

## Tres neoclasicismos

# Explorando las posibilidades de una Average Shot Length comparativa a través de Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma y Woody Allen

*Three neoclassicisms. Exploring the Possibilities of a Comparative Average Shot Length Through Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma and Woody Allen*

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## **Resumen**

*El montaje de las películas de tres directores americanos - Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma, y Woody Allen - son analizados en terminos de la Average Shot Length (ASL). Esta información es útil para caracterizar a los cineastas y sus montadores, además de las correlaciones existentes entre ellos.*

### **Palabras clave**

*Neoclasicismo - cine - montaje - dirección - análisis comparativo - average shot - length - cinemetric - ritmo - velocidad*

## **Abstract**

*The editing of the films of three American directors - Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma, and Woody Allen - are analysed in terms of their Average Shot Lengths (ASLs), and this information is used to characterize their directors and editors, and the relationships between them.*

### **Key Words**

*Neoclassicism - cinema - editing - direction - comparative analysis - average shot - length - cinemetrics - pace - speed*

## **Introduction**

This study is intended to compare the complete filmographies of the three American directors whose works are analyzed with respect to cutting rates. They are Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma and Woody Allen. Our approach is like a trampoline for leaping over the wall of a difficult conceptual and methodological blind alley—an understanding of movie editors and their task, but above all their contribution. Their work is dismissed as something merely technical and obvious but, even in the best of cases, this attitude is simply lazy. Our analysis route is that cultivated by David Bordwell and Barry Salt. We want to reject an unsustainably radical anti-

empiricism without falling into neo-empiricist infantilism. That is, we are trying to remain focused on both the wood and the trees with a statistical-type study, aided by the latest-generation digital and computer tools and, more specifically, an Average Shot Length study (which we will refer to from now on with the acronym ASL). This appears to us an objective and, consequently, literally unobjectionable criterion. It is probably as reductionist as it is stimulating when it comes to reaching conclusions that are non-definitive but undoubtedly worthy of interest.

## Objectives

We want to study the contribution of film editors to changes in the cutting rate, or pace, of films, and we are going to change our direction to the only practice we see as capable of offering a positive formula for objectively showing their share of responsibility for this.

Despite what is normally said on the subject, there is, in fact, a huge bibliography on film editing, but it is as scattered as its profiles remain diffuse. Without attempting to be exhaustive, a reading of this would include the manuals by Dmytryk, Reisz (alone and expanded/updated by Millar), Jurgenson and Brunet—texts so famous that they mark milestones, half way between the prescriptivism and the proclamation of individual poetry like the texts by the Soviets Eisenstein and Pudovkin. Treatises on aesthetics with a strong critical/authoral component, like the one by Amiel, and testimony and compilations of interviews like the books by McGrath, Rosenblum, Oldham, LoBrutto, Vaughan and Murch (with and without Ondaatje), would also form part of it. There would also have to be studies on the digital mutations of editing, like the ones by Ohanian (and even more so Phillips), on one hand, and Enticknap, on the other; and techno-historicist treatises like those focused on discipline, like those by Villain, Pinel and Crittenden, or the more holistic ones by Bordwell (in particular his most recent one) or Salt.

It is the analysis route originated and cultivated by the last of these researchers, followed by Yuri Tsivian and his cinematics project, using the Average Shot Length method, that we are planning to travel along. However, we are not attempting an unachievable neutrality; in fact very much the contrary. We will point out

our biases from the beginning: firstly, the tendentiousness of the selection of an unavoidably very restrictive sample of films. This is something we are fully aware of, applying the approach to the entire filmographies of the three movie-makers mentioned above so as to offer the conclusions of this study in the international sphere. The productions by the directors we have chosen extend from more or less the same dates to the present day, and their movies have been catalogued by many scholars from different perspectives. While in the previous publication of our results an attempt was made to balance the examples, to make them sufficiently representative, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, we have now been able to cover all their feature movie work in our new sample. However, we have left out of this sample the short movie experiments movie-makers almost always make in their early forays into the audiovisual world. In addition, and in line with the aim that encourages us to discern the possible level of effect of movie editors have on the work of directors normally recognized as authors, consideration will be made of their pairings with regular technical collaborators.

Our observations are also limited in various other aspects, which means the results and the consequent conclusions, must be interpreted with the appropriate caution:

- Firstly, there is the incompleteness of the filmographies, now very much qualified.

- Secondly, there is the fact that we have ignored countless fundamental variables, such as type of shot. Our observations are the result of what in the nascent discipline of cinematics is known as “simple analysis”, as opposed to the “full” analysis that provides data concerning many other basic parameters, such as scallarity and syntagmatic relationships; maximum, minimum and average deviations between scales, durations, etc.; camera supports, movements... This very fertile, fundamental field would lead to an infinitely richer study which would certainly lead to the qualification of a good part of the conclusions which we have been rather hurriedly led to, as, clearly, a fast pace based on long, fixed (wide) shots is not the same, nor is it perceived as the same by the viewer, as when these are shorter and more varied. This is even more the case if the movement is unstable...

- Thirdly, it means we have used different counting methodologies: based sometimes on cinematics software and sometimes on the digital editing program Final Cut Pro (FCP), but also trusting the results of third parties in relation to the

films of Woody Allen found in the Cinemetrics database. In the last respect we highlight a paradox containing a tremendous irony, which says very little for the reliability of cinematographic studies at this point in history. The fact is that a technique as elementary and mathematical as calculating shots is so full of holes that there are no agreed criteria in this respect. Often, as anyone who takes the trouble to look both at the website we have mentioned and at various analyses of the same movie will see there are more than substantial differences.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the confidence that the reader can give to the data included in this work, we note that the two authors followed the first and second methods, and worked separately and without communicating until the task was completed, and reached exactly the same number of shots in the case of *Hereafter*.<sup>2</sup> Although the figures should be taken as approximate, the fact that various parallel analyses of one of the most fragmented movies analyzed were partly carried out as a blind pair control strategy, but still gave the same results, is evidence of the reliability of the joint studies.

# **1. Three Neoclassicisms: Exploring the Possibilities of a Comparative Average Shot Length Through Clint Eastwood, Brian De Palma and Woody Allen**

## **1.1. Clint Eastwood: men with no name at Malpaso**

Eastwood's sobriety even extends to the unusually small number of movie editors in whose hands he has placed his movies—only six, two of whom, to go into greater detail, he worked with on only one occasion (his debut)... and a half (in the three-way editing of *Honkytonk Man*). His almost guild-like succession policy should be highlighted. This is very much in accordance with his understanding of production as a family adventure, using small, flexible teams working quickly,

in which the transmission of knowledge leads to technical roles being inherited from generation to generation. In addition, the movie-maker's clear predilection for surrounding himself with a few close collaborators on the staff of a small, very tightly controlled, company gravitates around the personality of Eastwood, and this is the way Malpaso is. Trained staff form part of the same industrial fabric and productive context, such as Joel Cox who, after working as deputy to the first regular editor, Ferris Webster, and with the only exception of the rather substandard and more commercial *Firefox*, was promoted from assistant editor to editor, and since then has had his name on all the director's movies. He first appeared alone, then sporadically with others—Ron Spang himself in *A Perfect World*—and lately with Gary D. Roach. The figure of Cox, then, occupies a parallel position in Eastwood's filmography and his importance is similar to that of the artistic director Henry Bumstead, the directors of photography Jack N. Green and Tom Stern, the composer Lenny Niehaus, and others.

Concerning ASL in the joint work of the people of Malpaso, it is reasonable to infer some ideas from looking at the graphs. Firstly, it can be highlighted that the pattern is quite regular from the first of the films Eastwood directed, and rather lively, with just a couple of initial breaks in tone, in both cases in the sphere of the western—*High Plains Drifter* and *Bronco Billy*. Secondly, the clearest fluctuation comes at the period of Eastwood's enshrinement as an author, coinciding with *Bird*, with a notable peak. Then, in his mature phase, with the single peak provided by the tearjerker *The Bridges of Madison County*, comes the culmination of his own, unique voice, which, in terms of editing has the form of a monotonous rhythm of around 5 seconds. So, although a certain correlation can be perceived between genre and speed, it has little effect. Finally, as indications of the unity of the Eastwood/Cox style, we would highlight two curious identifications: that of the *Flags of Our Fathers/Letters from Iwo Jima* diptych and another for clearly connected movies, such as *Million Dollar Baby* and *Gran Torino*. The fact that the ASL figures for the components of these pairs echo one another—note that they are the movies in the whole series that are closest to one another—can be put forward as reliable, empirical proof of such connections.

