Editing Of The Films Run Lola Run And Evil Dead 2: Comparative Essay

In this essay, I'll be comparing the editing of the films Run Lola Run (Tom Tykwer, 1998) and Evil Dead 2 (Sam Raimi, 1987). I will be specifically focusing on timing and the different ways these films deal with pace and rhythm, closely analyzing slow and fast paced scenes. I will also briefly consider sound, not for its entity, but merely in the way it reinforces the editing.

At a first look, the two films don't seem to have much in common: both unique and extremely stylized in their own way, the first being a time-twisting 90's indie and the second a gory slapstick horror, it is still impossible to deny they share the same extravagant energy.

Pacing is essential to this. Steve Hullfish (2015), author of The Art of the Cut, underlines this when comparing editing to dance; in fact, "dancers do not simply make a movement or a step on every single beat. Dance rushes forward, then holds, then flows elegantly, then spins and drives. When has the audience had enough speed? When does the eye need to rest on a beautifully held form in preparation for the next rush of movement or subtle gesture?"

Evil Dead 2 – Time In Horror And Comedy

Evil Dead 2 presents itself as a classic horror: in an abandoned cabin in the woods, Ash Williams and his companions find themselves dealing with an evil force who will proceed to possess them in turn and slowly kill them as they try to fight back. The comedy, in fact, comes not from the plot itself, but from the way the story is shown. If we focus on execution only, we can notice how, in both horror and comedy, timing is essential to generate a reaction in the public. Specifically, we can think about the way, respectively, jump scares and comedic time work.

In the words of J. K. Muir (2013), a jump scare is "a moment of surprise or terror that seemingly comes out of nowhere, but is actually a synthesis of specific sights and sounds.". He also quotes The Evil Dead's composer Joe LoDuca, stating that "a jolt scare is universally arranged as music tapers off or dwindles to silence. Then in the moment of quiet… WHAM! The volume is cranked up just as the monster cuts into the foreground of the frame."

At the same time, comic timing is defined as "the use of rhythm, tempo, and pausing to enhance comedy and humour."; according to Matt Ruby, "the pacing of the delivery of a joke can have a strong impact on its comedic effect, even altering its meaning; the same can also be true of more physical comedy such as slapstick." (Capture Your Flag 2011).

A specific scene exemplifies the pace of the whole movie: it is the over-the-top sped up fight between Ash and his own hand (28:30-36:00), a reminiscence of the puppet-like moves of sped up silent films, both comedy and horror (both comic and grotesque).

As the evil presence possesses it, Ash's hand furiously starts smashing dishes on his head, dragging him around the kitchen. The scene is chaotic and loud and ends with Ash passing out

on the floor.

In complete silence now, the possessed hand keeps harassing him, making squeaking, laughing sounds, until it notices a knife on the floor. It then tries to reach it, slowly dragging the whole body across the floor.

But the silence in broken once more, and the music jumps as Ash stabs the hand; “Who’s laughing now?”. He reaches for a chainsaw, and the music peaks as he turns it on, shouting as he proceeds to cut the hand off.

“Unlike most horror comedies, that have funny parts and scary parts, here the funny parts are the scary parts, and vice versa. What Raimi recognizes is that the construction of a scare is more or less the same as the construction of a laugh. There’s a setup, and a payoff; suspense, then a scare. So, instead of making them distinct units, he intertwines them, making them the same thing.” (Patrick H. Willems 2017)

The scene then proceeds; Ash is chasing his hand, embracing a gun. There’s silence as he aims and shoots, until an absurd amount of blood starts coming out of the walls at tremendous speed. It is then immediately sucked back. The whole house starts laughing with Ash, and we laugh as well. But, the scene goes on and the laughter does not stop. What we once found funny becomes grotesque as we have time to realize that there’s not much to laugh about in this situation.

