face alone is shown.

This practice does not happen through the whole movie; when someone agrees with Billy's ideas or he has a personal connection with them in an over the shoulder or medium two-shot puts the two together. In every scene that Billy is with his daughter, Casey, they are always presented together in every shot, even if it is just the shoulder of the other person. Their personal connection is insinuated through the edit choice.

Other examples of characters coming to the side of Billy, shown through the shot choice made in the edit, are when Peter comes to Billy's side on the recruiting issues. Whether it be standing up to the old styled scouts, fighting with the manager, or trading players, Peter and Billy are portrayed side-by-side in two shots denoting a relationship that Billy does not have with many others throughout the movie. Their relationship is not always presented in this fashion though, as Billy makes some hasty decisions that could effect the plans that he and Peter have set up for the team. In a scene where Billy begins trading some key players for little back from the other teams, Peter is presented alone on screen in medium close ups while Billy is shown in the over the shoulder shots, in an attempt to keep Peter on board with his crazy plans. By the end of the scene they are still somewhat separated, because of their disagreement, to the audience but soon after, when the trading of a player and the argument about it with Howe proceed, Billy and Peter are side by side in a medium two shot. They are in on the plan for a better baseball team together.

Another similar relationship, that is enhanced through editing, between Billy and Ron Washington, one of the coaches and scouts. Some of the key scenes when this relationship is show is when they go to recruit Scott Hatteburg. Though Ron's words are negative toward the idea of recruiting Scott as a first baseman, he and Billy stand (and sit) side by side through the recruiting process. Each shot contains the both of them rather than singling out one or the other. As well, on the first day of spring training, Billy meets with Ron, Howe and another coach as they tell him that Scott will not work as the new first baseman. A wide shot establishes where they are but as the conversation progresses Billy is isolated on his side of the desk and a three shot shows the three team staff members. The view cuts back and forth between the two set shots until finally Billy addresses Ron specifically. When this happens it is the first time during the

scene that Billy is shown with anyone else. They speak to one another across a desk but they are the only two speaking and no other character's face is shown in this shot. This choice in cut shows that though Ron is wary he is still on board with Billy to work through Scott's issues and teach him how to play first base. Once one of the other coaches says something the camera returns to the medium closeup that isolates Billy and the three shot that holds the coaches.

A third key area where Billy's connection with the other characters is presented is during the third act as he gives pep talks to different groups of players. Each of the scenes is quickly cut together and there is only one shot per short scene but Billy is the focus of each group, surrounded by the players and helping mentor them through their game related issues. These shots are in juxtaposition to the earlier scenes which always disconnected Billy from the players, whether he was addressing all of them in the locker room or talking with them one on one, he was never presented as close with any of them through two shots or over the shoulder shots. As Billy made the choice to personally mentor the players he was presented through composition choice within the short situational scenes, in a way that promoted his connection with the players and their trust in him.

The other core element that was edited in to the key dialogue scenes between Billy and the other characters is the idea that what one says creates reactions in others whether good or bad. Within *Moneyball* the editor made the decision to show the audience what the speaker's influence was over others rather than showing the emotion on the speaking character's face. This was primarily done through cutaways in some scenes and in many scenes the shot was held on the receiver of the message through most of the speaker's dialogue.

The first examples of this storytelling technique are presented in the conference room with Billy, Peter and the scouts. As frustration mounts on both sides of the argument on how to

build a highly efficient, winning team, characters speak to one another, their cases being presented, but their faces are only shown for two or three seconds before the shot cuts to close-ups of the other people listening to the conversation. This shows their reactions and emotions to what is being said to them. Using this technique the audience simultaneously hears the emotion in the voice of the speaker and sees the reactionary emotion of those that the message is given to.

On a smaller scale this storytelling technique is used in one-on-one conversations between Billy and Peter, the team owner, manager, and even his daughter. Important aspects of the story are discussed during these encounters, each being emotional in some way or another, as Billy attempts to convince others that what he is doing will work, and the audience understands this. What the editor has done during these scenes is place the audience in the spot of the speaker, for longer periods of time than normal, so they can concurrently hear and feel the emotion of the speaker and process how it effects those receiving the message.

Scrutiny of Functions:

Within *Moneyball* the editor's focus on Billy's relationships with others, as he communicated with his family and people within Major League Baseball, implies a deeper conflict within the film. As the idea of bold leadership is implied through the scenes of separation and unity viewers following Billy's struggles gain a more profound understanding of his internal conflicts with attaining his goals. This idea goes hand-in-hand with the editor's second technique of watching character's reactions to what is being said rather than primarily showing the speaker because, as a leader, understanding how one's words and actions affect others is important. Through this technique the viewer is able to look through Billy's eyes and understand what his words mean to the other characters and how his communication changes

how the other characters interact with him. The techniques used separately are powerful when understood and can give more to a character and story being shown but the way they are used together within *Moneyball* add an element to the dialogue scenes that enhances the story two-fold.

The Fighter Section:

Story and Character Descriptions:

The Fighter is a non-fiction story about the boxer “Irish” Micky Ward and his journey as a boxer in Lowell, MA during the early 1990’s. As well there is a focus on his brother Dicky Eklund who helps Micky train and also is a crack addict. The film is partially set behind the scenes of the HBO documentary *Crack In America* and is intercut with boxing footage that has the old television style visuals, including 90s’ style graphics and interlaced footage. During the film Micky deals with the pressures of family and friends as he works through the issues of his own ambitions and making his family happy.

Identification of Functions:

Editing within *The Fighter* is very much based on the actions and reactions of others, as it is a movie about boxing, and just as a boxer reacts to his opponents, the editor reacts to the actions and emotions of the story. As a boxer. The familial struggles between Micky and his mother and brother are potent as Micky works hard to be successful and most of the rest of his family use him for selfish gains. Through shot choice, the conflicts presented within the story and dialogue between the characters, internal emotional discourse is enhanced through the use of

movement at specific moments in time. By using this enhanced visual discourse the audience is able to envision his emotions and empathize with Micky Ward.

Assessment of Functions and Support Found:

Through *The Fighter* intentional choices were made between handheld shots and steady-cam or dollied shots, as it pertains to movement. These types of shooting involve some level of planned movement but each has a different effect. Within the film there are scenes shot with a mixture of moving and locked off shots. Through the use of choice shots the amount of extra movement that happens during the handheld shots on Micky portray his internal emotions as they pertain to what is happening within the story. This idea has a clear progression as the narrative moves forward and the conflict rises during *The Fighter*.

From the second scene of *The Fighter* movement is implemented in order to have a more organic feel. As well it portrays Micky's emotions toward characters and within himself. As the shot dollies forward the frame moves forward to Micky and his brother, Dicky, as they are paving a road. Dicky is attempting to play fight his brother and Micky eventually gives in. During the fight there are smooth movements and transitions as they spar back and forth. This is the first evidence that smooth movement means that Micky is emotionally stable and in control or happy.

After a credit sequence involving the two brothers walking through the streets of Lowell, MA, the scene cuts to the first practice session. A close-up of his hands wrapped in tape is slightly shaky, giving the idea that there is something off when compared to the smooth shots before the credit sequence. Throughout this scene the amount of extra movement in the handheld shots is minimal, as many of the film's characters are introduced. The practice session has not begun and everyone is waiting around because Dicky is late to coach for Micky's practice. The

minimal extra movement implies that though it is frustrating for Micky it is still a common enough occurrence that it is not emotionally jarring. Micky's mother, Alice, then enters the scene making a big ruckus. She is presented in a wide right to left trucking shot with a lot of extra shaking movement, almost as if the camera is running to keep up. Her entrance is one that implies that Micky is not happy she has come. Alice complains as she walks up and gets in front of the HBO documentary cameras that are there and the extra movement calms down. As she distracts the documentarians and makes excuses for Dicky's lateness, shots of Micky are intercut showing a little more movement than they are with the shots of Alice and the other characters. These intercut shots tell the audience of whose emotions the movement actually belongs and how the story should be understood through the eyes of Micky.

