Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets (Or Does She?):
Time and Desire in Tom Tykwer’s Run Lola Run

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Tom Tykwer’s *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, 1998) practically begs us to think about the film in terms of its management of time and space. From its opening image of a bizarre pendulum and clock to the scene of a hundred people simulating a thousand spelling *Lola rennt* on the soccer field, the film reiterates its preoccupation with time and space. In its most basic sense, the film is a demonstration of Benjamin Franklin’s formula “time is money.” On the level of the plot, running out of time and money spells death for Lola’s lover, Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu). A small time crook, Manni inadvertently left a bag with 100,000 Deutsch Marks on the subway—money he was to hand over to his mobster boss (Heino Ferch) at precisely 12 o’clock. The story begins with Manni’s frantic phone call to Lola (Franka Potente) to help him out of the mess he is in. This is the basic premise that motivates Lola on her run across and through Berlin.

On the level of the film’s references to its own production, running out of time and money would have meant the film’s death as well. Tykwer had about three million Deutsch Marks in his budget, a paltry figure even by German production standards, and certainly for Hollywood productions, where the average budget is around forty million dollars. The film’s use of digital technology kept it to time and budget, because, in the words of Thomas Tannenberger of Das Werk—the company that did some of the postproduction digital work for *Run Lola Run*—“shooting digital is faster, cheaper, better” (“Die Zukunft des Kinos” 2). In an interview with Anthony Kaufmann, Tykwer explained the way digital technology solved his time-money problem as relating to the production of the title *Lola rennt*:

> We had all those people creating the title, and I said, it makes no sense if we do it and it looks like 100 people doing 9 letters, it would look ridiculous. So it has to look like 5,000 or 10,000. But then you look at the budget and you go, 5,000 extras costs 80,000 Marks, so it’s completely impossible, forget it. So what we did was we took 300 extras and we let them make each letter, and we filmed each letter and put them together at the digital composite station. Of course, it was more work on the digital side, but it was still cheaper than if you had all the extras for the whole day (“Art Cinema or a Piece of Cheesecake?”).

Of course, digitalized cinema and hypermedia (characterized by mixing sound, text, graphics, video, and 35mm film) does more than simply save time and money. It upsets, as we can see from Tykwer’s description, the very notion of realism, questioning the epistemological status of the image. In his provocatively titled essay, “Speed is the Mother

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of Cinema,” the German filmmaker Edgar Reitz puts it as follows: “As soon as pictures, sounds, music, or speech have been acquired digitally we have material on hand which will make it possible to access every element from which events can be produced. Our perception of what is real will change fundamentally. Reality and image will have less and less in common. Hardly any image will be able to lay claim to reality. Only the medium itself will still be real.” (69).

With Run Lola Run Tykwer joins a number of other filmmakers’ experiments (Greenaway, Lucas, and earlier, Godard) with hypermedia these last few decades. And while it would be hyperbolic to claim that the new technologies ring the death knell of cinema as we know it, it is fair to say that they have opened up a myriad of possibilities for the industry, including multiple uses of already existing feature films, such as radical alterations for the purpose of staging virtual meetings between people or characters who starred in films decades apart. Of course, such effects were possible with analogue pictures long ago. Woody Allen’s film Zelig (1983) is a case in point. But computer generated digital effects not only make possible to produce a “Casablanca II,” starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman (“Die Zukunft des Kinos” 4), but have the ability to expand, as Robert Stam explains, “the capacity for palimpsestic overlays of images and sounds facilitated by electronics and cybernetics [that] opens the doors to a renovated, multi-channel aesthetic” that include “the interweaving of mutually relativizing layers of sound, image, and language.” (323)