The above is hardly more than a repetition of the ideas we dealt with in our previous paper. However, we want to—and, more importantly, we can and must, *because the data we provide here, closely observed from a new angle, lead us to a*

*richer reading*—turn the screw further because, without moving one iota from his well-known regularity, the legendary silhouette of Clint Eastwood is now profiled on the horizon as a much more ductile figure than he might appear at first sight. A suitable image to refer to him might be the continuous rubbing out and redrawing of the outline formed by that harsh sun so characteristic of the great desert panoramas typical of the western genre, which is said to make bodies tremble. So, when it comes to choosing genres and themes—just as he himself, as an actor, has been variously or successively a romantic radio DJ; avenging cowboy and policeman on various occasions; FBI agent; Korean war veteran; preacher/gunfighter; sergeant; the famous detective Harry Callahan; climber/professor/murderer, all in one in *The Eiger Sanction*; cowboy in a circus show; elite pilot; country singer; the legendary movie director John Huston; photographer for National Geographic; thief/plagiarist painter; journalist; astronaut or boxing trainer—this same variety was bound to affect the different cinematographic bases he has touched. So, although he has maintained a similar, *solid* continuity of style, which reached its peak when he conquered *Absolute Power*—and we hope we can be forgiven the facile play on words, which is not irrelevant, as we shall see—a certain editorial formula is applied to each variety, in the context of a recipe book which, seen as a whole, takes the form of the classicist ideas of correlation between content, tone and expression.

## 1.2. Universal Beginnings

As we have already noted, practically since its beginnings, Eastwood's work has been closely linked to his family/company of collaborators: specifically, in terms of editing, two of his most faithful followers—Ferris Webster and Joel Cox. It is worth pointing out that his first incursion behind the cameras, *Play Misty for Me*, for which he commissioned Carl Pingitore for the only time they worked together, falls within the normal pace for the early days of Malpaso/Universal, with an ASL of around 6. This was a period for which all the editing, apart from the film we have just mentioned, fell to Ferris Webster, who, later, with Warner Brothers, was sole editor on *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Webster uses a sustained cutting rate of around 6 seconds, with one exception which will be dealt with in detail below. then with Malpaso's union with Warner and the incorporation of Joel Cox into the

team as interrelated macro and micro trigger factors, the most turbulent period in Eastwood's filmography, both in terms of genre and more irregular editing, began. But, before that, between 1971 and 1975, with Universal, his movies—except for the aforementioned exception concerning which we will maintain the suspense—are structured following traditional patterns of crescendo in each title and scene. So, in *Play Misty for Me*, the lovesick Evelyn tries to kill Dave and his girlfriend; in *High Plains Drifter*, the scenario is prepared for the arrival in hell at the end of the movie; in *The Eiger Sanction*, all the climbers die at the end, except the one played by Eastwood of course...

### 1.3. Those not so wonderful sixties ending in Madison in 1995

The oddity we have noted is *Breezy*, which has an ASL of 10.2, a long way from its predecessor even though it is from the same year (*High Plains Drifter* – 6.6), and its successor, *The Eiger Sanction* (6.5). *Breezy* is the name of a young hippy, guitar in hand, who seduces an older man to get a place to sleep. Love erupts between them, an impossible love, as the actor William Holden says at the end of the movie: “I think this relationship could last a year”. Impossible love, the passion of that period of liberation between the sixties and beginning of the seventies, building bridges between this movie and another movie of his which, more than two decades later, would shatter the line of his filmography: *The Bridges of Madison County*, with its ASL of 8.8. Looking at the content of both romantic dramas, which beyond their slower pace do not seem to go along with the Malpaso filmography, points of contact can be found with the other movies, such as nostalgia for past times causing melancholy and painful memories. *Breezy*, the American equivalent of post-'68 cinema, tells of the failure of the young, revolutionary utopias of the previous decade: the romance between the directionless, good-hearted girl trying to change this forty-year-old man who moves away from her when his friends disapprove of him for going out with such a young, rootless girl, is destined not to last even though they get back together at the end. Because both are aware that, regardless of how much and for how long they turn deaf ears to the insistent rumble of “what people say”, the age difference constitutes, if not an impediment at least an imposing obstacle: she will probably have to become bourgeois and he will have to get old. As might be expected, this sensation is accentuated and made clear in



the wrinkles Eastwood himself displays in *The Bridges of Madison County*, both a flashback to the sixties with an apparent happy ending for the contemporary characters, who have learned from the pain the mother experienced in her impossible love for the *National Geographic* photographer, and a step forward, as the air of decay takes over as the movie's main theme and style. By extension, it also runs through all Clint's cinema, in which the action hardly goes beyond the surface of the director's impenetrable face, while his movies show vivid sentimentality. The dramatic density and depth of performance—fleeting and hidden behind masks of shame—require their time, so the shots gradually become more substantial, both in duration and in their emotional charge. Between the two movies, and with Malpaso now in partnership with Warner, there are two peaks that also get away from the average (now around 5 seconds) and which share connections with the movies we have just covered. These are *Bronco Billy* and *Bird*, both very personal projects, particularly *Bird*, which would bring Eastwood close to the notion of authorship as it is most commonly understood today, consistent with a production model of medium-low volume in terms of budget, team and pretensions towards making a commercial impact. It is significant that, when he interprets the themes that are dearest to him—almost always jazzy and nostalgic—our man's movies slow down. But, before Madison, comes the landmark of his ultimate somber movie, *Unforgiven*, in which the pace reaches a constant, perhaps because Eastwood feels safer in this territory—the West, which he knows like the back of his hand.

#### **1.4. Ferris Webster & Co. at Warner: the period in the wilderness**

As we have already said, Ferris Webster is the editor for the first Malpaso/Universal stage and for the early production from the Eastwood company, for which Warner took charge of distribution between 1976 and 1982. In this period, the movie editing was done by Webster, except for the first title, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*; largely jointly with Joel Cox (*The Gauntlet*, and *Bronco Billy*) and, on occasion, with Ron Spang (*Firefox*), as well as with two top-class number twos, like Joel Cox and the fleeting collaboration with Michael Kelly on *Honkytonk Man*. Except in *Bronco Billy*, the ASL drops from just over 6 at the first stage to 5. But, beyond round figures, it is worth looking closely at important details, such as, for example, the differences between these associations. While with Joel Cox the average

ASL is close to 5 (5.2 and 6.3), with Ron Spang, an editor specializing in action judging by his earnings,<sup>3</sup> the figure falls to the 4.4 of *Firefox* to rise, provisionally, to 5.9 in another more personal offering than the previous movie, with three-way editing—the journey into the sunset of an alcoholic musician which closed this series. By way of conclusions, we can state that, as well as the fact that the pace changes depending on the genre and the emotional closeness of the theme dealt with, it is not the same having one editor as having two or three, as the latter system involves more debate and reflection and *contaminates* (for the better) Webster's style as principal editor.

### 1.5. Eastwood the strategist

Based on the pair *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*, there was talk of the tactics deployed by Clint Eastwood when it comes to approaching and selling his products, alternating movies likely to be commercial with simpler, more poetic and personal movies, generating a box office draw, including among smaller select groups, precisely by achieving impact sometimes on some audiences and sometimes on others and cyclically taking advantage of commercial and critical success. In the light of the data we provide here, we can be sure that there is a correlation between this formula and the rhythmic tendencies of his movies, going back at least to the diptych of *High Plains Drifter* and *Breezy* (6.6 and 10.2); continuing with *Firefox* and *Honkytonk Man* (4.4 and 5.9); and going on with *White Hunter, Black Heart* and *The Rookie* (5.1 and 4). The latter involves a reversal in the order of the factors which, although not altering the product, probably due to the reputation Eastwood had gained with *Bird*, leads him to make another more interesting movie, far from the sphere of action as such, telling of the journey of the Melvillean John Huston in pursuit of a white elephant while filming *The African Queen* (1951). The pattern is repeated with *Absolute Power* and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (4.9 and 5.1) in which we once again find that the movie-maker is quicker—but not much quicker—on the draw first time round. From then on, the pace of his offerings, regardless of their genre, standardized, until his two pictures about the Second World War showed figures as close to one another as 5.4 and 5.3, which clearly speaks of a more mature, identical style. These two war movies, despite all the subtle factors consciously brought into play in deploying a dialectic

pattern, are based on a slow, reflective style, the action sequences are integrated in a similar way and the final result is hardly distinguishable. The above pattern is extended further, with *Changeling*, designed as a high-class brochure for Angelina Jolie, and *Gran Torino*, theoretically a lesser movie but one which harvested excellent reviews and was the most profitable in financial terms of any made by this director. In terms of ASL they are very close to one another (4.8 and 5, that is, within the line of his work, particularly in this *final* phase). To this later pair we could add *Million Dollar Baby* (5.1), which has many connections with *Gran Torino*. So, and to recapitulate the idea, something which initially caused sharp fluctuations in projects of one kind or another is gradually transformed by a factor balancing the oscillations. This highlights Eastwood's achievement of mastery by literally *imposing himself, or imposing a treatment* on stories and redirecting and assimilating editing into his dual production model until he had sketched out a *unique* touch. While this mere truth is sufficiently interesting in itself, it is even more so if related to a specific personal event: along this route Eastwood's stage-coach has stopped at successive posts at the hands of a particular driver. In effect, and as we will now be able to see, the fact that Joel Cox has taken the reins has been a determining factor in it reaching its destination.