During the following scene the local bar is crowded with Micky's family as they talk and enjoy themselves. Everyone is relaxed so the pans and tilts showing the family are smooth but when Micky is shown at the edge of the group and in the background there is a little more shakiness. This added implied internal struggle is not from frustration but rather nervousness at the thought of asking the bartender, Charlene, out on a date. As Micky sidles to the side, to get a better look at her, the camera slowly moves in with a little bit of shaky movement and his father, George, convinces him to talk to her. During the ensuing conversation some extra movement is built in to the beginning as Micky works his way in to introducing himself. The shots become steadier as she focuses more of her attention on him and his boxing. This steadiness denotes the confidence building within him as they talk. Once he finally asks her for her phone number his excitement becomes a little more potent and the extra shaking movements within the shot pick up once more. As he walks away with her number on a napkin his excitement can be seen on his face and felt through the extra movement in the shot.

As Micky and his family prepare to leave for his first fight of the film they are presented in a wide shot by the limo, waiting for Dicky. The wide shot and medium shot of George and Alice are locked off, with no movement, but as Micky and O'Keefe discuss where Dicky is (at a local crack house) there is a slight shaking movement, showing Micky's frustration toward his brother. They decide to go get him out of the house and as Dicky jumps out of a back window Micky is there to catch him in the act. Because of the events that are happening and the built up frustration the whole scene is encapsulated within two shots and pans back and forth between the characters, with a lot of extra shaking movement that enhances the emotions being felt.

After they all return home from his lost fight there are a few smaller scenes that promote Micky's emotions towards others through the extra movement of the shot. The first is as he tells his mom he is not sure he wants to fight anymore, during the shots that make the other characters the main focus they contain smooth movement or are locked off but when Micky is the character focused on there is extra movement due to his frustration toward his brother and mother, who are using him. The next smaller scene that promotes the technical idea is when Charlene comes to Micky's door asking why he did not call her. As Micky argues with her and apologizes for not calling the shots are shakier because he is nervous and embarrassed but once she enters his house to help him fix his bandages the movement is only slight and more relaxed because he is in a more intimate setting and mindset with her.

Another example of shot movement implying Micky's emotions is when Charlene first meets his whole family. Micky and Charlene sit on one couch together facing the family, George is the only person that likes Charlene. Alice arrives with Dicky and begins talking about Micky's next fighting opportunity. Up until this point the camera movement is only slight, as the tension has been rising, Micky tries to tell Alice that he does not want to fight anymore but she will not

have it. Charlene steps in for him and Alice and Micky's sisters begin arguing with her and start screaming at her, which heightens Micky's emotions even more; extra camera movement becomes jarring as this happens. He attempts to calm everything down but the argument continues until Charlene steps up and defends him even more. As she takes charge the camera movement lessens exhibiting how Charlene helps stabilize Micky's emotions and is a calming factor in his life.

After attempting to defend Dicky while he gets arrested, Micky winds up with a broken hand and cannot fight or train for some time. Once his hand is healed it is suggested to him that he gets back to training by one of his trainers, O'Keefe. Micky agrees and begins the process. A new manager comes by that is willing to fund Micky and promote him as he trains but the catch is that Dicky and Alice are not allowed to be on the team. During this scene, as Micky is shown, there is some added movement as he contemplates whether it will be okay that he drops his family as teammates in order to focus on himself but because he knows it is good for him he is not extremely emotionally distraught or frustrated.

Through the rest of the film Micky's emotional frustration focuses primarily on his brother. Micky visits Dicky in prison in order to see how he is doing, let him know that he is not going to be training him anymore, and to let him know about his new fight. The scene begins with medium shots of both men as they converse. As the conversation becomes deeper the camera pans back and forth between them, to show the emotional connection that they have with one another. As the conversation turns toward the fight they begin to argue with one another about the strategy of Micky's next fight. The camera movement becomes more erratic as Micky's emotions flare up in anger with his brother, because he believes his brother is just

speaking selfishly and not actually trying to help. As Micky leaves the room the shot shakes with anger.

The next time they see each other is when Dicky is released from prison. Micky is practicing with O'Keefe when his mother and brother walk in excited. As Micky makes it clear with Dicky that he cannot be a part of the team though he simultaneously wants him to be there is extra movement. O'Keefe and Charlene face off against Alice and Dicky in the gym, and Micky stands in the middle of the argument, trying to get them to work together, the camera movement builds from beginning to end as Micky is emotionally distraught about the whole situation. Micky, just wanting to have what is best for him, is visibly high strung and the audience feels it as well through the use of extra shaking movements.

Scrutiny of Functions:

Overall, the use of movement as a form of visual emotion works well within the story of *The Fighter*. Because of the boxing concept and the internal emotions that Micky had toward his family, primarily his mother and brother, showing this not only through words and actions but through camera work is a technique that can help the audience understand him more. The purpose of extra movement involved is not something that most viewers pick up on while viewing a film so it can affect their view without them knowing. This subtle messaging to the audience makes the technique work well, though at the same time it may not be consciously noted by viewers. That being said, because the technique is consistent through the story while primarily being a cutting choice rather than composition choice, *The Fighter's* dialogue scenes do convey a somewhat deeper meaning through their shot choices that help audiences understand

and connect with Micky Ward as he feels frustration, embarrassment, and anger throughout the story.

The King's Speech Section:

Story and Character Descriptions:

The King's Speech is about King George VI and his ascension to the throne as the King of the United Kingdom. King George VI grew up with a stutter and for years sought help from therapists, struggling to speak properly. Just as he is about to give up on trying, the King's wife finds a speech therapist named Lionel Logue, who works with him and eventually befriends him. The story happens during a time of difficulty in the Windsor family as King George V is dying, his successor King Edward VIII is living a scandalous lifestyle, and King George VI is thrown in to his position as events worsen in mainland Europe and Germany begins their offensive on the brink of World War II.

Identification of Functions:

Within *The King's Speech* there is a melding of production and post-production editing that presents itself to the audience in a way that forms the emotional and relational status between characters. Through the use of composition and shot choice Tariq Anwar, the film's editor, was able to build the psychological and emotional connections that King George VI and Lionel Logue had with each other, and with those with whom they were close. The primary technique that was used within the film was through the composition of each person in each discussion and the direction they were facing, whether it be toward the near or far side of the

screen. This is the broad idea and will be explained within the next section. The secondary editing technique utilized within *The King's Speech* focused on King George VI, his own emotions, and how Lionel helped him speak to the United Kingdom even though he had a stutter. This was achieved through the introduction and selection of camera movement.

Assessment of Functions and Support Found:

As discussed earlier, the use of shot composition and choice was a key factor within *The King's Speech*. Within each key dialogue scene between the two main characters, King George VI and Lionel, deliberate framing was chosen in order to show the emotion of the discussion and many times the relationship of those speaking with one another. There are two parts to each shot that were key to the emotion and relationship within each scene: distance and direction.

During the key dialogue scenes the distance the camera was from the character, whether it be a close-up, a medium shot, or a wide shot, the audience was able to recognize the emotion of the character. This idea can easily be identified in the scene after King George's father dies. As the King stands outside of Lionel's office and each man looks at one another and Lionel finds out the King just wants to talk, they are presented in medium shots alone. The King walks in to the office and a wide shot establishes the direction and spot of where the scene will take place within the office. The conversation that they have during this scene delves in to the past of the King, his emotions toward his family, and the current situation of kingship in the United Kingdom, as no one believes his brother is fit to be king because of his social choices. As King George VI sits and accepts a brandy from Lionel, medium shots and close-ups are used intercut with the original wide shot in order to create an awkward feeling for the audience because both men, especially the King, understand that royalty does not talk about their personal problems

with commoners. The use of three different angles and distances makes the audience live through the awkward tension of getting comfortable enough to talk about personal problems. As they both sit down and the King begins to spill out his feelings about his childhood and royal issues close ups are utilized between the two men, back and forth. This technique keeps the audience close and understanding that the relationship between the King and Lionel is extremely close during this time. At two points within the conversation a medium wide two shot that dollies in to a medium two shot. This shot is used as the conversation becomes lighter, as both the characters and the audience are able to take a small breath, then returning to the close-ups and close medium shots. Cutting back and forth between these shots, building emotion, and allowing spoken thoughts to be completed while showing the listener's reaction before they speak shows how this scene has all the elements of using distance to communicate the emotion of the scene.

