Run Lola Run

Run Lola Run is a concentrated film in that it deals with one main issue and the fate of two main characters. In the first 15 minutes, the "problem" – Manni has lost 100,000 marks that he needed to deliver – is developed and the need for a "solution" – how to get the money before Noon – is stressed. Lola must find a way to get the money and get to the intersection where Manni is in twenty minutes or less or the "game" will be over.

One of the most interesting things that I didn't pick up on the first time I watched the movie but I did pick up on the second time when I watched it this weekend was how the film actually runs almost in real-time. The movie is 80 minutes long. The intro is approximately 15 minutes, and there are a few minutes for credits at the end. That leaves about 60 minutes for the rest of the movie. Three separate parallel scenarios for the game are presented, which means each takes about 20 minutes – the amount of time Lola is said to have. Normally, movies either stretch or compress time to fit "cinema time." *Run Lola Run* works with real time, which makes the game aspect even more pronounced – the viewer (or player) can feel the time pressure.

In terms of good game design, *Run Lola Run* presents a single problem and a straightforward solution. A game must have a clear and well-defined goal or else the player will have trouble focusing on the task at hand and the game will not succeed. The movie also has well-defined boundaries for the characters. There are three distinct scenarios presented to the audience, but each works with the same setting and characters,

just like in a game. Even though Lola dies in the first scenario and Manni does in the second, the game is reset a third time and the player/audience makes it through to the finish. In each, Lola encounters the woman with the stroller and the man with the stolen bike, and she must dodge the car coming out of the garage. It is necessary for her to pass the stage in the bank, and she has to get to Manni's intersection within 20 minutes. "Game over" is declared when either Lola or Manni dies, and the ending to that sequence is signaled with a scene of Lola and Manni lying in bed together; the lighting has a reddish tint to call attention to the dream sequence.

It would be harder to make this into an interactive film because part of the success of the movie comes with the fact that each character fails before both of them succeed in the final scenario. The audience feels the pressure of Lola being shot and Manni being run over – this is relieved when each gets the 100,000 marks in the end and the problem is solved.