Tykwer’s innovative use of hypermedia in Run Lola Run has received mixed reviews. While the film has been given rave reviews in a number of markets internationally, not a few critics commented that the film emulates a shallow MTV aesthetic. These voices are in the minority, however. Tom Whalen, for example, celebrates Run Lola Run’s multi-entry architecture, and calling the Game the “film’s unifying principle,” (33) even goes so far to claim that Tykwer’s film represents a foray into the arena of interactive cinema, that offers the audience a powerful position where, “... like Lola, we, too, if we work at it, can become the player rather than be played.” (40) Benjamin West concurs by pointing out that the “plurality of viewpoints [that] enables the viewer/player to visually explore the diegetic space, obtaining as much volumetric information about the scene the two-dimensional screen will allow. (18)

Indeed, there seem to be few limitations to the uses viewers have put this film to; there are, at this writing (December 2000) hundreds of websites on Run Lola Run. One site offers a Lola Quiz users can take to test their viewing intelligence quotient; a neuro-linguistic programmer has created a Lola mind-mapping run; some German language instructors have designed language learning exercises with grammar modules and dialogues culled from the film; and there now exists a “Run Lola Run” game on the web that one can access. Tykwer himself conceded that on some levels the film is indeed about the myriad possibilities of cinematic practices, all the while stressing that the film’s references to cinema “are always tied to the question. ‘What are our possibilities in life?’” (Muscinió 1).

While this essay does not intend to focus on the ease with which Run Lola Run can be put to multiple uses, it is important to consider the film within video gaming culture. What interests me in the present discussion is to explore the extent to which Tykwer’s use of multimedia technology creates sufficient narrative upheaval that destabilizes, or perhaps even subverts, stereotypical gender identities and traditional power relations for the creation of a powerful heroine.

On one level, Run Lola Run’s articulation of issues of movement through time and space rests on insights we have gained from physics: that space is thinkable only in terms of the objects and energies contained in it; that, similarly, time is conceivable only in terms
of the events that unfold in it; and that there exists neither absolute time, nor simultaneity. This by now accepted understanding of time and space is relevant especially as relates to the film’s three-part structure that presents three similar but non-identical segments. As was mentioned by at least two mainstream film critics (Ebert and Hoberman) and by a number of reviewers on the Internet, the self-similarity of the three episodes in Run Lola Run brings to mind Chaos Theory’s insights into how systems behave. Basic to Chaos Theory is the understanding that even small differences in initial conditions make, as Edward Lorenz’s work on weather systems demonstrated, “vast differences in the subsequent behavior of the system.” (S. Kaufman 178) Lorenz’s first computer simulation of weather systems took the shape of a butterfly, putting into circulation the idea that the beat of the wing of a butterfly in the Andes might, in principle, alter the weather in Texas. In a metaphorical application of the Butterfly Effect, we can see that each film sequence in Run Lola Run, while very similar to the original one, shows that alterations in initial conditions register as an effect of a complex layering of sound, image, and language. However, digitally produced images are released from the constraints of scientific notions of physics. So, while it may be seductive to think of Run Lola Run as a demonstration of the Butterfly Effect, it ultimately does not work as seamlessly as some commentators have implied. Although viewers accept Lola’s explanation that the theft of her Moped was the initiating cause of the chain of events that follow, we have to keep in mind that electronically produced interaction of sound, image, and language defy the laws of time and space. Within the digitally produced parts of the film, cause and effect is best seen within the context of a bricolage of realities that cyber space and cyber temporalities are a part of when live action and animation are combined. In other words, even though we can point to the theft of the moped as the initial cause for Manni’s dilemma, it is often in cyber reality that subsequent changes are produced and it is within this virtual reality that the viewers’ perception of and responses to a given variation take shape.