### 1.6. Joel Cox: riding alone or two riding together?

From *Sudden Impact*, to *Flags of Our Fathers*, Joel Cox was the official and entirely self-sufficient editor at Malpasó, except in *A Perfect World*, in which he shared the task with Ron Spang. The ASL is very constant, at around 4.5, throughout these twenty years. There are only two peaks out of keeping with this—*Bird* and *The Bridges of Madison County*. Sometimes when 5 seconds is reached the increase is probably caused by the effect of the end credits, in this sense, that Eastwood uses them to apply the final brake, as in *Sudden Impact* (5) and in the more reflective or less active *White Hunter, Black Heart* (5.1) and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (5.1). Note the development from *Mystic River*, a movie dramatically more intense and performed by a group of actors showing that they are at the height of their powers, whose plot requires a slower rhythm and whose ASL rises to 5.5, onwards. In *Million Dollar Baby*, where drama predominates over action, particularly in the second part, as the boxing matches demand faster cutting in the first part,

so the movie's overall ASL remains at 5 (5.1 to be more precise). In this period, running from 1985 to 2004, the style could be established as follows: the action movies have a faster, more constant ASL while the reflective ones maintain their own steady pace. Among the former we should mention *Heartbreak Ridge*, with 4.2, the aforementioned *The Rookie*, with 4, or *Space Cowboys* with 4.2. His most compact, consistent movies in all senses on this long journey are those with the average ASL of 4.5 already established: *Pale Rider* (4.6), *Unforgiven* (4.4), *A Perfect World* (4.5) and *True Crime* (4.6). Since then, the ASL has moved from around 4.5 to 5.1 (if we take the average for the last eight movies, starting with *Mystic River*). This speed is not, in our opinion, due to the incorporation of Gary D. Roach, who did not join the team until *Letters from Iwo Jima*. The pace of the latest Eastwood movies is more youthful, and the ASL once again falls below 5, to 4.8 in *Changeling* and 4.4 in *Invictus*, obviously due to the rugby scenes, but also to a very fast interplay of shots and reverse shots, except when Morgan Freeman/Nelson Mandela goes into moralizing lectures and is allowed to speak without cutting the shot. His latest movie, *Hereafter*, has an ASL of 5.8, the highest since *The Bridges of Madison County*. This is undoubtedly an Eastwood operating as an older, wiser man: there are hardly any moments of action like the ones in his other movies left now, except the tsunami at the beginning of the picture, filmed with delicacy and subtlety, allowing himself to be carried away by the current.

### 1.7. Partial conclusions: a sketch in four lines

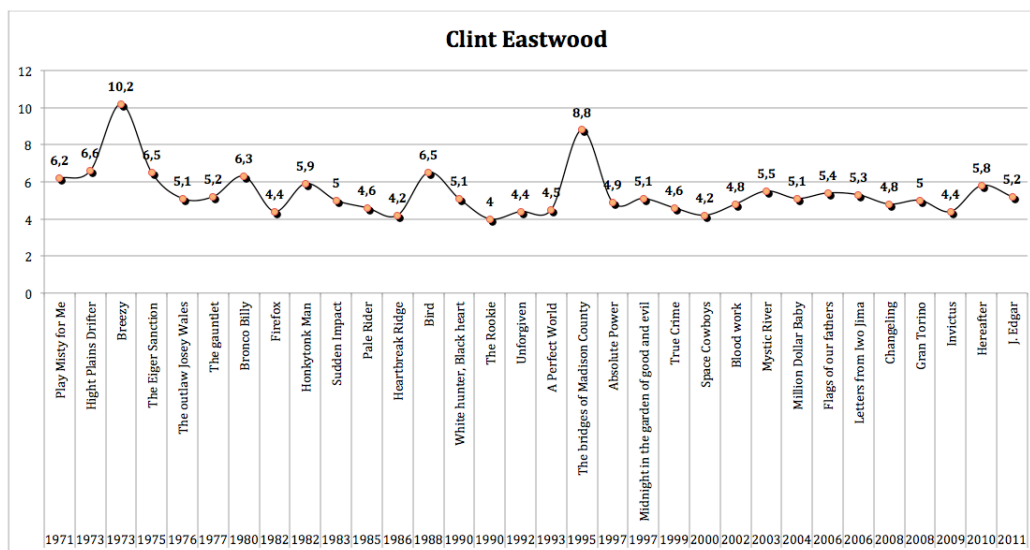
Overall, Eastwood's filmography can be seen to be quite balanced. It can be summarized as being made up of a slower first stage, with Universal; a rather irregular period with a change of partner, dual editing and leaps of genre; another period which, based on the sixty-year-old's memories in Madison, calms down, and a final, regular phase, going back to *Absolute Power*, lasting fifteen years now, and which it would not be too bold to predict will go on for as long as Eastwood continues to sit in the director's chair.

## Clint Eastwood

Year	Title	Editor	ASL	Runtime
1971	<i>Play Misty for Me</i>	Carl Pingitore	6.2	97:32.6
1973	<i>High Plains Drifter</i>	Ferris Webster	6.6	100:20.4
1973	<i>Breezy</i>	Ferris Webster	10.2	106:03.7
1975	<i>The Eiger Sanction</i>	Ferris Webster	6.5	121:59.7
1976	<i>The Outlaw Josey Wales</i>	Ferris Webster	5.1	128:42.7
1977	<i>The Gauntlet</i>	Ferris Webster & Joel Cox	5.2	104:19.1
1980	<i>Bronco Billy</i>	Ferris Webster & Joel Cox	6.3	111:23.5
1982	<i>Firefox</i>	Ferris Webster & Ron Spang	4.4	114:52.0
1982	<i>Honkytonk Man</i>	F. Webster; J. Cox; M. Kelly	5.9	117:39.9
1983	<i>Sudden Impact</i>	Joel Cox	5	110:26.8
1985	<i>Pale Rider</i>	Joel Cox	4.5	109:23.7
1986	<i>Heartbreak Ridge</i>	Joel Cox	4.2	123:57.5
1988	<i>Bird</i>	Joel Cox	6.5	153:48.6
1990	<i>White Hunter, Black Heart</i>	Joel Cox	5.1	107:16.3
1990	<i>The Rookie</i>	Joel Cox	4	112:30.2
1992	<i>Unforgiven</i>	Joel Cox	4.4	120:29.1
1993	<i>A Perfect World</i>	Joel Cox & R. Spang	4.5	128:32.5
1995	<i>The Bridges of Madison County</i>	Joel Cox	8.8	126:58.9
1997	<i>Absolute Power</i>	Joel Cox	4.9	111:56.1
1997	<i>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</i>	Joel Cox	5.1	144:58.6
1999	<i>True Crime</i>	Joel Cox	4.6	116:49.7
2000	<i>Space Cowboys</i>	Joel Cox	4.2	117:31.2
2002	<i>Blood Work</i>	Joel Cox	4.8	101:25.4
2003	<i>Mystic River</i>	Joel Cox	5.5	127:16.0
2004	<i>Million Dollar Baby</i>	Joel Cox	5.1	122:14.8
2006	<i>Flags of Our Fathers</i>	Joel Cox	5.4	123:06.0
2006	<i>Letters from Iwo Jima</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	5.3	129:09.6
2008	<i>Changeling</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	4.8	131:42.4
2008	<i>Gran Torino</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	5	111:01.8
2009	<i>Invictus</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	4.4	120:59.4
2010	<i>Hereafter</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	5.8	121:44.1

Year	Title	Editor	ASL	Runtime
2011	<i>J. Edgar</i>	Joel Cox & Gary D. Roach	5.2	130:35.0

*Figure 1: Clint Eastwood. Source: Own source.*



*Figure 2: Own source.*

## 2. Brian De Palma: bigamy and fidelity

Schizophrenia, constituting one of the core themes of the work of Brian De Palma, we borrow, as least as an interpretive metaphor, as a key to the type of relationship this director has forged with his editors and with editing itself. Gabriella Oldham, interviewer of his two “great loves”, Paul Hirsch and Bill Pankow, with the permission of Gerald B. Greenberg, compared the method and results of the self-proclaimed “intuitive” Bill Pankow, more focused on narrative tension, with the more cerebral Paul Hirsch, attentive to the psychology of the character. She sets an analytical challenge:

As both men separately have worked on a number of Brian DePalma’s movies, an interesting scholarly study could be done of the construction of tension, suspense, rhythm, and illusion by two different editors. Such an analysis would undoubtedly illustrate how editing style is an extremely difficult term to define. Although editors develop their own preferences, which they may repeat from movie to movie

and which seem to constitute unique styles, how much really is ‘individual’ and how much is due to the director’s own style and what the movie itself requires? (1992: 188).<sup>4</sup>

It is a challenge which, with all modesty and recognizing the narrow scope of this study, we take up here, attempting to provide the answer it deserves.