These practices happen throughout all of the encounters between the King and Lionel. In their first meeting Lionel and the King stare at each other in a wide shot, with about five feet of distance between the two of them. At this point he has been through so many speech teachers and therapists he is doubtful it will work and what makes it worse is that Lionel wants to be friendlier with him than he believes should be allowed. With these conflicting ideas the King is naturally shown in medium and wide shots away from Lionel at the beginning of the conversation. As Lionel suggests that they have a more intimate level of interaction, in order to create a comfortable and trusting environment, the King becomes more frustrated. The way that the editor shows the emotion and the distant relationship of the two men is through the distance of each shot choice. As the King gets frustrated the camera gets extremely close and he stutters more. After he gets frustrated and disagrees with whatever Lionel is suggesting the camera backs out to a wide shot, implying that the King is disengaging from the idea and that Lionel is

regrouping in order to try to connect again. The process then begins again and the editor patterns his shots to create continuity between each one.

The final key example of this technique between the King and Lionel is during their meeting after a party at Balmoral Castle, thrown by his brother (the current king) and his mistress. The scene begins with a close-up of the King and a medium close-up of Lionel. This establishes they are already in a deep conversation and emotions are already high. A wide shot is then given to establish the location and as the conversation builds in favor of action and openness the camera backs out to medium shots. The King begins to move around and the camera follows him in medium and close shots as he lets out his frustration about his brother being king. Two medium shots are given of Lionel as he sits and cheers the King on, but there is no movement until he too gets up and suggests they take a walk in the park to help clear their heads. The close-ups and medium shots used in this scene are used in a way that implies the audience already understands that a close-up shot implies deep emotional happenings and discussions. The camera then backs out to medium shots in order to help the audience track the King and Lionel and show them at comfortable distances which implies that they are relaxed when communicating with one another.

Distance is not only used between the King and Lionel but also between each of them and other supporting characters. In every scene between the King and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, they are shown with close-ups that generally have part of the other person on screen. During the first scene, as the King prepares for his first national speech, he and the Queen have close-ups that show the relationship between them as he is extremely nervous and she is supporting him and trying to make it better. As well when the King begins to break down as the weight of his new responsibilities bear down on him, she comes to his side and comforts him, they are shown in

close-ups and two shots that imply their intimate relationship and the emotional climate of the scene.

Patterned change in distance between shots is used during the conversations that the King has with the Prime Minister and with Winston Churchill. The first conversation that he has with the Prime Minister is in relation to the King's brother and his mistress's scandalous behavior. During this scene the Prime Minister expresses his, and other key leaders', concerns about the image of the current King and how it could affect the United Kingdom. The scene begins with a medium shot of the Prime Minister and cuts to another medium shot of the King. Each subsequent shot of the Prime Minister is a medium shot, showing his distance and emotional stability while he speaks. Close-ups of the King are intercut as the Prime Minister speaks in order to show his reactions, and have the audience feel his emotions as bad things are being brought up about the crown and what he stands for. The scene ends with a close-up of each man, psychologically closing and connecting the conversation and the two men. The second time he speaks with the Prime Minister it is about the coming war with Germany, and the Prime Minister's resignation. During this scene the emotion brought about by the news of what is happening on the European mainland and the resignation are done through continued dolly shots moving in on both the Prime Minister and the King from medium shots to close-up. Because of the forward motion that seems continuous as cuts are made back and forth, the audience feels the character's emotion as if the world is closing in on them.

The King's meeting with Churchill represents the emotion of each character as the King's brother has unofficially announced his resignation of King. Churchill initially is shown in a medium shot, being emotionally stable in his support of the new King and offering his help. The other side of the conversation shows the King in all close-ups, his emotional frustration being

shown through the close distance. As well the audience understands that he feels boxed in, through the utilization of these close-ups. Again as the emotion of the dialogue becomes more emotional and the King admits that he is not sure he is ready, the shots become closer and closer on both men.

Direction, as I refer to it, in *The King's Speech*, is in reference to how a character is both composed within a shot and which way they are facing in each shot. The use of direction is immense within the film and is edited in a way that makes the audience feel the ebb and flow of relationships between each character. Shot composition within this film had three primary positions of the characters: far left, far right, and centered. A character that was composed in the center of the shot emoted power. For example the first speech instructor at the beginning of the film yelling at the King that he needed to speak with the marbles in his mouth, the King's brother when he was making fun of him or his stutter, and when the King was feeling confident after his first wartime speech at the end of the film. During most dialogue scenes, though, most characters were composed left or right in order for the audience to understand their two-dimensional positioning within the scene. Understanding the position of each character in relation to the way they are facing in each shot is how the audience feels the close or distant relationships that are at play. For example when the King and the Queen are speaking with one another they may be composed as the King on the right side of the screen and the Queen on the left side of the screen but they are looking toward the closer edge. Many times this would imply that they are looking away from each other, but rather, by referencing the wide shot at the beginning of the scene a realization comes about that implies that they are facing one another. Even if their physical distance is far away, the close-ups that are composed this way emote a close relationship between the two characters.

During the three scenes that were presented within the discussion on distance, between the King and Lionel and within his office, direction is another way that the editor brought the audience in to the status of the emotional connection between the two men. During the first meeting while the King and Lionel are arguing about whether or not they should create an intimate emotional environment, the King is looking at the far side of the screen, disconnecting himself from the attempts at working on his speech in the ways of Lionel. In contrast Lionel is looking directly at the near side of the screen in an attempt to work with the King and make him feel at ease. These awkward compositions and shot choices evoke feelings within the audience that help them understand the dynamics at play, as well as making them feel uncomfortable that the King is not physically addressing Lionel. This composition continues through the scene until Lionel finally gets the King to answer questions on how his stuttering started and Lionel helps him understand that it is not his fault and the disability is curable. Once this happens the King is then looking in the direction of the near edge of the screen, implying a new found closeness between the two.

In their second meeting after the King's father's death, the direction of each character changes as the conversation moves in and out of emotion. This does not happen nearly as much as the distance but it is notable. From the beginning the two men are facing the far edge of the screen because Lionel is not expecting the King and a connection has to be established. Once this happens and Lionel realizes something is wrong and the King opens up, they both are composed and facing toward each other in the close-ups and medium shots. As Lionel steps over the line on what he is allowed to ask about and when the King insults him the direction of each character changes so that they are facing the far edge of the screen. Again, this not only implies a close relationship but also a close emotional bond that shifts during deep conversations.

In the third shorter meeting, after the King's breakdown with his brother, the use of direction shows how the King is embarrassed and emotionally separating himself as much as possible from the embarrassing situation. On the other side, Lionel is facing the nearside of the screen toward the King, supporting him once again. As the support continues the King's direction slowly switches to facing the near side of the screen toward Lionel and, in the mind of the audience, creating the close emotional bond that they previously had.

There are multiple scenes within the film that are setup how I described direction earlier in this section. As the King and Queen ride in the car to the party they are physically close and still framed facing the near side of the screen, intimately chatting in their close-ups with one another. As well they do the same when the King breaks down after officially being crowned and as she moves even closer they are shown with the same composition even though the other is on the screen during the extreme close-ups.