For example, the breathless tempo and wrap around quality of the techno sounds that initiate and accompany Lola’s three runs offer viewers the illusion that the three episodes are self-identical. The constant tension of the pulsating techno tracks “Running One,” “Running Two” and “Running Three” create a sound bridge from one episode to another, and seemingly support one of the film’s opening quotes by the famous German soccer coach Sepp Herberger that “After the game is before the game.” However, the lyrics of “Running One” and “Running Two” challenge notions of self-identity suggested by the football metaphor and the wrap around sound. Lola’s wish list “I wish I was . . .” followed by “help me,” reveal the desire for self-identity in real time and space as fantasy. Much more straight forward in the message it transports, is the track titled “Running Two” with its wish list (“I want to run, I want to . . .) and list of nevers (“never letting go;” “never saying no;” “never giving up”) which rather more supports Tykwer’s claim of Lola as a modern day Pipi Langstrumpf, who lives by the credo that the world is hers to change to suit her (Muscioni nico 1).

The effect of the collision of various layers of media is of course not limited to sound and language, but should be thought about on the level of Lola’s virtual reality run through Berlin. The route Lola runs makes no logical sense within Berlin’s topography. The implied space cannot be traversed within the twenty minutes that she is given. In this context, one might read the lyrics of the soundtrack “help me” as a joke between Tykwer and his Berlin audience. Berlin, which has been dubbed “Europe’s biggest construction site” since the fall of the wall in November 1989, has turned the city into an urban space that is dominated by hundreds of cranes and detours. An audience that knows Berlin will have no illusions that Lola’s routes from her apartment on Albrecht Strasse to her
father's bank (in actuality, the building that houses the executive branch of finance at the Kurfürstendamm) to the Bolle supermarket in midtown Berlin, were chosen because they are traversable in the shortest available time. Similarly, this audience will realize that Lola's route to the Kronprinzenpalast and the City Hall of the Berlin district Schöneberg (these buildings served as the exterior and interior respectively for the Casino sequences) makes no sense at all if one has only twenty minutes in which to get from the Albrechtstrasse to the Bolle Supermarket. The city space of Berlin might then be best seen in terms of its function as a metonymic link to Lola's potency. Claudia Mesch hints at such a connection when she points out that

The setting of Run Lola Run is not a playing field but a playing level. Underscored by other filmic devices and technologies, Run Lola Run emulates the kinetics and structures of a virtual, quasi-interactive environment: the Berlin setting of the film is paradoxically rendered as an indeterminate, but also site specific, entertainment complex, which hinges upon the high-speed functioning of multiple networks of automobility. Urban mobility as circuitry is performed by the super-athletic Lola. (4)

Whether or not cognizant of the reasons for Lola's topographical leaps, the audience recognizes the "supernatural" aspects of her character as built cumulatively in a combination of live action and digitally produced effect. The film's use of mixed media creates paratexts (embedded or cut across the main narrative) that produce Lola as a feisty cartoon character and as a visionary of sorts. The montage of flash-forward Polaroid snapshots that offer a glimpse into the future of various characters Lola bumps into, confer, because they are shot from Lola's point of view, supernatural powers onto her. These inserts—when added to the energizing techno sound track and other cinematic codes, such as the title's reference to Dinah Shore's "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola gets," Lola's flaming red hair, and her suggestive stage name, Franka Potente—all work to position viewers to accept her as an extraordinary being, who is able to stop a truck hurling at high speed toward her; who can win 100,000 Marks at the roulette table by arresting the wheel on the number 20 by simply screaming, whose piercing look can bring on cardiac arrest, and who is able to save that same man's life by simply holding his hand.