At first sight, the average shot durations in De Palma’s filmography show notable consistency, if we ignore the experimental documentary essay *Redacted*, which plays with the idea of establishing a movie based solely on the new types of digital video image on substandard devices (mobile phones, security cameras, files placed on the Internet...) for consumption via the new transmission platforms. After two a-generic art movies, very much indebted to the ideas and styles of underground cinema and the counterculture, whose ASLs are rather higher—and are therefore understandably slower—than in his better known pieces, for the recognized Hitchcockian portion of his work shows a clear rhythmical unity. This is the origin of the monotony—a term that here is not used pejoratively or to express dismay—of *Sisters*, *Obsession* and *Impact*, as well as *Dressed to Kill* and *Body Double*, and *Carrie* and *Fury*, another two pairs of movies which have very similar ASLs. The oddity of the musical *Phantom of the Paradise* is due to the fact that, for the purposes considered here, it is free verse. Then came the bigger productions consisting of adaptations of television series and remakes commissioned by big studios, with a slightly faster pace than his more personal approaches. This can be seen in *Scarface* and *The Untouchables*, but above all in the way this tendency is shown in his biggest, most expensive and highest grossing movie, *Mission: Impossible*, which also marks his most spasmodic moment, at 4. So, just as the more serious feature movies, such as *Casualties of War* and *Bonfire of the Vanities*, are slower, the movies he made in the mid-nineties when he began his most self-referential course, such as *Raising Cain*, *Carlito’s Way*, *Snake Eyes* and *Femme Fatale*, show a tendency towards a slower pace. That is, when he turns in on himself he moves away from his early days but also from the references that inspire him to, rather paradoxically and very subtly, identify with himself. That is, putting it more simply, the recent Hitchcockian De Palma is neither the master of suspense revived, nor the frenetic director of the past, but rather a “Hitchcockian De Palma” whose style is recognizable to the point where it could be considered a (sub)genre in itself, or at least an autonomous model, governed by its own code. Finally, it also draws attention, and

is therefore worth noting, that a fantasy piece, like *Mission to Mars*, is considerably slower than the average for American cinema of the period, particularly in its genre, and that its figures, to a point, resemble those of an exercise in retro-noir like *Black Dahlia*.

The new indications and findings not only do not refute this thesis based on De Palma's personality, working philosophy and, even more importantly, filmography, they corroborate it. However, as in the case of Eastwood, we want to deal with him more extensively and jump around his work, both to offer a richer view and make progress with a rational model that breaks down his production into successive phases, discriminating between them in terms of the directives governing the editing.

**Beginnings: dress me slowly, I'm in a hurry.** A first period covers from *Greetings* to *Get to Know Your Rabbit*: mostly edited by the same editor. They draw on, or are impregnated with, the feel of the times, and exude a passionate desire and enthusiasm to make movies. They are typical exercises in (prepost)modernist style, as much driven by the gale of new European cinema (Antonioni) as they are ruffled by the Hitchcockian breeze, resulting in a real hurricane. Generically, they are movies attached to the comedy genre which, in De Palma, against the general trend and the specific example studied in this work—Woody Allen and his slapstick sketch movies—show a very (or rather, comparatively) slow pace. This is perhaps influenced by the lack of budget, leading to the solution of filming just enough takes and resolving a good number of scenes in a master shot. However, it is appropriate to recall that, historically, this coincides with the international craze for the sequence shot as a virtuoso/realist formula respecting the integral nature of the action represented. Be that as it may, the figures speak eloquently: *Greetings* has an ASL of 17.4; *The Wedding Party*, 12.6; *Hi, Mom*, 12.3; *Get to Know Your Rabbit*, 9.7. The increased cutting rate perceived here expresses another trend or, at least, allows another reading. As De Palma hones his weapons—that is, acquires confidence and skill in storytelling technique—and carves out a niche in the movie world, increasing, if only slightly and gradually, the means at his disposal, our man makes these initial free titles his own. Made more with the heart than with money, they take on a specific, different character, affected by current trends but, at the same time, with a spirit leading him to step on the accelerator. These are not bad images for defining De Palma: a whirlwind, turmoil, or the more modern



metaphor of a particle accelerator. In this period, *Murder à la Mod*, his second movie, despite having passed through the same hands as *Greetings* and *Dionysus*, steps out of line, speeding up to 7.9 and showing itself to be bolder on all fronts in terms of editing. *Hi, Mom*, kneaded into shape by a Paul Hirsch recently recruited to De Palma's kitchen, has the highest ASL of any title molded by the director and matches the models of his pieces from this period. *The Wedding Party*, edited three ways by Leach, Munroe and a De Palma who was making his third movie with this production, is around the average, between *Greetings* and *Murder à la Mod*. Ultimately, everything indicates that De Palma likes to have someone similar to him who complements him and serves as a counterweight for achieving stability and equilibrium, as occurs with his next movie, *Hi, Mom*, whose ASL is very similar. The movie closing this period, *Get to Know Your Rabbit*, edited by Peter Colbert and Urioste, brings De Palma to the values marking the figures for his succeeding filmography. In fact, as can immediately be seen, the ASL of these movies shows a very lively pace but maintains the connection with the rhythmic and dramatic patterns of the preceding ones.

## 2.1. The *Dionysus* case

*Dionysus* and *Redacted* are De Palma's most pronounced off-key notes, explicable *because the movies demand it*. In the earlier case, the reason is that it is the result of a performance, filmed live and then edited. The whole movie is resolved with split screen on which the theatrical production is shown. It is a separate, unique case, then, in his filmography, despite the fact that the resource used itself constitutes one of the most notable in his style book. To continue working through metaphors, this movie and *Redacted* come to be the ends of two converging branches of a tree: the points furthest apart in terms of chronology, although physically close and sprouting from a common trunk.

## 2.2. The gaps

We will now try to fill in a couple of gaps in what we have just said: firstly, the one occupied in De Palma's work by *Home Movies* (1980), which, with an ASL of 10.9 is well above the trend of his filmography that otherwise tends towards con-

sistency. Located as it is more or less in the middle of De Palma's work, he gives it air and tones down his heart-stopping schizophrenia after the two Hitchcockian exercises *Obsession* and *Dressed to Kill*, the commercial success of *Carrie* and the disaster of the fantasy-action hybrid *The Fury*. Probably seeking some relaxation to get away from the roller coaster ride, De Palma then embarked on his smallest, most personal project, going back to his beginnings both in terms of style and plot: *Home Movies* has a low budget, filmed as if it really was a home movie. The first reflection on his filmography, it goes back to his beginnings and points towards the slowness that takes over his following movies and which, in time (forgive the play on words again) becomes his tempo. With this, also, and in passing, the ASL goes back to the figures of his early movies.

The other gap we can now fill in is *Wise Guys*. As with *Home Movies*, De Palma has just strung together several hits (*Scarface*, *Body Double*) and what was an interesting exercise although a box office failure, *Blow Out*. It seems that, once again, the director needs to take a breath, soothe his cyclothymia and undertake a simple project, with something in his hands to calm his nerves—literally a *divertimento*. This pastime, this entertainment, is *Wise Guys*, which joins the fashion for movies about gangsters in trouble and with which De Palma attempts to make a fast, crazy comedy. This is why the ASL is the lowest of his entire filmography (5.7), exceeded only by *Mission: Impossible* (4.2), and not much lower than other titles from the same period, which are around 6 seconds. Another peculiarity of *Wise Guys* is the fact that its editor, Gerald B. Greenberg, worked alone on it — the only other case when he did so was *Dressed to Kill* (6.4). The detail in itself, beyond obsessive erudition or pedantry, is relevant because it indicates a propensity: it is when Greenberg goes into De Palma's editing booth and drives the editing that the pace takes off, becoming livelier and faster. In fact, the period when he acted as coeditor is the fastest moving.

### 2.3. Editing in space

Producers normally design products similar to those of their rivals with the aim of turning them into blockbusters, as happened in the case of *Armageddon* (Michael Bay for Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer) and *Deep Impact* (Mimi Leder for Paramount Pictures and Dreamworks), both in 1998. Coincidence

or otherwise, two years later, De Palma made the science fiction movie *Mission to Mars*, for Red Horizon; Touchstone; Spyglass—an ironic name when the suspicion of cinematographic espionage surrounds it, and the Jacobson Company at the same time as Clint Eastwood's production with Malpas and two small producers (Clipsal and Mad Chance) of *Space Cowboys*. Although the movies are not actually too similar, as was in fact the case with the Cold War between *Armageddon* and *Deep Impact* which we have already mentioned, in order to continue to demolish prejudices and endorse the framework hypothesis we upheld in the previous paper, it is worth highlighting that Eastwood's movie is cut faster than De Palma's: *Mission to Mars* has an ASL of 6.8, while for *Space Cowboys* the figure is 4.2. Both directors are faithful to their respective styles and they start, maintain and beat their records: the specific figures in both cases are slightly below their averages.

