

Robert Rodriguez film once upon a time in mexico essay sample

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The film I chose for analysis is Once Upon a Time in Mexico. I viewed this film on November 17, 2003 at the Channel Islands Theater in Oxnard. The structural effect I am critiquing is the dynamic editing effect. This film is full of very fast paced action scenes throughout the entire film. To really understand and keep up, one must have a good analytical mind because there are several story lines that blend in together at the end.

Robert Rodriguez has impressed me so much that I must comment on him. He is an amazing and talented man. He was not only the director this film, he was also the writer, producer and editor plus the credit state he chopped, shot and scored Once Upon a Time in Mexico. He personally operated the video camera and the new Sony 24-fps digital Hi-Def camera, so he knew the precise effect he was searching for. Before shooting the scenes he storyboards some of them in a cartoon fashion, then shoots them on video before filming the actual scenes. He implements the most up-to-date technology in his films. In Once Upon a Time in Mexico, he used the Sony digital hi-Def technology camera compositions that include great facial close-ups, making landscapes of the faces and the classical western shoot-outs. His action sequences create humor and are also a salute to the old Sergio Leone westerns.

This film included Dolby digital, Sony digital dynamic sound and Dolby stereo. He made violence in the film choreographic. The Rodriguez epic is more fascinated in the moment, in great shots, in surprises and ironic reversals and close-ups of sweaty faces then in a rational story. The film feeds on the music of heroism and sorrow. This story is in bold, vivid colors.

He goes for sensational kills. I am very impressed with his technical skill and creative energy. Rodriguez is the one-man band of modern-day filmmakers, creating his films not quite by himself, but nearly.

The synopsis of the mythic guitar-slinging hero, El Mariachi (Antonio Banderas) continues in Robert Rodriguez's courageous, non-stop action epic *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*. The new quest is set against the surroundings of revolution and greed. Haunted and scarred by death, El Mariachi has retreated into an existence of isolation. He is forced out of hiding by Sands (Johnny Depp), a corrupt CIA agent. Sands recruits the reclusive hero to sabotage a scheme by the malicious cartel boss Barrillo (Willem Dafoe), who is planning to assassinate El Presidente (Petro Armendariz) of Mexico. El Mariachi has his own reasons for returning - reckoning and revenge. Now, together with his competent partners Lorenzo (Enrique Iglesias) and Fideo (Marco Leonardi) the legend of El Mariachi attains new levels of excitement and adventure. Within the saga, other story lines persists, CIA agent Sands (Johnny Depp) sends Cucuy (Danny Trejo, the henchman for Sands) to shadow and keep tabs on El Mariachi. Sands also convinces Jorge Ramirez (Ruben Blades, retired-FBI, who has old grudge to settle with Barrillo) to come out of retirement and exterminate Barrillo and Dr. Guevera (Miguel Couturier, personal Dr. to Barrillo, who killed Jorge's partner a long time ago), who brutally tortured and killed Ramirez' FBI partner.

The scene under analysis is the soundless battle scene, which takes place in a church. There is a huge fight in the church but all the weapons have silencers. You see being killed without a sound. Then at the conclusion El

Mariachi brings out his gun and it does not have a silencer, the sound is even louder. It vibrates and echoes throughout the church. In the frame reference in the lower foreground there is several gunman entering the church. In the middle ground you have the main isle leading towards the altar. The center upper ground is the confessional (which El Mariachi is in) and in a distance is the altar (the altar is not being focused on). Both the left and right side of the frame is the pews, also with henchmen coming in from the sides. The altar is not seen very well in this frame because the camera is focused on the confessional. This scene takes several minutes to complete; there is a lot of rapid tight editing. It begins with the gunmen opening fire on the confessional and ending with El Mariachi leaving everyone of them dead.

The structural filmic effect is of course the dynamic editing, which is necessary for action films. Using a large number of shots intercut rapidly to an emotional conclusion did this. These also including a lot of jump cuts that jarred the audience psychologically. There was some degree of flash cutting that edited shots of brief duration that succeeded each other very rapidly. I was really amazed with the stunt of the escape from the confessional (which Antonio Banderas did most of his own stunts). He escaped up the wall onto the balcony from the back of the confessional as the gunmen opened fire. What was so amazing was that he slithered quickly like a lizard up the wall and was on the top of the wall before the gunmen noticed. Of course I know this was done ropes or hoists of some kind. This was really a very electrifying and emotional scene. It kept me on the edge of my seat and made me feel I

was actually there, which is the effect I believe that Robert Rodriguez was going for.

This was the best action movie I've seen in a long time. Once Upon a Time in Mexico was even better than I imagined! As I left the theater, it left me wanting another sequel that is bigger and better. Scene after scene is filled with slight of hand, even magical, stunts and just cool moves. One in particular is when El Mariachi and Carolina (Selma Hayak) escape over a balcony of a high rise apartment by rappelling down over each other in sequence while chained together. Rodriguez has jumped upon the phenomena of making people almost fly through the air on screen. This film is stylish and very cool. This movie all came together for me. That is where the analytical mind come in. There are so many characters switching allegiances and double-crossing one another, it curdles the brain - but, incredibly, it all comes out in the end. The plot was well understood by me and the scenes all flowed together. The dynamic editing with music twanging and guns blazing made this film an exception experience.