One scene that shows a different use of this concept is between Lionel and his wife. The Logue family sits in their living room. She reads and he works at his desk, this is established by a wide shot, they are both looking away from one another. During the conversation, about his and the King's recent falling out, he is shown in a medium shot at the far right corner of the screen and looking away and down toward the near side of the screen. The close-up cuts to his wife, which has her in the far left of the screen looking at the near edge of the frame. This use of composition and direction shows the audience the relational detachment between the two because of Lionel's secret that he was helping the King and his embarrassment of having the falling out. This composition also shows the audience the wife's unconcern about the situation, partially due to her lack of pertinent knowledge but as well she clearly is not completely paying attention to the interaction because she is reading.

The final technique used in editing the dialogue scenes of *The King's Speech* that helps forward the story within specific scenes is through the use of movement. The limited amount of movement that was cut within the film shows its importance within dialogue scenes. Dolly-in's were used during scenes where building emotions were pertinent to the conversation. Some examples of this can be found during the recording session as the King visibly is reading Shakespeare without fault, as well after the King's father dies and Lionel and the King connect on a deeper level through his emotional issues, and during the conversation between the Prime Minister and the King as information on the war and the Minister's resignation come about. Each of these dolly-in movements subtly brings the audience closer to the characters physically and psychologically, making them feel as though they are truly connected with them.

Other uses of movement are during the practice sessions and the final speech that the King makes. At the beginning of these scenes the camera movement is little to none, generally in and out movements, locked on their angle. As the King relaxes physically and mentally the camera movement replicates that feeling, in order for the viewer to feel the change in emotion. This happens with an upswing of music each time as the King sings and dances and moves in order to speak properly. Each time the movement increases through the middle of each scene and dies down back to a prim-and-proper movement or stand still to show the true regal nature of the King and the serious attitude that comes with being royalty.

Scrutiny of Functions:

The King's Speech used editing techniques in dialogue scenes that forwarded story development and relationships in ways that are not often seen in American film making. By using composition that focused on the distance and direction of a character in comparison with

those they were communicating with the editor added a depth to each individual scene between King George VI, Lionel, and other supporting characters. By having the characters face the near or far edge of frame, depending on how each character was feeling about the other or the emotion of the scene, adds an element for viewers that help them understand those emotions and relations. The use of movement within the film also greatly helps the audience visualize the internal emotions of King George VI as he struggles with his stutter and learns to speak to his kingdom. The way that the editor of *The King's Speech* cut together the dialogue scenes of the film successfully portrays deeper meanings within the communication between characters than just what was acted out, successfully enhancing each scene.

The Social Network Section:

Story and Character Descriptions:

The Social Network is a non-fiction story about the beginning of the social networking website Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg's journey to building the most successful networking website in the world, becoming the youngest billionaire in America. The story is told using the two depositions that Mark went through, around 2007, as the narration and transitions for the story being told. Eduardo Saverin, Mark's best friend, who helps build Facebook and has conflict with Mark, eventually suing him. The other deposition is brought on by the Winklvoss twins, believing that Mark has stolen their idea. The intertwining storyline gives a bigger picture to the beginnings of Facebook and gives depth to the people who actually lived through the events. *The Social Network* won the 2010 Academy Award for Best Editing.

Identification of Functions:

The Social Network is primarily about Mark Zuckerberg and his life during the beginning of Facebook. This idea was emphasized within the dialogue editing of the film through the use of intentional isolation during key events, slowly implementing Mark with other characters as the film progressed.

Assessment of Functions and Support Found:

The key theme that the editors embedded within the dialogue scenes of *The Social Network* is the isolation of Mark within himself from society because of his idea that he was superior to everyone else. The editing theme begins at the first deposition scene. Mark's isolation from others is apparent through the choice of shots. For example in the first disposition scene, with Eduardo, when Mark is featured in the shot no other characters can be distinguished on the edge of the frame, other than the establishing wide shots, whereas when the plaintiff's lawyer is speaking directly to Mark either his shoulder is prominently in frame or her legal team are shown.

Another example of this is when Mark is first meeting the Winklevoss twins. As the twins approach Mark in the hallway Mark's back is to the audience and the twins are in full view. Now, when Mark's dialogue and reactions are shown a standard double over the shoulder shot or three shot is not used but rather he stands alone in the discussion, psychologically distancing Mark from the two massive crew team members who are wanting to partner with him on a new project. This trend continues in the next scene within the bike room of the Porcellian Final Club. The Winklevoss Twins' business partner, Divya Narendra, is introduced so there is a bigger group talking, Mark is still being standoffish with his words, and is further excluded from

the 'elite status' through the shot choice. In the over-the-shoulder shots selected Mark is a prominent part of the screen, taking up a third of it, implying that the featured character believes they are connecting with him yet when the camera is reversed Mark is shown alone. This visually shows the psychological distance and dynamics between Mark and the other characters, for the audience.

As *The Social Network* continues Mark slowly pulls out of his disconnection with others and more over the shoulder shots where his face is shown and more medium two shots are used. The key turning point for this change in shot choice is when The Facebook goes live. Up until this point there were very few shots that presented Mark with another person in a medium shot or close-up where the other person was important. Once The Facebook is finished with its initial launch Eduardo, as Mark's best friend, moves in to the shot and talks with him, there is no awkward tension and subliminally Mark has connected with someone, as they have accomplished something big and made the first major step in the entrepreneurial endeavor.

From that scene on there is an ebb and flow to Mark's connection with people. During the initial phasing of The Facebook, Mark is presented with Eduardo in the next few scenes that involve dialogue, he begins to make connections with other people and forming common ground, The Facebook being the primary commonality, but his isolation and bitterness toward others disappears as the two friends revel in their success. Soon after though, following a confrontation with Mark's ex-girlfriend, Mark re-isolates himself as he focuses on getting some vengeance against her and expanding to other markets. The change in shot choice is apparent from one scene to the next as Mark disconnects, in his dorm room, from the rest of his group who work on the website. During the discussion to expand to new schools quick cuts are employed focusing on different parts of the group. Four out of the six participants are shown together but two are

not: Mark and Eduardo. Mark is isolated once again as he makes plans and hands out marching orders to those he is employing, not taking in to consideration how he looks to the others, just that what he needs gets done.

This begins the editing practice of singling out Eduardo during the rest of the film. During this scene he is shocked by the sudden change in Mark's attitude, and only isolated as issues about The Facebook are addressed. Yet in the scenes following, Eduardo, is isolated within shots when Mark is betraying him because he believes he is not fully committed to what the website could be and is trying to take control. This can be seen in the fight between Mark, Sean, Eduardo in the California house as Eduardo argues his case for being in New York and why he should be more a part of the process. Each close and medium shot shows Eduardo alone looking back and forth between the two others, trying to keep his composure. As well, as he signs the contract for the new Facebook incorporation Eduardo is isolated in his shots within the conference room while the lawyers give him the contract to sign. During this scene he does not realize he is being set up to fail but the editors intentionally chose to separate him during the whole scene to give hint at his demise. His and Mark's final positive connection happens directly after he signs the contract. Eduardo walks in to the shot, showing his back, as Mark looks at him and says he will need to come back for the one millionth user party, they smile at one another and have their last connection as best friends. This also is the last time Mark is shown so close to another character in a shot, for positive reasons.

Another example of how the shot choice shows how Mark's engagement and connection with others during conversations is when he and Sean Parker, the creator of Napster, are in the Club in California after Sean is told that Eduardo went to New York for an internship. A superficial conversation is being discussed over drinks and Mark is looking off in to the distance.

Wide shots are used in order to establish the setting at the beginning of the scene. Sean and two girls are shown in an over the shoulder three shot from Mark, having a good time, but when Mark is put in to view he is again separated from those around him by being the only person on screen. The two girls leave and Mark and Sean begin a business discussion. Each shot, compositionally, gets closer to the characters, and though Mark initially is isolated in his shots but as the conversation gets deeper Sean reels in his attention from the architecture of the building to impressing others. Mark leans in to hear Sean and the over the shoulder shots from Sean begin implying that he is fully engaged and connecting with Sean. Once the conversation winds down, from the serious topic at hand, Mark leans back and again is isolated in his shots, focusing on himself and disconnecting again from others.