#### 2.4. Partial conclusions: a sketch in four lines

De Palma's work, like Eastwood's, is characterized by its consistency. But against the latter's tremendously rocklike composition (the score, we might very well say, as Eastwood is a movie-maker so much given to musicality), in De Palma's case it is appropriate to establish another perhaps even more complex formula: an iceberg in the process of being forced to melt but which, obviously, never shows more than that always deceptive tip. De Palma suffers from a quiet, invisible bipolarity behind a façade which is severe only in terms of numbers. Within that icy heart burns a hidden fire which, in fact, perfectly and deliberately transposes the latent ideology and aesthetic of internal editing. However, the passion for the sequence shots which De Palma likes to set up melts, and, after a wild, passionate initial stage, with few resources and in accordance with the fashions of young cinema of the time in terms of productive volume, narrative typology, pace, etcetera, the early period of collaboration with Hirsch opens up. Then comes the time when Greenberg acts as co-editor, when there is an acceleration and, finally, he returns towards himself, bringing a slowing down except in the exercises where De Palma moves away from his most personal style: *Mission: Impossible*, *Mission to Mars*, *The Black Dahlia*, and the isolated case of *Redacted*.<sup>5</sup>

## Brian De Palma

Year	Title	Editor	ASL	Runtime
1968	<i>Greetings</i>	Brian De Palma	17.4	85:20.4
1968	<i>Murder à la mod</i>	Brian De Palma	7.9	78:49.0
1969	<i>The Wedding Party</i>	B. De Palma; Leach; Munroe	12.6	90:45.2
1970	<i>Hi, Mom</i>	Paul Hirsch	12.3	81:06.4
1970	<i>Dionysus</i>	Brian De Palma	40.4	84:22.2
1972	<i>Get to know Your Rabbit</i>	Peter Colbert & F. J. Urioste	9.7	91:48.0
1973	<i>Sisters</i>	Paul Hirsch	7.6	92:04.8
1974	<i>Phantom of the Paradise</i>	Paul Hirsch	5	87:33.5
1976	<i>Obsession</i>	Paul Hirsch	7.7	93:50.8
1976	<i>Carrie</i>	Paul Hirsch	6	92:26.5
1978	<i>The Fury</i>	Paul Hirsch	5.8	108:30.8
1980	<i>Dressed to Kill</i>	Gerald B. Greenberg	6.4	96:06.1
1980	<i>Home Movies</i>	Corky O'Hara	10.9	82:47.3
1981	<i>Blow Out</i>	Paul Hirsch	7.5	99:59.5
1983	<i>Scarface</i>	Gerald B. Greenberg & David Ray	6.2	162:47.9
1984	<i>Body Factory</i>	Gerald B. Greenberg & Bill Pankow	6.8	108:09.0
1986	<i>Wise Guys</i>	Gerald B. Greenberg	5.7	88:44.9
1987	<i>The Untouchables</i>	Gerald B. Greenberg & Bill Pankow	5.9	110:54.2
1989	<i>Casualties of War</i>	Bill Pankow	7.2	102:09.1
1990	<i>The Bonfire of the Vanities</i>	Bill Pankow & David Ray	7.5	116:27.0
1992	<i>Raising Cain</i>	P. Hirsch; R. Dalva; B. Koehler	6.9	83:40.5
1993	<i>Carlito's Way</i>	Bill Pankow & Kristina Boden	8.1	138:36.4
1996	<i>Mission: Impossible</i>	Paul Hirsch	4.2	101:18.9
1998	<i>Snake Eyes</i>	Bill Pankow	9.4	93:47.8
2000	<i>Mission to Mars</i>	Paul Hirsch	6.8	102:16.5
2002	<i>Femme Fatale</i>	Bill Pankow	8.5	106:11.9
2006	<i>The Black Dahlia</i>	Bill Pankow	6.6	111:32.7
2007	<i>Redacted</i>	Bill Pankow	35.8	80:47.5

Figure 3: Brian De Palma. Source: Own source.

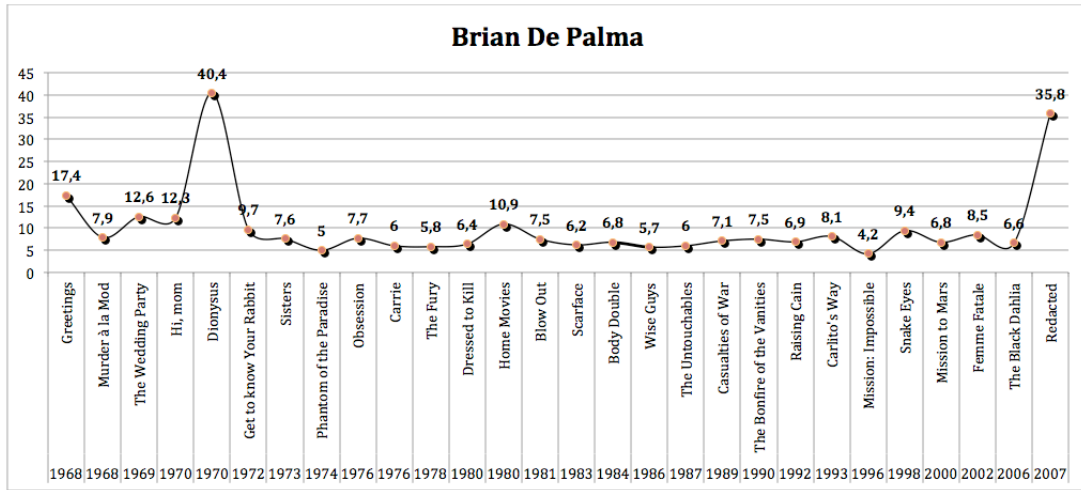


Figure 4: Own source.

## 2.5. Hirsch versus Pankow, or brawn and brain

Taking up the gauntlet thrown down by Oldham, perhaps recklessly, because perhaps we did not have sufficient elements to form a judgment, in the first article we were already bold enough to draw a preliminary, if rather hasty, conclusion from the comparison of figures, averages and the development of the respective ASLs of Hirsch and Pankow. In the light of this data, it can be seen that the former's approach is based on a greater tendency to cut.

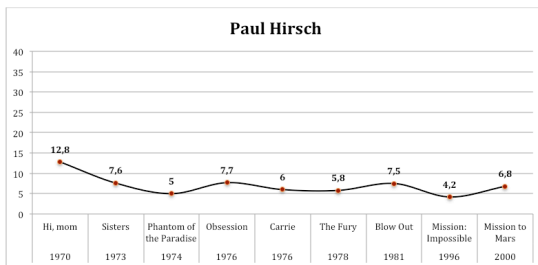


Figure 5: Own source.

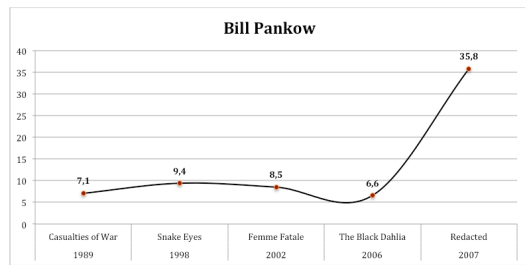


Figure 6: Own source.

We continue along the same lines. In this case, in order to offer something more than the simple statement, a hypothesis should be sketched out concerning the etiology of the phenomenon. In the first place, it can be deduced from a mere reading of the list of movies edited by Paul Hirsch, that he has been linked to more

genre movies, which means he has more opportunities to establish pace, if the expression is acceptable, by picking up, using and abusing the blade. This includes those two action and intrigue movies *Mission: Impossible* and *Fury*, and the other pair of suspense titles with brilliant, fast, exciting sequences, like *Carrie and Sisters*. *Hi, Mom*, belongs to De Palma's initial stage. It is more reserved and follows the pace of his early movies. *Phantom of the Paradise*, the musical, by contrast, lends itself to the concordance between a cheerful *pop-rock* songbook and editing that is consequently fast. As for *Obsession* and *Blow Out*, these are the two darkest, most baleful titles of the De Palma-Hirsch period. We would conjecture that this is probably the reason why, in terms of figures, they appear closer to the constants of the De Palma-Pankow period. In fact, a virtuoso style and self-awareness are the clearest qualities in the director's movies which he has entrusted to the latter editor. *The Black Dahlia* and *Redacted* are the two movies that most *stand out or return*. This is translated into slowness because, as is well known, self-analysis leads to abstraction and, in terms of time, suspension. The main new feature in the characterization of the conception and practice of De Palma's editing is that we finally find the meaning of that disconcerting bigamistic (in)fidelity which we used to head up the section devoted to the movie-maker. De Palma chooses to resort to one or the other in a studied or calculated way depending on the profile of each movie. This is why, after having *employed* or *used* Pankow on *Casualties of War*—as is well known, these verbs, implying utilitarianism, are regularly used by groups of directors in the industry to refer to their regular editors—he dispenses with him and returns to Hirsch to make the faster *Mission Impossible* and *Mission to Mars*. Later, in a gesture of reverse betrayal/belief—in the sense of reaffirming matrimonial vows—he places the movies closest to his Hitchcockian formula, *Snake Eyes* and *Femme Fatale*, in the hands of the repudiated Pankow.

