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 One day before CLASS #22
<center>Critique of *Run Lola Run*</center>

A) What does the film borrow from or share with the aesthetics of good game design?

Run Lola Run actually can be modeled in a game format. The idea of a character, Lola, being presented with a mission involves many of the same anecdotes of a game. Most games, including the Adventure and Role-Playing genres, require a player to control a character in order to solve a mission or complete certain tasks. Sometimes during these missions a time limit is set because the game designer wants to present challenges that the player has to overcome. In the same respect, *Run Lola Run* uses these same ideas. Lola is presented with a task of helping her boyfriend, Manni, acquire money that he lost. If she does not get the money for him in a set time limit, the time that Manni is supposed to meet his employer, then there might be some severe consequences.

Another important aspect incorporated into games, is the ability to restart the mission when you fail. This gives the player many opportunities to succeed the mission while experiencing new obstacles or even new methods of achieving the goal. In *Run Lola Run*, the audience sees Lola fail in retrieving the money for Manni in the very first attempt. As a result, they end up robbing a store in order to get the money. Unfortunately, they do not get away because the police surround them and fire a bullet straight into the chest of Lola. The next thing you know, she says that the outcome can't end in that way. So, the mission starts all over again and this time she encounters new obstacles and does new things to compensate for them. The mission is replayed three times and shows similar scenarios each time, but the way they happen are different. The first time Lola will barely miss a car pulling out and then the next time she will jump over it. In the final one she gets stopped by the car. As a result, each of these times she encounters new obstacles which makes the outcomes differ. The third and final mission attempt is successful because both Lola and Manni are alive and they acquired the money.

B) What aspects of the film specifically evoke games as a metaphor for understanding the film?

The very beginning of the film shows how this movie can be seen as a game. The opening sequence of clips shows the purpose of the film. It is very similar to game in the respect that a game might have an opening cinema or trailer that gives the player an idea of what he is going to be doing. The viewer sees that Lola has a mission to do by helping Manni get money that he lost in order to save his life.

Another aspect of the film that evokes the idea of games is the animated clips presented throughout the movie. This shows that there is not a definite reality in the sense that everything seen is not real. So, these animated clips, like Lola running down the stairs, could represent the start of the game. These clips could show that Lola still has a choice

of committing herself to a dream or reality. However, once Lola makes it to reality, there is no turning back. She has to keep her word to Manni.

A final aspect is the pictures of the characters that are presented. The pictures are shown every time Lola encounters a critical character. These pictures show the future events that the character will encounter. This helps the viewer see what changes were made in this new time or mission. So, if this were a game, the player would be able to see the differences in the events that may occur in a single game. For instance, if the player kills someone, then the events that happen in another character's future may change. This idea helps both a viewer and gamer get a better feel for the things that are occurring and to look out for them at later times.

C) The first fifteen minutes or so of the film might be understood as an extended cut scene which establishes the characters and their goals, sets a deadline, and maps the range of choices available to the player. If this were a game, at what point do you think the player would gain control over Lola? How does the filmmaker map the affordances of the player's environment? What choices does he signal that the film itself doesn't fully exploit?

If this were a game, I believe the place where the player would gain control of Lola would be the moment she hangs up the phone. One reason I believe this, is because each time the objective is repeated, this is the point where the viewer is returned. In a game, when you die, you return at an initial point. This point allows the player to retry the objective until successful. Each time Lola fails, she returns to her room and hangs up the phone.

If this were a game, the player would be limited to what is in reality. There can't be any artificial or fantasy moves made by the player. Basically, the player can run and interact like people. With these abilities the player can navigate through the city and talk to people in order to get closer to your goal.

Some of the choices that were given in the beginning were not fully exploited. Lola came across many options in order to attempt to get money. The other options consisted of contacting friends and family. However, the movie only focused on one option, which was her dad. If this movie explored those other options, then the movie could have lasted for many more hours.

E) What factors determine our degree of emotional engagement with this game/story? What factors insure a strong identification between the viewer and the protagonist? What kind of character is Lola? What kinds of things do we learn about her during the film and how do we learn it?