The final scene of the film rounds up Mark's whole journey to connect with the general population. The day has come to an end at Eduardo's deposition and Mark sits at the conference table working. Marilyn, who is a part of his legal team, walks in letting him know that he can leave. This encounter is shown in a wide shot in order to establish the setting as well as show the audience the slight connection Mark has with her. As she sits down they talk about what will happen next each character is shown in long over the shoulder shots and some close-ups implying the slight disconnect that Mark has with her. In the end a complete disconnection happens because she works for him, but rather than this disconnection being one of anger or superiority it is one of professionalism and understanding. As Marilyn walks out of the conference room, Mark is left alone centered in a medium shot, isolated physically yet attempting to reconnect with Erica, his ex-girlfriend from the beginning of the film, presenting to the audience that though Mark is physically alone at the end of the story he has made progress in the act of social networking.

Scrutiny of Function:

The utilization of separation between Mark and the other characters through shot composition and shot choice works very well for *The Social Network*. The technique was consistently used in a way that told a deeper story within the main storyline, Mark's journey of learning how to coexist with others and truly connect with them. By isolating him while he felt superior or defensive and then bringing him compositionally closer to others as he learned and yearned to be a part of something bigger, the editors of *The Social Network* communicated these ideas in a way that the audience could grasp them and add depth to character interactions, enhancing the dialogue between them and the events that would unfold throughout the film.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo Section:

Story and Character Descriptions:

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is a mystery story about a journalist, Mikael Blomkvist, and the investigation of a forty year old cold case of a missing girl. The film as well features the story of Lisbeth Salander, an outcast and a hacker, who aids Mikael in his search for the truth.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo won the 2011 Academy Award for Best Editing.

Identification of Functions:

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is shot and edited in a way that complements the story being told and the source material that the writers drew from. The dialogue scenes within the film have artistic wide shots and cutaways to key images that help the audience put together the

story of the Vanger family yet the primary story telling technique that was edited in to *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is focused on the two main characters and their growing professional and intimate relationship. Through the use of distance within the composition of shots both emotional and psychological connections are visualized through shot choices. The audience follows along as Lisbeth learns that she can trust someone other than herself and allows Mikael to share a closeness with her that most others cannot.

Assessment of Functions and Support found:

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is a story of more than a murder mystery but of the emotional journey of Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist. As both characters are dealing with personal issues, the story unfolds before the audience in a way that shows the parallel timelines of the events happening in their individual lives.

Mikael, as a strong and confident man is presented quite often in over the shoulder medium shots and medium two shots within his dialogue scenes with supporting characters. Examples of this can be found throughout the movie in his interactions with Erika Berger, his girlfriend, Henrik Vanger, his employer, and the people with whom he interviews. Each of these scenes includes close over the shoulder shots that invoke in the audience an understanding that he can connect with others very easily.

On the other hand, Lisbeth is strong yet extremely cautious of everyone around her. Because of her past experiences she distances herself with everyone she is required to talk to and does not interact with anyone that she does not have to. Through the use of long shots, medium shots, and the use of having her viewed many times in a profile shot and not looking at those she is talking with, the audience physically sees and feels the space that Lisbeth intentionally places

between herself and others. Examples of this can be seen in the conference room in the discussion between Lisbeth and her employer as they discuss Mikael and she makes a point that she does not want to be with them, signified by her nonverbal cues. As well, when she deals with her new legal guardian as he reprimands her and asks her questions, though they are shown in over-the-shoulder shots and wide two shots, a physical distance promotes the idea of a mental distance between the two. One other key example of this happens as a reminder to the audience of the distance she keeps from others, within the third act, when she is tasked with sifting through archives of the Vanger Company and has to deal with the keeper of the archives. As they disagree they are physically separated and their disagreement also separates them. Through the use of cutting in long over the shoulders and medium wide shots the editor enhances the idea that Lisbeth does not want to garner a relationship or connect with anyone.

Though *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* features both Lisbeth and Mikael through the first act of the story they do not meet until the beginning of the second act. The time that the characters are not together, during the first act, allowed the editors to establish the visual rules of how they relate to others. Once Lisbeth and Mikael meet the conversational protocols that each have set for themselves combat, both through their words and in the edit.

Their first meeting is somewhat of a shock to Lisbeth, as she is not expecting him to come find her. Mikael shows up to the apartment early in the morning to both talk about her investigation of him and to bring her on to help him with the Harriet Vanger investigation. When she finally opens the door they are shown in a medium profile shot facing one another. She talks about how it is not really a good time, alone in a medium shot, still somewhat shocked he is there. Then as he argues with her he stops and says, "We need to talk". The closeup on his face showing that he is serious. As she gains her composure, internally, the camera backs out to a

medium shot beginning to show the distance between the two characters and establishing the location of the scene. She gets ready and leads her friend out of the apartment and turns around, in a medium long shot that begins showing her internal separation and preparation as she deals with Mikael, who moved to the kitchen and is shown in an over-the-shoulder medium long shot exhibiting to the audience that she is against becoming close with the man that just made his way in to her apartment. As the conversation begins the two characters are presented back and forth in this fashion, with a close-up for emphasis as Lisbeth threatens him about if he touches her. They both move to the table, the conversation gets deeper, and they internally get closer with one another, which is emphasized through the choice of over-the-shoulder shots. The conversation flows in to the Harriet Vanger investigation and Mikael mentions he wants her help. This statement jars her and makes her inwardly question him of “why her?”; the shot type switches from over-the-shoulder, showing a connection, to a medium shot of her isolated. Mikael recognizes her hesitation and makes the driving point that he knows will bring her in to help, that they are going to catch a killer of women. For emphasis Mikael says this statement in a close-up, showing the audience that this is an important idea; this also connects Lisbeth to Mikael as her reaction to the notion is shown in a close-up before they begin discussing the case in detail.

Their next meeting happens back at the cottage that Mikael is set-up in on the Vanger owned island. Lisbeth has been doing some research and has been looking through police reports on cold case files that are seemingly connected with Harriet Vanger. As she gets off of her motorcycle and enters the cottage Mikael is conversing with Martin Vanger about the health of his uncle and how Mikael’s work is coming. Because Lisbeth does not have the connection that she does with Mikael she is presented in a long over-the-shoulder shots before she enters the cottage. Once Martin has left Mikael goes back inside of the cottage and Lisbeth goes straight in

to explaining everything she has found. She is very excited about all of the connections she has found and the information she has gleaned. The beginning of the encounter shows separation as this is their second meeting, but the composition of the shots proceed to close-ups as Lisbeth spills the information faster and faster and Mikael becomes overwhelmed by the amount of data she has compiled about the hideous murders. These shot choices close the gap between the two characters even though they are featured separately. When he finally stops her and they take a smoke break outside, in each shot they are shown together in three primary two shots, as they discuss the case a little more. The choice to show the two characters together in all of these shots strengthens, in the minds of the viewers, the unique connection that Lisbeth is experiencing with Mikael. In the morning their connection is enhanced once more by the use of medium shots that include Mikael blurry in the background and medium close-up shots of both of them leaning over his computer looking at the evidence. Lisbeth's caution is still present and it can be seen when Mikael accidentally touches her when he leans over her, but she allows him to stay close and the shot has both of them filling the screen together discussing the case before they separate once more to do individual investigating.