### 3. Woody Allen: you meet the editor of your dreams

Throughout his career, Allen has entrusted the editing of his works to a limited number of technicians: ten lucky people have been commissioned to assemble

shots for his movies. Two general considerations must be made by way of preamble: firstly, how deceptive this figure is, giving equal treatment—because each individual inevitably count as one—to editors as sporadic and, in principle, as unimportant in explaining his career and *modus operandi* as O. Brown, G. Hively and W.G. Bricmont, who appear in the attached table of credits only once. In all three cases, they also share the role of editing that single feature movie with two other operators, such as Allen's true twin souls, his inseparable Susan E. Morse and Alisa Lepselter. Secondly, directly related to the above, the fact that this area began being occupied by men but was then taken over by women, in quasi-matrimonial and quasi-monogamous arrangements, also seems anything other than a trivial element. It is, in fact, an interesting psychological note for getting a good idea of Allen's own idiosyncratic production methods, and by extension, the dominant practice in editing booths in terms of the cultural anthropology of the audiovisual medium in the West...<sup>6</sup>

In his case, a clear trend is observed: after the early days of promiscuity associated more with the fact that he had less control over his productions than over the character he played, he now forges long, trusting relationships. Ralph Rosenblum at the beginning, Susan E. Morse for a long time, and now Alisa Lepselter, have taken charge for the bulk of his more personally controlled work.

Allen's filmography constitutes the most extensive and, in cinemetric terms, irregular sample of the three we analyze and compare. Now we have the complete battery of data, we would like to attempt a more far-reaching study model because, as will soon become clear, for the purposes of interpretation the practice of counting shots is particularly useful in order to understand the way this movie-maker's products are conceived and achieved, or at least to illuminate certain areas that have, to date, remained shadowy. In passing, we are going to put forward a tentative periodization of his career based both on the specific principles governing the editing of his movies and their general lines. Although generally the editing of Allen's films is considered a factor with little significance, the idea is, without falling into the fundamentalism of granting it priority, to give this aspect its importance in (relation with) the movies as whole.

### 3.1. Beginnings: take the editing machine and run

Looking at the simple appearance—a word which is in itself vague—and the reliable data of his first movies, it can be established that the early period runs from *What's Up, Tiger Lily?* to *Love and Death*. The first movie comes from the re-editing and fantasized parody dubbing—apocryphal is the most precise term to classify the premise and scope of the process to which the story and images are subjected—of a Japanese movie. The idea—original at the time although limited in its achievement, particularly seen with modern eyes—is in tune with the nature of the productions that followed: the series of sketch comedies conditioned or, to put it better, achieved, by a frenetic pace. Their average ASL in the period is around 7, with peaks of speed in the most physical ones, like *Bananas* or *Sleeper*, of 6.6 and 6. Half way through this phase, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* shows the highest ASL (8.5), which is not very useful considered alone, because it is an episodic movie. Fortunately, the Cinemetrics website contains the detailed analysis made by Erick T. Jones which takes account of the respective behavior of the five segments making it up, whose results are 7.9, 10.3, 13.2, 8.5 and 10 in that order. So, it is not only immediately notable that the opening sequence is the fastest but also that, firstly, there are clear variations reflected in these figures; secondly, the peak reached coincides with the central block and, thirdly, the general picture is like a sawtoothed mountain range which, as we will see, reproduces a familiar pattern, no more and no less than that of Allen's filmography taken as a whole.

It is worth spending a moment on the situation of *Love and Death* (1975), the last step in this period, both because of qualitative issues—its content is more serious, incorporating philosophical and metaphysical meditations into its gags—and quantitative ones—the ASL operates in the average range of 7. So, *Love and Death* still meets the dynamic of this first period while heralding the mechanics of the second.

### 3.2. Second stage: Woody *all'europea*

The period covers from *Annie Hall*, which saw him enshrined as an author and gave free rein to his psychoanalytical, comic, tragic and tragicomic revelations



about human beings and their obsessions with love and sex, religion, etc. and *Hannah and Her Sisters*, his last unanimously praised movie, for which he obtained an Oscar. A bird's eye view shows that during this period the wildness of his cinema is tamed: this calming process takes the form, in the three first pieces appearing in it, which received an excellent critical and commercial reception—the aforementioned *Annie Hall*, *Interiors* and *Manhattan*—of a drop in the pace towards figures more appropriate for the cinema of the old continent than of the Hollywood of the time. More specifically, they are analogous to the figures of Woody Allen's main references of the time—Ingmar Bergman and Federico Fellini. However, the qualifications should be noted because, just as between pure black and white there are infinite ranges of grey, there is no linear relationship between real and felt/perceived speed and slowness, nor is the reductionism of (prime) numbers possible. So *Interiors* has a faster ASL but comes across as slower than *Annie Hall* with its comings and goings in time, or *Manhattan*, to the beat of George Gershwin and his symphony in praise of New York. After these three movies, Allen carries out a very interesting experiment consistent with confirming his personality as an author. As paradoxical—or ambiguous with even a touch of the fallacious or puerile—as it may seem, this involves basing himself on intrinsically mimetic exercises. It is then that he comes up with products as daring and radical as *Stardust Memories*, a failed or misinterpreted (cross out whichever does not apply, or whichever you prefer or, even better, do not cross out anything and see this dialectic as the essential consequence of the ambivalence we have just described) exercise mimicking the master of Rimini and sticking to the constant of *Manhattan*. His subsequent journey, over increasingly steep mountains and valleys with even sharper slopes, leads to ASLs as low as that for *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*—stylistically and statistically in line with his *Interiors*—or the initially vigorous and progressively calmer mockumentary *Zelig*, alternating with lighter, more comic exercises in style like *Broadway Danny Rose* and *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, in which the ASL goes back up again. Due to that deep searching of the soul and the human consciousness, with a markedly realistic tone and reminders of *Annie Hall*, which is *Hannah and Her Sisters*, the ASL shoots up to 25.5. The better known actors attract the attention for a movie which owes itself to them, making the performance/acting component most important, while the editing remains secondary.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3. Third stage: something personal

The overwhelming reputation gained thanks to *Hannah and Her Sisters* led Allen's movies to rest on their most self-satisfied, complacent laurels. The encounter (with himself) in the third phase, which includes his productions from *Radio Days* to *Celebrity*, is his most unstable in his filmography, in the sense of debatable and creatively restless. Although all the movies corresponding to this period have high ASLs, they also have quite sharp divergences in this respect in as far as they are attached to very disparate genres. So, in fact, without actually being able to say that Allen's approach is classical, as anyone watching it carefully can see, there is a classical or more correctly classicist essential principle: a sediment or foundation. This is the search for correlation between form and content, within and with all his self-referentialism, without losing the quite unmistakable finish running through and permeating the movies from beginning to end. Starting with the typographically immutable opening credits on a black background always running at the same pace and to the sound of jazz or Charleston songs, Allen tries to put his own stamp on every work—a style, an atmosphere, a rhythm. One name stands out, in capital letters: Susan E. Morse heads the editing credits throughout this period, to the point that it is not too bold to attribute to her, as we will now be able to see, part of the responsibility for the uniformity in the making of these titles. In the same way that Allen's cinema has been subdivided by serious historians, and other more frivolous ones, by its leading actresses who are at once sentimental partners and muses—Diane Keaton and Mia Farrow, and, to a lesser extent and more recently, inevitably by sublimation, the Nordic beauty of the leading lady in *Match Point* and the Hispanic Penélope Cruz—it is right to establish successive arcs given the changes in the female occupants of the editor's chair, which begin to break down and finally crack only when the pair splits up. The nostalgic, mythologizing *Radio Days* takes him back to his childhood and returns to an ASL of 20.4. He follows the trend with *September*, another doubly retro work—the imitative Allen, specifically imitating Bergman—with 32.5. He progresses (or regresses) along this path until almost losing direction with two works forming a loop with *Hannah and Her Sisters* on all fronts—exploring the human psyche and heart, applauded by the Academy and with very similar figures in terms of ASL—*Another Woman* and *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. Less metaphysical but no lighter, if by this

we understand faster, is *Alice* (42.1), the first of the peaks in his work in terms of slowness, and this is followed by the oppressive, expressionist *Shadows and Fog* (34) and the anguished, anachronistic *Husbands and Wives*, which, with its 28.9 and its very relevant use of a hand-held camera with nerves close to the surface is, at the same time, Cassavetian and dogmatic *avant-la-lettre*. *Manhattan Murder Mystery* recalls the intrigue movies of the golden age of Hollywood—a final nod to *The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles) —with 28.8, and Allen redoubles the theatricality, nostalgia and slowness with *Bullets over Broadway*, a true Himalaya with its 50.1. No less stale, the television version of his old comedy, *Don't Drink the Water*, in his old, antiquated comic register, revitalizes the paradoxical Allen and injects him with energy, increasing the pace to 34.4. The movement grows with the musical—always a feeble, neurotic shadow of the unmatched, irrecoverable past, poorly sketched in the present's clumsy, ridiculous dance steps—*Everyone Says I Love You* (34.2). If—and we do not say this pejoratively—this is the chalk, the cheese is *Deconstructing Harry*, surprisingly Godardian with its ASL of 17.4, which takes Allen back to the seventies and sets the standard for the rates to be maintained in the next phase. His collaboration with Susan E. Morse concludes with the bold and backward-looking *Celebrity* (33.4). From this, the analyst draws perhaps a mistaken lesson but one which really seems to be following the pattern of thought the director himself followed: the increase in the ASL and the rigor with which it was (mis)treated/understood by the critics corresponded to the very clear end of an era.