A vexing question remains nevertheless: is this super potent heroine, produced by way of multi-channel media "believable" enough? If we take this question to be about the epistemological status of the image, the question of realism in the age of digitalization may ultimately become a question of not only of genre, but also of generation. The first point speaks to the need of particular genre (documentary, for example) to create images that rely on a match between image and reality. The 1997 trial of Michael Born, a German television author, who had faked more than twenty documentaries that ran on German TV, attests to the outrage people felt at being duped and is evidence that viewers still demand this match from documentaries (K. Hoffmann 159). A similar case can be made for pornographic films. As Grahame Weinbren argues, "When the consumer can no longer fantasize along the causal chain of photographic reproduction back to the events or physical relationships represented in the image, the erotic potential of pornographic images will fizzle." (231) However, for feature films that depict fantastic feats within genres of the comedic gangster variety, for example, the need for verisimilitude may well be a question of generation. The twenty-something audiences to whom I have shown Run Lola Run are not disturbed by the fact that the potency of the heroine is a result of the film's mode of production. I have noticed a similar audience response to Katja von Garnier's 1997 prison-gangster-rock-road-movie "chick flick" Bandits (1997). In
von Garnier's film the female bandits also break visual codes by way of digitalized imaging. Bandit's characters leap, fight, scream, and play music as hard-core as their male precursors and counterparts. The overarching effect of this postmodern version of Thelma and Louise is produced digitally. Many of my twenty-something audiences see the film's presentation of gutsy female bandits with its play on words "Ban Tits," as a spoof that critiques not only male violence, but also the convention that cinematic representations of gangsters are nearly always of male gangsters. What Bandits has in common with Run Lola Run is that the digitalized technology serves as a vehicle to construct superpotent female characters that are quite self-consciously a product of technology. Audience reaction to both films supports the argument that younger audiences, practiced in video gaming, have different demands of realism than audiences before video gaming. Such viewers do not ask cinema to provide realistic images as a match between sign and referent, but rather understand visual culture as a bricolage of realities. The belief in Lola as super-woman is a result of precisely her construction within a variety of realities, including virtual realities.

This leads us to a deceptively simple question: What does Lola really want? Or, in theoretical terms: does the film's use of hypermedia in producing an extraordinary female hero ultimately escape representing her in terms of hierarchized gendered social relations? The question is important because for all the socially transformative possibilities inherent in the new cinema's use of technology, the characters' relationship to time is not outside of time, cinematic or otherwise. Everyone in Run Lola Run has a different relationship to time and temporality and they are, at the very least, located in a social space and time that is conditioned or circumscribed by factors having to do with class, gender and generation.

Lola's parents (portrayed by Ute Lubosch and Herbert Knaup) are clearly in a different relationship to temporality than Lola and Manni, representatives of a fringe of the so-called Berlin Generation. Lola's mother's time is filled with events that may be said to conform to a stereotypical view of certain class of privileged women in Germany: dissatisfied and self-indulgent, she fills her time with talking on the phone, drinking Jack Daniels, and having affairs. How little she signifies in social terms is highlighted by her cameo appearance (repeated three times, near the beginning of each episode), where she is displayed, lounging at midday in a chiffon dressing gown in the mostly pastel environment of her boudoir, holding a drink and chatting on the phone to her married lover. She calls after Lola, who is about to fly down the stairs to begin her mission, with the anti-climactic request that Lola pick up shampoo for her. Lola's father, the chief executive officer in a major Berlin bank, spends his time managing money. Nevertheless, his main preoccupation with and in time is expressed in his anger about being exploited by women and his preoccupation with not having fathered a child. This becomes apparent in his display of anger as he denies being Lola's father (he declares that she is a "cuckoo's egg"), and his anguish when he finds out that his lover Jutta Hansen is pregnant by another man. Jutta Hansen (Nina Petri), on the other hand, may be said to represent the lived contradictions in what has been dubbed post-feminist time: a banking executive, she takes her married boss (Lola's father) as her lover, only to find herself locked in pre-feminist moral codes about single motherhood. Her time is ultimately spent trying to find a father to legitimize her unborn child.

The young couple is positioned on the margins of dominant late capitalist time: Lola is unemployed and Manni is a small time crook. While the plot sets up Lola and Manni's preoccupation with time as circumscribed by a momentary problem and limited to twenty minutes, there is another level that suggests that Lola's relationship to time is more complex. I argue that what Lola really wants is to get into time sync with Manni
in sexual terms. That there is trouble in paradise between the two lovers and that it has
to do with timing, is signaled early on in the film in their phone conversation.