Lisbeth and Mikael's emotional connection deepens through the shot choice within the next scene that they are together. As Mikael investigates on the other side of the island he is shot at and a bullet grazes his head. Rushing back to the cottage, Lisbeth is there setting up a surveillance system, he bursts in explaining that he got shot. She quickly moves to help him. During this scene medium shots are utilized to compensate for the actions as she pours alcohol on his wound and he reacts. Once the wound is "cleaned" and Lisbeth begins sewing up the wound both characters are presented in close over-the-shoulder shots in order to show the intimate connection that is building between the two of them. This idea is perpetuated in to the

next morning as their intimate connection the night before overlaps with close over-the-shoulder shots, rather than medium shots. Their connection at this point is at an all-time high. The audience can recognize through the use of the shots being closer than earlier in the film that Lisbeth trusts Mikael so much more than when they first met and more than anyone else. Within the next short scene between Martin, Henrik's lawyer, and Mikael, Lisbeth is presented in the back ground only with long shots behind Mikael. The way that this scene is cut so that she is only clearly close to Mikael and distant from the other two characters, reminding the audience that they should not be mistaken about by how close she is with Mikael. Even though Lisbeth has let her guard down with one person it does not mean that she is trusting of anyone else.

After Mikael is beaten by the killer in his den and Lisbeth apprehends him and kills him she, once again, fixes him up. They spend the night together and wake up the next morning, talking about their own personal issues and past. During this scene they are framed in a medium two shot, profiled, looking at one another laying on the bed. This shot, mixed with close-ups of each character, tells the audience that they are completely open with one another and that Lisbeth is willing to trust Mikael completely and intimately.

After all of the intimacy and closeness the story ends with Lisbeth and Mikael being emotionally and physically separated. In the final scene, as she gets off of her motorcycle, with a present in hand for Mikael, Lisbeth sees him walking away with his original girlfriend, Erika. Their final shot together tells of her devastation and separation as she stands there in a medium shot profiled and Mikael gets in to a taxi in the distance, blurred from depth of field.

Scrutiny of Function:

The overall editing style of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was all about relationships, primarily focusing on Lisbeth's connections, or lack of, with other people. The use of distance within the composition of shots and shot choices enhanced the dialogue in a way that allows audiences to understand her and Mikael's connection, specifically focusing on her trust for him. The example of Mikael being shot at and their intimate composition being compared to the next day, when they are meeting with Martin and Dirch Frode and she is physically and compositionally distanced from the other characters, shows viewers that her instincts have not changed just because of her encounters with one man on one night. The dialogue editing style between these two main characters strengthens and deepens the story being told and the characters themselves. These choices give more than the written story but an implied depth.

Courageous Section:

Story and Character Descriptions:

Courageous is a story about five men who struggle with their roles as fathers and their faith. Adam, Shane, Nathan, and David are police officers in Georgia whose mission is taking drugs off the streets. Javier, whose family is in financial trouble, befriends these men after Adam gives him a job. During the film Adam suffers through the loss of his daughter and recapturing his relationship with his son. Through his grieving Adam studies what fatherhood should be according to the Bible and makes a resolution to be a better father to his family; three of the other four become better fathers as well.

Identification of Functions:

The function of the way that *Courageous* was cut within its dialogue scenes was to communicate the basic storyline in an effective manner. With the inclusion of wide shots, to establish each scene, and reaction shots the editors of *Courageous* effectively told the story outright. While enjoying the film, audience members are able to recognize who has the most important information within a scene by who is presented the most. There are two different dialogue editing techniques that have been used within the film that achieve the goal of telling the main story. The techniques utilized are scenes shown in single long takes and scenes that apply continuity in both word and image with cutaways to reactions and occasional wide shots.

Assessment of Functions and Support Found:

Within *Courageous* the two dialogue editing styles are basic within filmmaking, though one is used more than the other, they both successfully tell the story that is trying to be told. Through the use of wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, and over-the-shoulder shots, the editors of *Courageous* utilized the two different editing techniques mentioned previously in order to tell their story.

The first editing technique that should be mentioned is for the scenes that contain no cuts at all. The choice to show a long take can build emotion as well, if the one shot contained the actor's best take; it allows the audience to feel as if they are sitting in the room with the characters, experiencing their issues with them. The two scenes that this technique was used in are when Javier and his family are introduced and when Adam talks with his son for the first time after his daughter's funeral.

In the scene located at Javier's home, he has lost his construction job due to over-hiring, his wife is beginning to make the children lunch and he walks in. She is concerned that he is home early and after learning that he has lost his job she becomes even more distressed. Javier calms her down and says he will go back out and look for work, before leaving. During their interaction they experience sadness and worry which is seen on the actors' faces. These actions are presented in a medium shot that is held within the kitchen for the entirety of the scene. This places the audience about five feet from the emotional conversation as though they are listening in rather than experiencing the event.

The second scene that the long take is used is very emotional as well. Adam's nine year old daughter, Emily, has just died in a drunk driving accident and his family is grieving. Adam's son, Dylan, has locked himself in his room in order to ignore the world so he unlocks the door and steps in to talk with him, trying to connect with his son that he has ignored. The whole scene is shown in a low medium two shot on the floor with a slow truck back and forth. The trucking allows the audience to experience some of the emotion that is felt because it articulates the sad and slow feeling of mourning. Yet again the audience observes the interaction from a distance as if they are watching the interaction from afar rather than experiencing the emotions that the characters are going through.

The second technique the editors used was through a focus on continuity and getting the story told. There are three major types of dialogue scenes and locations within *Courageous*: vehicles, cookouts, and emotion driven. Each type of scene is cut similarly and achieves the goal of communicating the information that is needed for the story.

There are five scenes that take place within a vehicle, four in police cars and one within Adam's truck. Each scene contains a standard medium shot that shows from two to four

characters straight ahead. As well medium close-ups are utilized to feature whomever is speaking and show short reactions of those within the vehicle. When the vehicle is at a standstill the shots switch to medium two shots through the driver or passenger windows, which give a different dimension to the conversation. In a scene where Javier is riding in the back of the police car, shot composition is used in order to show a distance between Javier and the gang member that the police officers had to arrest. Javier claims to be the leader of the Snake Kings and speaks in Spanish in order to upset the gang member in the other back seat. Both characters are shown in medium shots but Javier is shown on the far right and the gang member is in the far left, this gives the audience the idea that the gang member is actually trying to get as far away from him as possible and is legitimately upset by his circumstances.

Within the two cookout scenes there are many similarities. The first similarity is that both scenes begin and end with wide shots for establishment and resolution. The second is that most of the cuts are to over-the-shoulder medium shots of whomever is talking. If a character does not talk much then they are given two or three reaction shots but the focus then turns back to whomever is speaking. Both of these scenes bring in deep subjects such as Christ and fatherhood; so when a character says something profound or important they are shown in a close-up before returning to the standard medium over-the-shoulder shots. The few close-ups there are utilized emphasize to the audience the idea that they need to pay attention to what is being said and connect with it as much as possible.

The final type of scene is the emotionally driven type. *Courageous* is full of them because of the content there are three main examples of the common editing style used throughout the film. The first example of emotional editing is within the scene after Javier comes home from getting his job working for Adam. His excitement and praise is evident in his acting.

As he and his wife sit at the kitchen table they are shown in close over-the-shoulder shots, talking back and forth. As he tells of his new job the camera moves closer to Javier and the viewer feels closer to the characters as they see and experience their joy. The second example is after Emily's funeral Adam and his wife mourn and talk in her room, trying to figure out what mistakes they made to cause her to be in the position to get killed. This highly emotional scene begins with a wide establishing shot as they get settled facing one another, as they talk the connection can be felt through the close over-the-shoulder shots and the reaction shots that each character is presented in. Again, the emotional connection is felt by the audience between the two characters because of the close-up shot choices made by the director and editors. The final example to be used for this idea is during a scene where Adam and his family have come to accept the loss of Emily and they all grieve once more, together. A wide establishing shot at the dinner table helps the viewer understand the time and place. Adam begins talking about how "today was a good day" and he smiles. A medium 3 shot of the three of them is intercut with medium over-the-shoulder shots that cut to who is talking. As Dylan admits that he thinks he should have been a better brother the over-the-shoulder shots become slightly closer for the reaction of his parents. As they get up to comfort him, they are then shown in a wide three shot before the film cuts to a close three shot of each of them crying and supporting one another. This choice in shot allows the audience to feel their mixture of pain and hope as they connect with one another before the final shot that dolly's back outside of the window looking in on the family, as if the audience is leaving the characters so they can grieve on their own.