### 3.4. Fourth and (for now) last stage

Whatever the cause or the consequence, or even if the two things are a coincidence rather than being related, the fact is that Allen changed editor and replaced Susan E. Morse with Alisa Lepselter, retaining his link with her to the present day. The ASL in this entire phase has remained quite monotonous, between 15 and 18, with just three peaks: *Small Time Crooks* (22), *Hollywood Ending* (22.6) and *Anything Else* (22.9); perhaps not independently if we consider these three as minor works.

The Lepselter period opens discreetly, in average tone and once again covering the ground of the past, with *Sweet and Lowdown*. From then on, Allen turns bour-

geois. Although the ASLs of Allen's films are still far greater than most American art movies, let alone American commercial movies, the fact is that his films move towards the contemporary and, as such, they are updated, with the ASL showing a corresponding reduction. As happens with the movies themselves, which give off an increasingly strong aroma of déjà vu, they are locked into figures which hardly change. In terms of speed, in the last few years only the vacational *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* and *Midnight in Paris* have fallen below the psychological barrier of 15.

### Woody Allen

Year	Title	Editor	ASL	Runtime
1966	<i>What's up, Tiger Lily?</i>	Richard Krown	6.6	76:13.2
1969	<i>Take the money and run</i>	Paul Jordan & R. Kalish	7.9	84:14.2
1971	<i>Bananas</i>	R. Kalish; R. Rosenblum	6.6	78:41.7
1972	<i>Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex. *But Were Afraid to Ask</i>	Paul Hirsch	12.3	81:06.4
1973	<i>Sleeper</i>	O. Brown; R. Kalish; R. Rosenblum	6	81:00.9
1975	<i>Love and Death</i>	R. Rosenblum; R. Kalish; G. Hively	7.1	77:49.6
1977	<i>Annie Hall</i>	Rosenblum; Bricmont	15.1	90:22.8
1978	<i>Interiors</i>	R. Rosenblum	12.3	89:29.8
1979	<i>Manhattan</i>	Susan E. Morse	18.3	89:41.2
1980	<i>Stardust Memories</i>	Susan E. Morse	18.6	84:49.7
1982	<i>A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy</i>	Susan E. Morse	13.5	80:11.9
1983	<i>Zelig</i>	Susan E. Morse	8.5	70:56.8
1984	<i>Broadway Danny Rose</i>	Susan E. Morse	15	76:55.1
1985	<i>The Purple Rose of Cairo</i>	Susan E. Morse	11.8	77:31.6
1986	<i>Hannah and her Sisters</i>	Susan E. Morse	25.5	101:53.6
1987	<i>Radio Days</i>	Susan E. Morse	20.4	83:54.2
1987	<i>September</i>	Susan E. Morse	32.5	76:13.4
1988	<i>Another Woman</i>	Susan E. Morse	28	77:01.6
1989	<i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i>	Susan E. Morse	26.8	99:51.2
1990	<i>Alice</i>	Susan E. Morse	42.1	102:00.9
1991	<i>Shadows and Fog</i>	Susan E. Morse	34	80:44.6
1992	<i>Husbands and Wives</i>	Susan E. Morse	28.9	99:26.6

Year	Title	Editor	ASL	Runtime
1993	<i>Manhattan Murder Mystery</i>	Susan E. Morse	28.8	99:34.0
1994	<i>Bullets Over Broadway</i>	Susan E. Morse	50.1	90:44.6
1994	<i>Don't Drink the Water (TV movie)</i>	Susan E. Morse	34.4	89:25.2
1995	<i>Mighty Aphrodite</i>	Susan E. Morse	36	90:31.8
1996	<i>Everyone Says I Love You</i>	Susan E. Morse	34.2	93:14.0
1997	<i>Deconstructing Harry</i>	Susan E. Morse	17.6	90:56.8
1998	<i>Celebrity</i>	Susan E. Morse	33.4	103:22.7
1999	<i>Sweet and Lowdown</i>	Alisa Lepselter	16.5	85:44.9
2000	<i>Small Time Crooks</i>	Alisa Lepselter	22	85:42.9
2001	<i>The Curse of the Jade Scorpion</i>	Alisa Lepselter	17.7	97:19.7
2002	<i>Hollywood Ending</i>	Alisa Lepselter	22.6	102:31.2
2003	<i>Anything Else</i>	Alisa Lepselter	22.9	100:15.0
2004	<i>Melinda and Melinda</i>	Alisa Lepselter	14.9	90:58.2
2005	<i>Match Point</i>	Alisa Lepselter	15.4	120:23.8
2006	<i>Scoop</i>	Alisa Lepselter	14.7	87:25.7
2007	<i>Cassandra's Dream</i>	Alisa Lepselter	17.4	100:08.8
2008	<i>Vicky Cristina Barcelona</i>	Alisa Lepselter	11.6	87:42.5
2009	<i>Whatever Works</i>	Alisa Lepselter	17	88:53.0
2010	<i>You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger</i>	Alisa Lepselter	18.2	93:60.0
2011	<i>Midnight in Paris</i>	Alisa Lepselter	12.6	89

Figure 7: Woody Allen. Source: SALT, 2009: 359; 2006: 322; Cinemetrics; own creation.

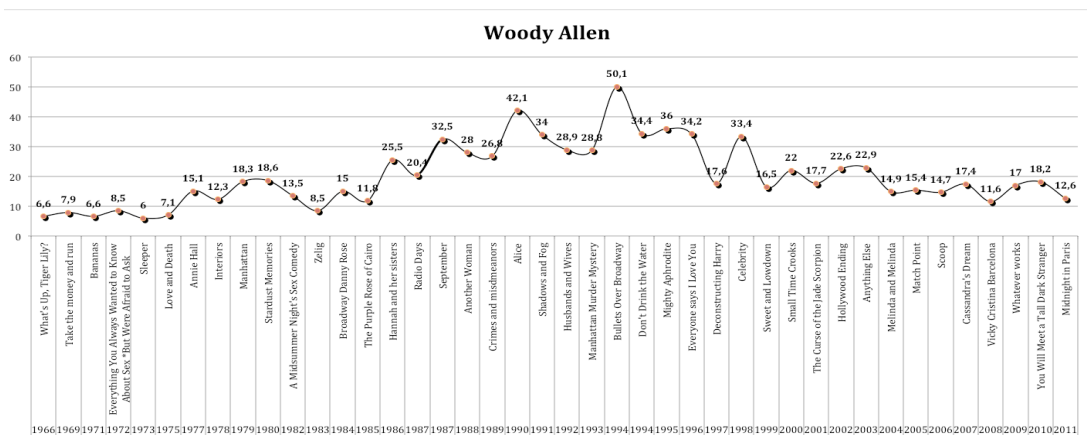


Figure 8: SALT, 2009: 359; 2006: 322; Cinemetrics; own creation.

The statistical drawing shows a curiously pointed shape superimposing a pyramid and a sawtooth pattern, with multiple successive edges: from the ASLs slightly above—slightly slower than—the dominant ones of the initial period—the comedies made up of sketches—we reach the double vertex of *Alice* and *Bullets over Broadway* before speeding up slightly. In its descent, the pattern does not balance or equal the gradients of the start of Allen’s career or, still less, reach the swift rates of contemporary mainstream American cinema. Looked at again, the graphic representation shows a scaled structure with successive plateaux, identifiable with other stages in the director’s work. This is no coincidence. They are usually differentiated from one another both by the critics, by almost all the essayists who have tried to take account of the ups and downs of his career and by Allen himself. The period of the (little), unpretentious comedies—in the range of 6.5; the period of transcendentalist enshrinement—about 15; the most personal phase, in the second half of the eighties, rising to 25; his catharsis in the early nineties, reaching averages above 30, and a final stage of decline, in all senses of the word, to half way through this decade, thanks to which he reaches very regular ASLs of about 16...

