

Student's Name
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MUSL 3332, Music and Film
Dr. Leinberger
Interlude Essay 1, 3332IE1
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Heading is single-spaced and goes in the body of the paper, not in the header. Do not indent.

Paragraphs in the body of the paper are indented 0.5 inches.

First paragraph: film title, year, director, composer, and actor(s).

Director Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* was released in Italy in 1964, but not released in the United States until 1967. The film stars Clint Eastwood, who had been previously known to American audiences only for his role in the television series *Rawhide*. The music is by the incomparable Ennio Morricone.

Second paragraph: genre and plot summary.

This film is a western. This particular subgenre of western is usually referred to, unflatteringly, as a "spaghetti western." Based on the samurai film *Yojimbo*, by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, *A Fistful of Dollars* tells the story of a drifter who arrives in the town of San Miguel, a town run by two feuding families, the Rojos and the Baxters. The drifter cleverly manipulates the families into a bloody conflict that leaves the Rojos in control, until the final conflict between the man with no name (Eastwood) and Ramón Rojo (Gian Maria Volanté).

Third paragraph: your analysis of the scene.

The most noteworthy scene, in this author's opinion, is near the end of the film as the man with no name and Ramón Rojo are about to face off. In this scene, explosions are heard offscreen as Ramon and his men are torturing Silvanito (José Calvo) for information. After a close-up of Ramon, the audience sees the smoke from behind some nearby buildings. Underscoring begins at this point, featuring a mariachi-style trumpet solo, a device that became part of Morricone's signature style of scoring for westerns. As the smoke clears, Eastwood's character, the man with no name, is seen in an extreme long shot. The music stops, and after a brief silence, dialogue begins. Ramon soon fires his rifle several times at the man with no name.

The sound of the shots is exaggerated with extreme reverberation. The man with no name is unharmed. After showing the metal plate under his poncho, music begins again, but briefly. The man with no name shoots and kills all but one of Ramon's men; Esteban Rojo (Sieghardt Rupp) is now offscreen. There is dialogue between Ramon and the man with no name. Solo timpani are heard during the final showdown. Ramon is killed. Silvanito, now free, shoots and kills Esteban, who is hiding behind a nearby window. After dialogue between Silvanito and the man with no name, underscoring is heard as the man with no name rides out of town and the film ends.

Last paragraph: conclusions and opinion about the film's soundtrack including music.

Most of the dialogue in this scene comes from a source that is onscreen. Some of the sound effects are from offscreen diegetic sources. All of the music in this scene is nondiegetic. Morricone's underscoring for this film represents a significant paradigm shift from the composing and orchestrating techniques which were standard in Hollywood westerns at the time. In the film as a whole, his use of non-traditional timbres gives the soundtrack an original and complex texture.