Scrutiny of Functions:

Courageous as an overall story has touched many people's lives and has changed the hearts of many fathers. Yet, as it pertains to the editing of dialogue based scenes, which made up most of the film, it meets the basic editing practices. By cutting to the person speaking or to reaction shots they allow the audience to see how each character is communicating and the slight reactions that each character has to what is being said.

The use of the two scenes with no cuts does not have the effect that is intended, emotionally. Because of the distance that is put between the characters and the audience the emotion is lost as viewers are not physically close with the characters during their vulnerable talks. This lack of cutting also creates dissonance between the two scenes and the rest of the film because all of the other extremely emotional scenes include close-ups that help the audience feel the pain and excitement that the characters are emoting.

Overall the basic function of showing the story was met by *Courageous* but there is a lack of depth in the editing. The basic rules of shot composition were followed and continuity was met both two-dimensionally and three-dimensionally during dialogue scenes, so there were not any times that the audience was jarred out of the story. These basic requirements being met is what the filmmakers wanted even though their editing could have brought even more depth to the characters who were all dealing with deep issues that the audience could relate to.

Conclusion to the Results:

It can be seen through this process that the ways that films are edited have a great effect on how an audience views story and character development. The functions of the dialogue scenes of each film have been identified, assessed, and scrutinized using Foss's schema. As a result I

have found notable differences between the editing practices of the Academy Award nominated films and *Courageous*. The differences I have found and suggestions for more effective storytelling within Christian filmmaking will be discussed within the following section.

Discussion:

As presented within the results section every film editor has some sort of purpose in the way they cut scenes, whether big or small. Foss's schema for the evaluation of imagery allows scholars to identify and assess the meaning behind images. I have applied this schema to five major films and one independent Christian film in an attempt to find storytelling patterns between each of their editing techniques and how they enhance the story being told beyond its basic premise.

The functions found in each film utilized different tactics yet focused on the same concepts of emotions and relationships when a scene was dialogue driven and important to the overall storyline. *Moneyball*'s dialogue scenes were shot and edited in a way that emphasized Billy Beane's relationships with others through the use of isolation and character placement. As well, the way that dialogue scenes presented more of the reactions of others while a person was speaking, rather than showing the person speaking, indicates that understanding how the words being said and how their being said effect the other characters is important to deepening the whole story. *The Fighter*, as a movie about boxing, is very action oriented and through the use of extra movement the filmmakers were able to emote in their shot choice the feelings of their lead character, even if the shot was not on him. Shot composition, through the use of distance and direction, was the key element within *The King's Speech* that complemented relationships and emotions during key moments between characters. Also the use of movement expresses the lead character's internal changes as he breaks down the walls of his impediment. Isolation, through shot choice and composition, was the fundamental concept that *The Social Network* achieved in the editing of their dialogue scenes pertaining to the main characters. The editing techniques of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* told the deeper tale of Lisbeth and Mikael's personalities with

others and how Lisbeth learned to trust at least one man by using shot composition to denote the distance physically and mentally between characters. Finally, *Courageous*'s editing style helped tell the story and add emphasis to key lines and events. Following will be a discussion on the differences between the films, how *Courageous* missed the mark compared to the rest, and how Christian filmmakers can enhance their storytelling through editing.

Film editing is commonly understood as a post-production activity. It happens in a computer at an editing bay away from the film locations and writing rooms. The editor and director decide what to put where, in the end. It happens toward the end of filming or after it is all done. I believe that misconception has kept highly creative filmmakers from attaining the potential their stories could really have and as each of the five Academy films show: editing starts in preproduction when story and character development is meticulously picked over.

Shot composition is something that I found to be the most utilized technique when enhancing the storylines of the films that I observed. In *The Social Network*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, and *Moneyball* the intentional use of separation within the shots, through long shots and singling out a character, successfully deepens the story and character development. Within *The King's Speech* the framing enhanced the dialogue being had within the scene, displaying that even with similar close-ups or medium shots the direction the character is facing can have a major impact on the emotion of a scene.

Each film, visually, has their own style, brought about by the director, cinematographer, and editor in different proportions. *The Social Network* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* have the same director and editors and their style between films can be seen as very similar. Within both films they utilized separation in different ways because the characters were different in each story. Mark, in *The Social Network*, is a boy that is self-centered and thinks he knows

best at the beginning of the film; yet as he goes through his journey he learns how to work with others and how his words and actions do effect those closest to him. The edit shows this through his separation at the beginning of the film and the slow progression toward getting close with people and working with people as the story continues. This is all done through the use of selective over-the-shoulder shots and completely isolating him within the frame, whether in close, medium, or even wide shots. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* also emotes separation through the shot composition and shot choice but there is a different progression as it pertains to the main characters. Mikael Blomkvist can naturally get close to people as a character but Lisbeth Salander intentionally distances herself as a character. This is visualized through the long shots and isolation in the shot choices when she is talking with all but two other characters. As she begins to work with Mikael, she begins to trust him and get closer to him, reluctantly at first. As she talks with Mikael and spends time with him the distance between them gets smaller and smaller, moving from less long shots to more medium two shots and medium over-the-shoulder shots that physically close the distance between the two of them. Though, as noted in the results section, she still maintains her physical and mental separation to everyone else. The differences between the two films in story and development are almost completely different but the editing and shot choices were similar and enhanced both stories in ways that seem catered to them.

In *Moneyball*, Billy is isolated while still surrounded by people. He is alone in his ideas and goals, having to convince those around him that they should follow his lead. Isolation again is a key element within this film. Close-ups and medium shots on Billy maintain him as the only clearly visible character and as he brought more people on his side, like Peter Brand and Ron Washington, they were presented closer to him in medium shots and over-the-shoulder shots.

The King's Speech utilized composition and shot choice to the fullest capacity. By utilizing the near and far edge of frame to imply the depth of relationships and the intimacy of conversations the filmmakers added a layer of understanding for their audience that, unless acknowledged, enhances the storyline and characters. The tense relationship between Lionel and King George VI can be seen within the composition of their discussions, from the beginning of the film to the end, as the direction of the character's eye line to the edge of frame shows both men's attempted relationship with one another or emotional connection. As well between King George VI and his wife, their relationship is not only acted on screen but implied through the direction that they are framed within each shot, though they may be separated by a few feet of distance, facing their nearest edge of frame as they talk with one another implies that they are having a conversation that is closer than the physical space between them.

The use of movement was important in both *The Fighter* and *The King's Speech*. Within *The Fighter* as Micky's emotions rose and his confidence fell the shot became shakier. This generally would happen as his mother and brother made decisions that were not in his best interest and as arguments and fighting ramped up. This did not happen consistently within each scene, many times the shot would only be shaky on key characters, especially Micky, and the movements would be smooth or nonexistent on the other characters within the scene. The addition of movement indicates for the audience the emotions of the main character in an attempt to have them feel what he feels. *The King's Speech* utilized motion within its dialogue scenes in order to emote the feelings of King George VI as he opened up to Lionel and worked through his speech problem. The fluid motions utilized and chosen give the audience the idea of the King's worries and difficulties melting away as he becomes more relaxed and willing to speak.