Manni: “Damn it, where were you?”

Lola: “You were gone already, I came too late!”

Manni: “But why today! Of all days, why today? You’re always on time,
always . . .”

This quarrel will be repeated at the beginning of each of the three episodes. Manni’s
assertion “You’re always on time, always . . .” hints that Manni perceives Lola’s lateness
as a new development and solely within the framework of his need to be rescued from
the wrath of his mobster boss. Lola, however, sees the impossibility of getting into time
synch with Manni as a systemic problem in their love relationship.

The first time we are alerted to her viewpoint comes in an inserted segment at the
end of the first episode (after the couple has robbed the Bolle supermarket). The sequence
begins with a shot in which the camera seems to be traveling straight into Lola’s eyes to
let us into her fantasy. The lovers are shot from above, lying side by side in bed. Their
post-coital pillow talk is bathed in a pink haze. Lola asks Manni whether he loves her. In
some ways, the inserted segment is presented comically: Lola’s rigorous questioning of
Manni’s repeated declarations that he loves her, has its humorous aspects. However, as
we learn through Manni, there is a serious aspect to the verbal volley. In a rare moment
where he is given some insight in the film, Manni realizes that Lola’s discourse expresses
her dissatisfaction with him. He asks: “Lola what’s going on? Do you want to leave me?”
to which Lola answers: “I don’t know, I have to decide today, I think.” One cold say that
the narrative (driven as it is by desire) is only allowed to go on because Lola decides—
immediately following the fantasized pillow talk—that she will continue in her attempt
to adjust Manni’s timing: when the camera returns from its travel into Lola’s mind to an
overhead shot of Lola lying on the street, she says “But I don’t want to, I don’t want to
leave. Stop.” Her directorial “stop” initiates the second episode and begins her second
round of running.

Lola’s fantasized pillow-talk segment helps us read the preceding sequence of Lola’s
final approach toward Manni in terms of the film’s embedded narrative of desire. Manni,
who announced to Lola in his frantic telephone call that he will go into the supermarket
to rob it at noon if she did not arrive with a solution on time, is shown waiting for
Lola in front of the store. The slow motion, erotic up and down movement of Lola’s
approach to the supermarket, interwoven with the pulsating soundtrack, begins fairly
straightforwardly with a split screen that depicts Manni waiting and Lola running toward
him. Significantly, in terms of Lola’s desire for simultaneity, it ends in a complex split
screen. In each portion of the split screen the protagonists are doubled. Thus, we see
Lola running toward Manni as well as toward herself, and Manni walking away from her
and passing her by. They literally miss each other by split seconds. The doubled images
of the lovers is a visual reformulation of the time problem between them: Lola is not on
time and Manni does not wait for her. Translating the formulation into a sexual synch
problem, Manni’s drawing and shooting his pistol into the air in the store may be said to
signify his sexual climax. After they have robbed the store, the couple finds itself trapped
at each end of the street by a line of police officers. A policeman shoots Lola, and the
pillow talk segment I described above begins.

At the end of the second episode, Lola arrives at the supermarket just barely in time,
triumphantly swinging the plastic bag with the needed 100,000 Marks. She has robbed
her father's bank, narrowly escaping a battery of police waiting outside the bank for the "real" robber. As in the previous episode, Lola's erotic up and down slow motion approach to the supermarket is supported with a pulsating sound track. But this time her final approach is cut in a simple split screen and, at certain times, into three parts: Lola running occupies one third; Manni waiting outside the supermarket door another; and an image of the clock with its second hand moving toward twelve, appears on the bottom lower third of the screen. Lola's pleas to Manni to wait for her, signal that she is close to attaining the desired time sync: "Wait Manni, I'm coming. I'm almost there, wait, wait, I'm going to make it, I'm going to make it." However, her dream of being in time sync with her lover remains just that: a dream. As he enters the street to meet her, he is run over by an ambulance and killed. One might hazard all sorts of speculations about the meaning of Manni's death just as Lola is so close to attaining her goal of sexual synchronicity. The most obvious would be to say that Manni's death is a result of Lola having broken two taboo s as relates to representations of femininity. The first is that she has attempted to become the subject (rather than the object) of desire, and the second is that she has broken the gender barrier by becoming a bank robber.