Robert Rodriguez dynamic editing and camera work has made this film well worth seeing again and again. The experience induced by the use of the structural effects made this film with the most awesome shoot-outs imaginable, jaws dropping at every scene and most incredible sound & special effects. This film is worth seeing just for the filmmaking alone. On the 5 star rating system, I definitely give it a 5 star recommendation! This film is brilliantly shot. It gives reference to Leone's Spaghetti Westerns, older black and white films similar to Orson Welles films and even silent films in the way

the camera captures its characters. This is all organized with Rodriguez's own unique style and energy.

The way he shoots and edits his movies, when uninhibited especially, is magnificent, it really seems natural, as if he knows unequivocally how he will edit it together as he films it. Aside from the ingenious way this is shot, the cinematography is lush and crisp, it was shot on digital film and it looks extraordinary, it will without doubt be a far more customary thing to do in the near future. Overall the dynamic editing has made this an enjoyable film, it is quick and frantic, and the action is ingenious and just completely nuts. Also Rodriguez's score is outstanding, he is the definition of multi-talented.

What I now understand about the use of dynamic editing that I have not understood before this class is dynamic editing is used for action rather than ideas and is faster than continuity editing.

1. Dynamic cutting is a film editing style.

A. Dynamic cutting, the film's impact is achieved in the cutting room rather than during the original shooting and usually through clever juxtaposition and rapid pacing. It has a visceral energy generated by using a greater number of shots intercut rapidly to an emotional conclusion.

B. Intershot movements are editing techniques or a device used involving shots, scenes and sequences.

2. The cut is an instantaneous transition from one shot to the next. It is a sudden transition from one scene to another without using an optical effect

such as a dissolve, a wipe, or a fade. It is achieved by splicing last frame of one scene with the first frame of the next.

A. Jump cuts occurs within a scene to condense time. They can effectively eliminate dead periods. They in effect, abbreviate the time/space line of a scene.

B. Flashy jump cuts produce an ellipsis between shots, either by maintaining a consistent background and suddenly changing the positions of the actors, or by holding the positions of the actors and abruptly changing the background.

C. Flash cutting is high speed interchanging of two shots for the emotional effect. Also, editing the film into shots of very brief period that succeeds each other rapidly. They are shots of very brief duration intercut to create a sharp dramatic impact of shock effect.

D. Flash frame is a shot of only a frame or a few frames duration, sometimes a single frame, which can just scarcely be perceived by the audience.

3. Optical effects are a general name for such special effects and transitional effects as the fade, the dissolve, and the wipe.

A. Transition effects can be created by a motion picture camera but are normally added optically in the lab which allows a smooth flow of the film by providing a link between separate scenes.

- B. Reverse action is a technique effect achieved by running the film backwards in the camera or during optical printing.
- C. The dissolve is the gradual appearance of a new shot as an old shot slowly disappears. The proceeding shot gradually fuses into the following shot.
- D. Superimposition's are overlaying or overlapping of images for dramatic result. This method is stating that emotional things the audience feels and expands our understanding. This is an essential technique in " Montage".
- E. Fade is the gradual appearance or disappearance of a shot.
- F. The iris is that the picture gradually opens out of closes into black as does the iris in a lens. The iris-in/iris-out is a transition effect, now rarely used and is credited to D. W. Griffin.
- G. The wipe is an optical effect, in which one image gradually replaces another image, usually moving horizontally, vertically, or diagonally across the frame.
- H. A flip is a type of wipe in which the images appear to be cards flipped one after another.
- I. Multiple images are a number of images printed alongside each other within the same frame, often showing different camera angles of the same action, or separate actions.
- J. Wash or ripple is the mechanical procedure that distorts the image.

K. Focus is a mechanical modification of the lens to sharpen or blur the image. In editing, they focus in, focus out and use it as a punctuation device. One image slowly goes out of focus as the next image comes into focus.

L. Freeze frame is the effect of continually printing a single frame so that the action seems to freeze on the screen into a still life without motion. The process can be used to increase the length a scene, to highlight a point, or for sheer dramatic effects.

4. Editing revolves around cause and effect relationships.

A. Action is causal, the person is speaking.

B. Reaction is effect, the cutaway to the person listening.

C. Simplistically, editing relates actions and reactions.

5. The nature of the editing is to select, arrange, and assemble shots into scenes, sequences, and films.

A. Editing gives a visual rhythm to a film. It develops the narrative sequence. It creates the mood, tempo, pacing, and timing.

B. Editing principles involves the passage of time, restructuring of time, restructuring of space, creating movement, and development & emotional feeling to the film. The sound is also edited and manipulated to make the audience feel what character in a film feel.

C. Editing is the heart of the cinema art by pumping meaning through the film. Films have been enriched, enhanced, and saved as a result of great editing.

D. Editing is used to bestow humor, suspense, romance, fear, horror, and every other emotion in human nature.

6. The montage is a sequence of shots, which may be similar in content that when combined, carry specialized meaning that is important to the story line.

A. The time montage indicates the passage of time and, in effect, condenses or expands the passage of time. The editor manipulates time.

B. The action montage is exhilarating and is a specialized type of dynamic editing. It is an emotional device that forces the audience to participate in physical events.

C. The mood montage creates an emotional environment and allows the audience to become involved with the characters and their relationships. It creates a state of mind in the audience, which probably is also that of the character involved.

Prior to taking this class I only viewed films for the story line, plot, or character's roles. I did not realize all the talent, creativity, and hard work that was involved. I now view films from a different perspective. I can see the editing structural effects, camera angles, lighting effects, context to the

frame, and the effect the director is going for. This class has helped be understand filmmaking and film viewing more clearly.