Each of these functions and themes were intentional and key to character development within each of the five aforementioned films. The deeper elements implemented in to the stories through these editing practices make the difference between the audience seeing the story and experiencing the events happening on screen. Within *Courageous* there is a lack of intention having to do with the edits of the dialogue scenes. One of the factors that identify a lack of intention in the dialogue editing is that there is no consistency across the film between characters or emotions. The two long take scenes were not used or placed with purpose and they awkwardly seem as if they filmed it without shooting options. As well there is another scene that is almost completely shown at the same angle and composition but for one line the shot changes to a wide shot of the event and then returns to the original angle. The other scenes were a mix of locked shots or slider driven shots, focused primarily on the speaker with varying cutaways for reactions at random points within the scene. These practices are completely fine if the only intent is for a story to be told but *Courageous*, like most other Christian films, has the intent of making a difference in the people's lives who enjoy the film and utilizing intentional filmmaking practices is a key to embracing the audience.

Film editing does not only happen during post-production, for every film it begins in preproduction and does not stop until the final render of the film (and sometimes even after that). As a writer or director begins to visualize a concept they understand what they want to see on the screen and begin planning their shot compositions and cuts, sometimes without even realizing it. Shot composition is something that can be changed only slightly within the editing room but the choices are truly made during the pre-production and production phases of film making. Once a script has been finalized, as much as it can be before production, directors and cinematographers sit down and visualize the story in great detail, creating pictures of the types of shots they would

like within each and every scene, these are called storyboards. This is the point where the elements discussed about each of the Academy films begin to take shape. Character development through the visual imagery conceived at this juncture can be crucial to the end product, keeping in mind the relational and emotional dynamics at play between the main character(s) and the journey they are travelling on. Once production begins even more ideas come to mind to the director and cinematographer while they are on location and working with the actors, this can help or hinder that character development depending on whether they keep in mind their plan. Many times this is also the point where that element is brought in and is implemented within the film. Finally when all of the little pieces make it to the cutting room the editor can piece together the envisioned story of the director. Within the cutting room character dynamics can be built if the shot options are available and the editor has the vision, but many times within independent Christian film there are not the options that the major motion pictures have, due to time and money constraints.

All of that being said, being intentional from the beginning of the filmmaking process and understanding the dynamics that have been written within the script can enhance storytelling within dialogue editing. A lack of money and time is not an excuse when it comes to editing in this manner. If anything both can be saved when the shots are planned and the emotions and relationships that characters are feeling during each scene are remembered within the whole. Christian films are becoming more popular among audiences across America because of the sentiment that they evoke, hitting on key issues and answering question. This is a good sign but at this point Christian filmmakers have cheaper solutions to better products and have an opportunity to make a difference utilizing the stories that they tell by focusing on the dialogue scenes that are impactful to both the narrative and the audience.

The differences between all six films are enough to make them unique but each technique can be used to enhance new films. These are in no case the only techniques that can enhance story and character depth within dialogue scenes either. *Courageous* made a valiant effort and a lot of money with the final film that was made but intentional editing practices needed to draw audiences even closer were not there. Following will be suggestions for future research in the area of Foss's schema for the evaluation of imagery and how filmmakers can utilize it.

Suggestions for Future Research:

Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery is still a young idea and not always accepted. Studies utilizing this schema can both help communications scholars and also those who work with visual mediums. It can be used in a way that helps them understand meaning within their respective field and when others use the schema for their work new ideas can come.

The use of a modified version of Foss's schema by comparing multiple sources should be suggested as it brings new light to both the schema and the subject of observation. Whether it be comparing the works of one artists or similar styles of art by multiple artists, meaning can arise and be utilized to further all communication.

Specifically to filmmaking, I believe Foss's schema can be used in order to identify meaning within storytelling practices. Utilizing this form of study by pinpointing different filmmaking eras or techniques can bring about understanding for the filmmaking scholar as well as unveil techniques that may not have been explicitly stated. As was done within this study, multiple sources can be used and compared for even greater comprehension of the art.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, within this study I introduced the topic of editing as a necessary tool that helps create stories within film and a rationale of why looking at these techniques is important to both scholars and consumers because of the cultural implications of film and the ideas in the stories they tell. Understanding how manipulating an individual scene through cuts can change the style of editors in their future projects.

I then covered a review of the literature on the early history of film editing and the theories that came about, touching on both continuity and montage editing theories created in the early twentieth century. As well noting that both theories are the primary theoretical techniques used in the modern cutting room. After, I reviewed Foss's literature on evaluating visual rhetoric and the schema she set forth in order to define and analyze the function, or meaning, of an image.

Within the methodology section I presented a two part schema that I utilized to answer the question: "Is the editing style of Sherwood Pictures' motion picture *Courageous* the same as or similar to Academy Award winning pictures from the year before and of the release of the film?" The first part of the process used modified version of Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery, wherein I observed five films in order to define the functions of multiple edits, rather than looking at one image and defining its single function on my own. Then, using the functions and patterns formed by the editing within the dialogue scenes of those films, I analyzed *Courageous* and compared Sherwood Pictures' editing styles and storytelling techniques within the dialogue scenes to the award winning films.

What I found in each of the five academy films was intentional filmmaking through shot composition and shot choice. Isolation and separation within *Moneyball*, *The Social Network*,

and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was emphasized through the use of long shots and intentional composition. Within *The King's Speech* distance and direction within shot composition was key to adding depth to emotion and relationships while characters discussed important issues. And movement in *The Fighter* and *The King's Speech* symbolized the emotions of the main characters, accentuating their internal happenings.

Courageous, on the other hand, did not use consistent intentional editing in order to add depth to the story. The use of two different editing techniques, one only being used twice and somewhat awkwardly, helped tell the story but did not influence character interaction. The purpose of the dialogue scenes within the film were to tell the story and it did achieve that goal.

Overall I have found that through this study there is something that independent filmmakers must consider if they would like to capture their audiences on a deeper level. Using the understanding that editing actually begins during preproduction can promote character development within dialogue scenes. Though many times these ideas happen throughout the filmmaking process, keeping them at the top of one's mind can promote implementation within any film setting.

I believe this study as a whole has important as it pertains to communication studies and Christian filmmakers. Within communication studies, having a scholarly approach to visual rhetoric will forward understanding beyond the classical form of rhetoric. For Christian filmmakers I believe there is a level of creativity and thought that is lost in the editing room (and even earlier in the process) that can be attained in order to create quality films for the church and evangelism. Arthur Schmidt, editor of *Forrest Gump*, said:

I think it's important for the editor to remember how malleable film is. It's like clay and can be pushed this way and that way to

get as perfect as it can be. And that's a process that continues through the dubbing process, when the film is supposed to be "locked," but gets unlocked because one sees a new idea, whether it's just trimming a few frames here and there, or a much more elaborate reedit. The creative process doesn't stop. (*Cineaste*, 58)

Editors need to remember that the choices that are made before the film is completed can always be changed and manipulated in order to tell a better narrative, deepening the effect that dialogue has on those who take in their story.

Appendix:

Shot Type Definitions:

- Medium Shot
 - Also called the “waist” shot because the frame cuts off the human figure just below the waist and just above the wrists if arms are down at the side.
- Close-up
 - Sometimes called a “head shot” because the framing is primarily the face, but it may cut off the top of the subject’s hair. The bottom of frame can begin anywhere just below the chin or with the neck and a little upper shoulder visible.
- Wide shot
 - This is usually considered a “full body” shot, wide but still in close to the figure often framing feet just above bottom of frame and head just below top of frame.
- Long shot
 - Similar to the wide shot but denotes distance to the main subject.
- Two-shot
 - Contains two subjects who generally face toward camera or face each other in profile to camera.
- Over-the-shoulder
 - A special two-shot in which one subject is “favored” facing camera either frame left or frame right and the other subject has his or her back turned toward camera on the opposite side of frame The camera shoots over one subject’s shoulder to frame up the face of the other subject for the viewer to see.

- Dolly/Truck
 - Moving the camera to or from the actor.

All definitions have come from *Grammar of the Edit*, 2nd ed.

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