

The Expressive use of Camera and Editing Technique

The films of Martin Scorsese offer an important case study of how a filmmaker can employ a wide range of often contrasting camera techniques for expressive effect. Two of the Scorsese's films are particularly remarkable for the director's radical camera and editing technique.

Goodfellas (1990)

Strongly influenced by the visual style of the French New Wave of the 1960s, this gangster film uses camera and editing techniques such as THE JUMP CUT, SLOW MOTION and the FREEZE FRAME. Film Critic Michael Wilmington described Goodfellas as "a fantastic bravura display. Technically, its staggering: a feast of virtuoso Steadicam tracking shots, ironically pell-mell editing, and a mix of baroque visual satire, off-key realism, and brilliant, scabrous dialogue that elevates gutter badinage to the high verbal style of a Jacobean drama or thirties screwball comedy. Tying it all together is a barrage of period rock songs and an ingeniously shifting camera style that evokes each decade from the fifties to the eighties for us." The BBC series Moving Pictures contains a 20 minute feature on the making of the film with on the set interviews with all the key contributors to the film, including the screenwriter, the production designer, the cinematographer, the editor and the director himself.

Raging Bull (1990)

Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull uses expressive camera movements and varying camera speeds to place the audience in the subjective perspective of a boxer trading and receiving punches in the ring. In a special feature on the DVD, editor Thelma Schoonmaker (who won an Oscar for her work on the film) discusses how the director employed a variety of different camera speeds in several of the key fight scenes.