As at the end of the first episode, the second segment of post-coital pillow talk follows the death of one of the protagonists (this time, Manni's). This segment, too, is set up visually with a shot from above, depicting Lola and Manni in bed, enveloped in a pink haze, having a post-coital cigarette and conversation. An important difference is that this time Manni is the source of the fantasy. The camera travels into Manni's eyes as he is lying on the street, and his questions to Lola let us into his fantasy of his own death. It is significant that Lola's successful robbery of the bank and arriving on time results in Manni's anxiety ridden fantasy. One might conjecture that the post-coital pillow talk segment is a commentary on Lola breaking the two taboos I mentioned above. Still, narrative control remains with Lola. She stops Manni's death with her pronouncement that "you haven't died yet," and thus repeats her intervention—this time into Manni's fantasy—by acting as a stand in director for the beginning of the next episode.

This last episode jumpsstarts nearly the same run as episodes one and two. However, when Lola arrives at her father's bank, he has just left for a meeting and she barely misses him. Like in her first run toward the supermarket, she is empty handed. This time however, her progress toward Manni is stopped by an eighteen-wheeler in front of the Casino. The sequence leading up to her near collision with the truck is possibly the most erotic running footage in motion pictures. The close-up traveling shots of Lola's profile in suggestive slow up and down physical motions fills the screen and is interwoven with techno sound and Lola's voice. The viewer is let into her mind to hear her appeal to a higher power for inspiration ("What can I do? Come on. Help me. Please. Just this once. I'll just keep running. O.K.? I'm waiting, I'm waiting, I'm waiting, I'm waiting"). The erotically charged succession of images is the result of the layering of image, music, and language that opens up a "multi-channel aesthetic" (to borrow Stam's phrase) that confers a supernatural aura unto subsequent events that can only be called fantastic. Lola survives a near collision with the eighteen-wheeler and chances upon the idea of entering the Casino and investing the 99 Marks plus change she has at the roulette wheel, where she pulls off the fantastic coup of winning the needed 100,000 Marks by stopping the ball on the number 20 with one of her high-pitched screams. Leaving in her wake a Casino full of astonished highbrow patrons, Lola once again sprints toward her meeting with Manni with arms pumping and red hair flying. Her desire to succeed is so strong that she even hitches a ride in the ambulance (it ran over Manni in the previous segment). By quirky coincidence she encounters Schuster, the security guard of her father's bank, in the ambulance. Schuster had suffered a heart attack (precipitated by one of Lola's piercing
looks) during the last stages of her bank robbery in the second episode. Lola's "laying on of hands" and saving Schuster's life in the ambulance will be the last powerful act—supernatural or otherwise—that Lola will perform, however. In the meanwhile, Manni had managed to chase down the "plastic-bag-freak" (the bum who had found the bag on the subway), retrieved the bag from him, and is turning it over to his boss a few moments after Lola arrives at the intersection.

It seems like a perfect set up for a happy ending. Lola appears to have gotten what she wants: she has won the money, and has gotten to Manni in time; Manni having obtained the original money, has escaped punishment from his boss, and has proven his worth as a "man." So they can now live happily in perfect equality forever after. But the viewer has not been prepared for an ending that would even the power balance. Rather, the film's way of metonymically linking Lola to its complex narrative structure (both aural and visual) has set Lola up as the sole hero of the film. Importantly, this architecture had fractured time and space in a manner that prevented the camera from capturing Lola in what has been theorized in feminist film theory as the "male gaze." Tykwer's hybrid high-tech, low-maintenance postmodern heroine who could leap over traditional time-space constraints has, up to this point, created an expectation that she would ultimately get what she wants. Getting what she wants (i.e., into sexual time synch with Manni) included retaining her potency.