## Conclusions. *The final cut*

Beyond the partial interpretations arising from the examination of each movie-maker’s work, it is worth taking a look at the course of a joint chronology:

A diagram like the one above probably invites many readings, perhaps too many. However, in this second attempt of ours—the first for a wider audience and with pretensions to achieving a global impact, with all that that implies in the way of boldness—we would like to maintain prudence. We will therefore restrict

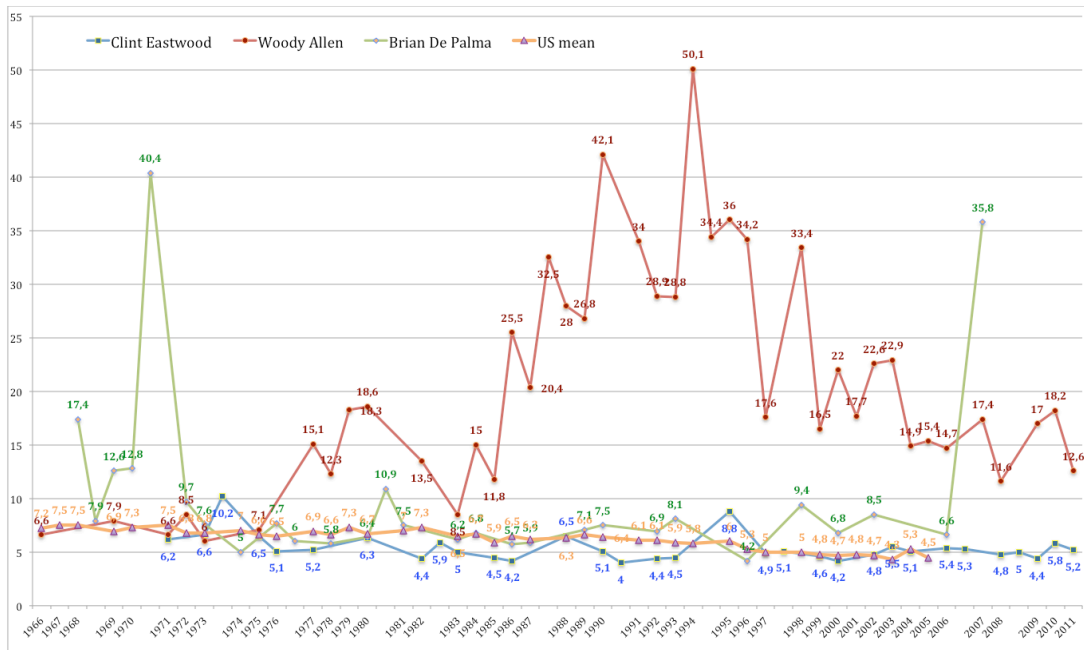


Figure 9: Own creation based on the above data—includes data from Salt and Cinemetric

ourselves to stating only a few absolutely obvious points, the concluding one predictable almost to the point of ridicule. So, apart from noting in these three directors, who have become old masters, an acceleration—in some cases a more timid one—as the years go by, which is usually mentioned as a cliché; the fluctuation of the numbers and the disparity of the evolutions of each movie-maker allow us to venture that, as we conjectured at the beginning, what is going on is not a single classicism, *it is various concepts of it*. From its very origin and developed by different routes by each one of them, this explodes in very different, if not directly antithetical forms. Although, because of his bloodthirsty nature, one tends to think of De Palma as the butcher of the three directors under scrutiny, Clint Eastwood is actually quickest on the draw. Already in the previous paper we recorded this in a footnote, observing that, except for Allen, who develops in an often peculiar way, a certain consistency can be made out, as well as a parallelism in the declinations of Eastwood and De Palma: the downward trend, with a symptomatic rise in all three in the second half of the decade on the eve of the millennium. Also—taking out *Redacted* but noting it well—their lines highlight rather than change the relative positions occupied by each one in the ranking at

the beginning and the end of the historical series: De Palma, the least nervous (!) and Eastwood, the quickest (again!). Who would have believed it? Or, more boldly and perspicaciously—perhaps, for some this will not be any more than a mere statement of the obvious—further reliable and almost definitive proof that the sensation of movement does not even primordially depend on the editing speed. One last note, at first sight, said jokingly for reasons of retentiveness, Woody Allen's career is a return journey—regression-progression or regression-evolution—as it first decelerates and then accelerates with the passing of the years. We have just hypothesized about this, attributing it more to a matter of sensitivity and thematic closeness to his movies than to an *aggiornamento* or updating in terms of cinematographic pace, cosmovision, or imagination... It only remains for us to repeat the same old humble story: it is worth continuing to investigate this line, and we shall continue to do so.

## Notes

- [1] In general terms, we state that we follow the shot discrimination criteria established by Barry Salt in his two seminal works (2009 and 2006). Concerning the durations of films, these correspond to PAL copies at 25 frames/50 fields per second from which have been subtracted, whenever they can be distinguished, the time corresponding to the initial credits and, above all and in practically all cases, the rolling of the final credits. When it comes to calculating the ASL, the results have been corrected, adding the 4% to adapt the data to the original film speed of 24 fps. In addition, when the figures have been rounded to achieve single decimal place, it we have been chosen to round them upwards when the number is greater than .x5.
- [2] With Cinemetrics, Cid Vasconcelos also obtained the same ASL, although with a different result for the number of shots—a difference of eight in one more minute.
- [3] Spang started as full editor with a few comedy films for people other than Eastwood, before being brought in to help on *Any Which Way You Can*. Subsequently he has specialized in comedies for TV and cinema. The authors thank this instruction to Barry Salt.
- [4] Hirsch told Oldham (1992: 190) how to apply the technique of cutting the duration of shots in suspense scenes in a linear way with almost implacable rigour following a mathematical pattern to create excitement: Sometimes I would do it mechanically in the sense of counting the number of frames in each cut, and I'd say, Well, this cut is sixteen frames, I'm going to make the next cut fourteen frames, then twelve, then ten, then eight, and six. You can't do it totally mechanically, but you can approach it that way, then make adjustments, depending on



the images and how quickly they read on the screen. Pankow's system is different: it consists of starting from the base to be used in the first shot at least one take from each camera angle: I put in all the film shot for a particular sequence, use at least a representative sample of every single angle in an appropriate place, as well as elongate each moment as much as possible with the film I have (...) the first time I'll cut it full and look at it. I keep an open mind, adding representative samples of each angle to the piece (in Oldham, 1992: 175).

- [5] The editor of this film, after five commissions to Hirsch and one to Greenberg, is Corky O'Hara, editor of only four films, the first of which is *Home Movies* and the last *Flight of the Spruce Goose* (Lech Majewski, 1986), with Karen Black.
- [6] Although Allen's rather clumsy staging (habitually resorting to the zoom...) and the lack of variation in the number of shots could lead one to think the contrary, the truth is that this film-maker gives editing a literally essential role. Both his own declarations from all periods and those of his editors, as well as a careful study of his filmography, back this up. For space reasons we cannot go further on this issue, to which we would like to return in future in a monographic study. But it is worth giving a couple of pieces of information that are eloquent in this respect. In the account given by Rosenblum in *When the Shooting Stops the Cutting Begins* of his exemplary, unusual and pleasantly extensive relationship with Allen, (1979: 241-290), he says that, after *Bananas*, to confirm the position of co-responsibility he had won on his own merit, re-editing *Take the Money and Run*—removing some scenes; reintegrating; shortening; extending; using of pieces to camera; altering the order as in the case of the start or the famous bank robbery scene, which was moved to a position where the structure demanded some continuous narrative material; altering the music; and inserting voiceovers with narration and brilliant comments which, at Rosenblum's request, Allen wrote ad hoc, almost improvising, on paper napkins—and thereby having the right to speak and vote, he asked for and was granted a credit as associate producer. However, on set he felt useless and out of place and, although he preserved the credit on *Sleeper* and *Love and Death*, as his relationship with Allen was in fact as an equal, he considered it superfluous and did away with it (1979: 256-257). From *Annie Hall* onwards, given the magnitude and depth of the changes made in post-production and as additional material and new endings always had to be filmed again and again, Allen's scripts simply ceased to contain them, with the formula "Ending to be shot" appearing in their place. The director then began to include in his budgets a large item for the completion phase, corresponding to the cost of two weeks of additional filming, to be ready for this eventuality (p. 262).
- [7] It can be useful to fully understand this phenomenon, the additional explanation, gently suggested by Barry Salt: "With very long-take movies where the length of the shot mostly equals the length of the scene (those done mostly in master shots, as the industry would put it) the exact ASL for different films from the same director varies a lot depending on the lengths of the scenes as scripted. This is not the case where a scene is broken down into many shots, when the habits of the director and the editor tend to take over. Hence I believe the exact ASL has less significance for very long take films. Even more importantly, if a director (like Woody Allen in his middle period) does not shoot any coverage, then there is nothing the editor can do about it. They just have to cut the heads and tails off the shots and stick them together. It is quite clear that Allen shot more coverage than previously in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, making

possible the use of reverse-angle cutting in many of the scenes (previously rare), and hence shorter shots”.

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