In fact, comic and grotesque are not that far from each other

Run Lola Run – Subjective Timing

The film is set in a 2000’s Berlin; Lola receives a phone call from her boyfriend Manni; He just lost the bag of 100,000 DM he had to deliver and only has 20 minutes to find a solution. Manni states he is going to rob a nearby supermarket, but Lola asks him to wait, and decides to ask for her father’s help, who is not intentioned to do anything. When she meets Manni it’s too late; they rob the supermarket together, and as they run from the police Lola is shot in the chest. But Lola refuses to die, and time goes back. The film rewrites its story in this way twice until a happy ending is found.

Topic Shapes Time

We can start talking about subjective timing when we realize that topic shapes time, and, again, sound as well. Through the whole film, there is a strong difference between the scenes in which Lola runs, her steps scanned by loud music, and the still, silent world around her.

W. Buckland (2009) showed this as he attempted at “drawing attention to how music and sound effects establish another, more intricate and paradoxical temporal logic of extreme rhythmicality.” With the world of Caryl Flinn, he defined techno as a perfect and obvious choice because, as dance music, it immediately connotes high charged physical movement, and being strictly knit to the activity in the movie, its beats dictate much of its rhythm, pace, editing and energy. According to Lefebvre’s understanding of the term, he defined rhythm as emerging everywhere there’s a tension between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, articulated

in birth, growth, peak, then decline and end.

The pace goes up and down, depending on the meaning and how much we are involved in the situation. We gather tension with crescendos of sound, and we release it when Lola screams (XX:XX). We follow conversations with diagetic sound, but we fall in silence when we touch stronger topics (24:00, “You’re not mine”).

That’s when we introduce fast and slow motion.

Many, many scenes in this film are in slow motion, and they all happen to be the strongest. Overall, the film fallows the scheme: slower the time = stronger the meaning. In fact, for example, Lola’s death at 30:00 is the slowest.

A use of fast motion is also that of compressing time; we see it first of all in the animations that introduce each chapter, or to show the quick thoughts that come to Lola’s mind as she hangs the phone.

Representing Our Mind

But it’s not only about of how much we care about the action we’re presented with; The movie seems to indicate something different, the way our mind filters reality. We notice this if we ask ourselves: How much attention do we pay to things?

One of the more obvious ways of looking at different ideas of time and of how time can be represented is in the contrast between our narrative selves and what we might call our memory selves. […] Our memory selves experience different planes of time simultaneously: as memories, these experiences are not ‘past’ – they exist only in the present moment of their recollection. (Nelmes 1996)

If we see the flashback at XX:XX we can notice that the first part (the bag being stolen) is sped up, while the second (the moment of realization) is slowed down. So why is it not the opposite, if the essential moment is the bag being stolen? This happens because we see everything from Lola’s point of view; she does not notice what’s happening around her, since her focus is on something else, and the action is to quick to be properly processed, so when she finally does her whole attention goes to the man.

We see an example of this first of all in the opening; we run through the city, not even looking at the people around us, until a familiar face appears and catches our attention; so we stop, and our mind stops running as well.

Or, again, repetition (the bag, the bag, the bag), indicates its importance, but also the way the thought keeps knocking on their head as their brain refuses to process the information.

So while at 26:00 our protagonists run in slow motion, it’s not only because the moment is full of tension, but also because of tachypsychia, the neurological condition that alters the perception of time when, for example, our bodies are full of adrenaline, making events appear to slow down. (Amato 2018)

Conclusion

They implement slow and fast motion in different was, but they're still carefully built/shaped on humans

This is what Eisenstein (1969) defined as "the secret of the genuinely emotional effect of real composition": "Employing for source the structure of human emotion, it unmistakably appeals to emotion, unmistakably arouses the complex of those feelings that gave birth to the composition. In all the media of art— and in film art most of all — it is by such means, that is achieved what Lev Tolstoy said of music: Music carries me immediately and directly into that mental condition in which the man was who composed it."