But, as the mise-en-scene of Lola's third arrival at the supermarket suggests, Lola not only loses her super heroine status, but her desire to desire. The pulsating techno music that intensified her high-energy performance runs is gone, a dark, foreboding sound that begins in the ambulance continues in the sequence that lands Lola on the eerily deserted street in front of the supermarket. The entire city, with which Lola was metonymically linked as a postmodern heroine, seems to lie still. Lola's powerful scream "Manni!" in the two earlier episodes, is replaced by a rather plaintive and tentative "Manni? Manni . . .". These will be the last spoken words by an unruly, rebellious heroine, for whom nothing seemed impossible for the first seventy-five minutes of the film. The way the camera captures her bemused disdain as she watches Manni's displays of virility and homo-social bonding with his boss, suggests that she is arranging herself in an inevitable situation. As Lola stands in the middle of the deserted intersection, the camera begins by shooting her from a bird's eye view, then encircles her, at times panning to encompass her view of Manni's arrival and transaction with his boss. The overwhelming impression this camera performance achieves is that Lola has lost her power; that for the first time, she is at a complete loss as to what to do.

From this point on, the film's hyper kinetic energy that the viewer has come to associate with Lola, is drained from her and transferred to Manni. A number of visual cues communicate this message: shots of Lola's background are devoid of any city movement what so ever, whereas shots linked with Manni show a vibrant city life. His swagger as he walks toward her is unmistakable in its message that he has taken command. When he meets up with her, he says "What's the matter with you? Did you run? Don't worry, everything's O.K.," nearly echoing the words Lola's father had said to her when she pleaded with him to give her the money (her father had said: "What is the matter with you? You look terrible!"). If it were not for Manni's affectionate tone and gestures, one might without hesitation claim that Manni is from that moment on folded into the patriarchal line that Lola's father represents.

It is difficult not to read the close-up of the two lovers' intertwined hands as they walk down the street as the film's self-reflexive comment that it understands that it is delivering the couple into a happy ending in the tradition of classical Hollywood cinema's economy of desire. This economy is very explicit: women characters, who presume to
be the subject of their own desire will be punished or, as in this case, "put into her place." The translation of the title *Lola rennt* into *Run Lola Run* makes a certain kind of sense in Hollywood cinema's economy of desire. Whereas in German the title (*Lola runs*) is descriptive of Lola's running as the agent of her desire, in the English title another agency (perhaps a crowd of people) expresses her desire for running. This observation is not intended to suggest that Hollywood is a regime that wields its power solely from its national or geographical location. But it seems to me that the ironic close up shot of the couple holding hands tells the story that desire must be returned to the male protagonist as a quotation of traditional endings in Hollywood romances.

I hope that I have made clear that my reading of Lola's end as a deflated heroine in the final episode hinges on more that Lola's expression of "bemused disdain" as she watches Manni's metamorphosis from a bungling and fairly ineffective lover to a man in control of the situation. (If it did, sequels would surely be forthcoming, perhaps titled "Manni rennt," a corrective to what may be seen as a gender inequality for the first 75 minutes of the film, or, "Lola und Manni rennen," in which Lola learns to accept Manni as an equal partner.) Rather, my reading is based on the entire mise-en-scene from the moment Lola jumps out of the ambulance. The overall impression of a tamed and reigned in Lola is underscored when, toward the end, as the couple walks off into the credits, the film gives the energizing soundtrack over to Manni in the final shots of the film. After the film's penultimate close-up of Manni's face, a large remix of the soundtrack begins as the credits roll in the reverse order. The last lines of the lyrics in the sound track of the film begin with a male vocalist singing four repetitions of "I don't need you any more than you need me," ending in "I don't need you."

References

"Die Zukunft des Kinos." (http://www.spiegel.de/rcptor/html)