The degree of emotional engagement depends on the characters and events in the movie. If the characters act out a feeling of mourning because someone has just died, then the audience is going to try to relate to the situation. This scenario occurs twice in the movie; once when Lola dies and once when Manni dies. Another factor that helps us identify or relate to things in the movie depends on the way the characters are portrayed. For

instance, Lola is a very strong woman who goes out of her way to try and keep her word, especially for her boyfriend. This is easily determined by the events she encounters throughout the movie. When she runs into people she tries to ignore them because her main focus is set on helping out Manni in a certain amount of time. While she attempts to find a solution she remains strong and determined because she can't fail Manni. These things are extremely important when establishing a character because this allows the audience to get a better feel for the character's role and also the events that occur.

F) What constitute memorable moments within this film? How successful is the film in establishing winning states that satisfy our investment?

As the film is played there are recurring moments in Lola's adventures. In each adventure she encounters similar obstacles, and the camera makes sure to get their full detail. After the first run through her adventure, the viewer sees a few of these key obstacles because the camera leaves focus of Lola and turns it to either another person or object. In later adventures, the viewer begins to realize that these same obstacles are recurring but in different manners. So, in the end the view will be able to better take note of these events and see how they affect the outcome. These states become memorable because they determine the how the movie is going to capture the audience; either by expectations or by surprise.

G) What kinds of conflicts and challenges does the protagonist confront? Are some of these kinds of conflicts easier to realize in a game than others?

Lola encounters many challenges throughout her adventures to help Manni. One of the most signifying challenges is when she tries to get money from her father. In two of the adventures, she is able reach him and asks him for money. At the same time however, Lola finds out that her dad doesn't want anything to do with her or her mother. So, despite the situation she is put in, she still focuses on helping her boyfriend. As a result, the audience sees that Lola has more feelings toward her boyfriend rather than her father.

In the final adventure, she misses her father and is not able to ask him for money. Lola now had to resort to some other means of getting the money. In this episode she does not have to deal with the new challenge of her father's lack of love. This actually helps her because she does not have to waste time arguing with her dad because the audience already can guess that he will not give her the money. And, it is the case that this helped her retrieve the money for Manni.

These conflicts and challenges can easily be represented in a game. The reason why this is the case is because games can be designed to display many challenges whether related to human interactions or to physical obstacles. The only drawback in having too many obstacles presented is the size of information stored. Some technologies do not allow games to have large amounts of information because there are predetermined thresholds. So, most games would not be able to have an infinite amount of outcomes based on certain obstacles. To compensate for this factor, game designers will most likely use a few of the more interesting outcomes. Using these outcomes keeps the interest in the game at a high level.

H) A certain number of elements are repeated multiple times in the film. Would it matter whether these repeated elements appeared in a different sequence or order?

Some of the events in this movie that recur can be rearranged, but not all of them. For instance, the moment Lola bumps into the lady on the street could have been added at another point in the film. However, events that are linked, like the driver meeting Lola's father, can't be rearranged. These events are time dependent and help form the plot and outcomes.

I) What factors organize our experience of time in this film? How does the marking of time give the film a particular sense of urgency? What similarities and differences do you see in the way time gets represented in this film and the way it operates in computer games?

Time acts as a key factor in the way this movie develops. Based on how fast or when Lola advances from an obstacle, the future events could be different. The audience can see how important it is because the camera will always refer back to a clock.

Not only did the time affect the future events, but it also played a role as time limit in which Lola had to come up with a solution to Manni's problem. Since the audience sees multiple attempts by Lola to achieve her goal, the audience can easily become anxious when wanting to see how each attempt unfolds. Basically, each of these attempts can be resembled as different "time universes"(similar to Borges' *Garden of Forking Paths* story) that have the same characters but instead revolve around the events that occur. With these unique events, each time universe can be easily distinguishable.

As for comparing the time relationship in this movie to a game, it is very similar. Many games depend on a timer to make sure the activities are challenging to the player. So, the situation, where Lola has come up with a solution within the time she hangs up the phone with Manni until his boss arrives, is very similar to a game. In a game, the player might have to control a character, like Lola, and defeat an enemy within a given amount of time or the player will lose and have to try again.

J) What aspects of the film would be harder to achieve in a more interactive form?

The only things that would be difficult to achieve in a more interactive environment(i.e. a game), would be the dialogue produced by the characters. It is very rare in a game(or at least from what I have seen) where the player can control what things they want to say. The only way I think this feature could be incorporated into a game would be to allow the user to select a dialogue from a list of options. But, again, this list of options would have to be limited just because of size and cost efficiency. Otherwise, all other aspects of the movie could be easily incorporated into a game.