

ENGLISH: *RUN LOLA RUN*

Texts which are distinctively visual have a significant impact on the responder. Discuss by referring closely to Run Lola Run and TWO other texts of your own choosing.

Distinctively visual texts affect their audience or reader with their ability to produce vivid images which challenge or influence the responder's initial perceptions of the world around them. Tom Tykwer's film *Run Lola Run*'s visual techniques present to his audience the importance of time and choice and chance, by creating a suspenseful, yet hopeful atmosphere. Denys Lefebvre's poem "Drought" also confronts a controlling factor of life; the power of heat. He portrays this through literary devices which create images that evoke sympathy and despair. Another text which draws attention to the importance of choice is Mark Molloy's television infomercial "Drinkwise Australia: Drink Cycle" (2008). Molloy also utilises visual techniques but instead he compels the audience to question the effects of their decisions. Each text has an established approach to its central thematic concerns and this impacts the responder's manner of visualising and relating to these themes.

Tom Tykwer reveals the manipulative and dominant nature of time to his audience through clever editing. The audience is first confronted with this thematic concern in the opening sequence of *Run Lola Run*. Names appear and disappear as the pendulum of the wooden clock oscillates. This reinforces the composer's message to his audience that time is powerful and has the ability to create or destroy lives. The camera then pans up from the pendulum to the actual clock face, implying that the audience is inferior and submissive to time. The close up shot of the clock face allows the audience to see that the time depicted is unnaturally fast, accentuating urgency and the ironic notion that man does not have control over time even though time itself is a man-made concept. The motif of clocks is evident throughout the film, acting as a constant reminder that time is an independent variable of life which will not favour any individual, regardless of his or her circumstance. Additionally, this particular motif also emphasises the authoritative nature and importance of time. From the beginning of the film, distinctively visual techniques enable the audience to realise that time is a significant factor in life.

Like Tykwer's film *Run Lola Run*, Lefebvre's poem "Drought" has a powerful and manipulative factor which controls mankind. However, instead of time, heat is the ultimate power. "Drought" accentuates the adversity of drought and its impact on the vulnerable. The juxtaposition "numbs the molten air" contains two opposing ideas of temperature. 'Numbs' connotes extreme cold and this contradicts 'molten' which is associated with extreme heat. This ironic and almost oxymoronic quote emphasises the power of heat and the impact of the drought. This hyperbole engages the reader and creates a strong image of heat in the reader's mind as well as create a heated and humid environment which the reader experiences. Although the poet attempts to convey the message to his readers that living organisms are inferior to nature, there is always a chance that the weak will eventually overcome their hardship. This parallels the third run in *Run Lola Run* where Lola successfully surpasses the difficulties of time and gains over 100 000 marks by noon. The overall tone in "Drought", which is effectively depicted in "and still no rain", is hopeless and defeated, which is also similar to the sentiment the audience experiences after Lola's two failed runs. This truncated sentence provokes a sudden sympathetic response from the reader. The shrunken-pool in "Drought" symbolises diminishing hope. Again, this highlights the harsh power of nature which is evident throughout this poem.

Through visually engaging techniques, the composer of *Run Lola Run* successfully conveys to the audience that events are a result of personal decisions and choices. The viewers witness a range of individuals' potential futures in the form of Polaroid-like snapshots. This allows responders to gain insight of events which will occur in a character's life. The "snapshots of life" correspond to the sporadic and unpredictable nature of Polaroid photographs. This metaphor relates to the idea that the outcome is unpredictable, but it is a result of a previous event. As one Polaroid piles on top of another, they show how one action leads to another resulting in varying outcomes in each run. Like the dominoes in the opening scene, Polaroids adopt the "cause and effect" ideology. Another

symbol representing choice is the intersection outside the phone booth where Manni spends the majority of the film. The intersection symbolises different choices and how they lead to different outcomes. This reflects the overall nature of Lola's three runs and how each conclusion is drastically different from the others. Occurrences rely on an individual's previous choices, regardless of its context.

Mark Molloy acknowledges the influence of limited choices and communicates this message by connecting with his audience, predominantly fathers. The clever combination of camera and audio techniques engage viewers visually and aurally. This particular infomercial and Run Lola Run both have a tripartite structure. However, unlike Run Lola Run, the three outcomes of "Drinkwise Australia: Drink Cycle" are identical. This suggests that Australians do not view the consumption of alcohol as a choice since this drug is an intrinsic part of their lives. In each generation, the camera follows the son as he makes his way towards the fridge. This tracking shot represents how a son 'follows the footsteps' of their father. As a result, members of the audience consider if they are appropriate role models for their children. The close-up of contents in the fridge focuses on the shelves of beer bottles which suggest no choices or chances to escape from their endless cycle of alcohol consumption. This image is either considered to be confronting or the norm, depending on the viewer. Therefore, this infomercial is appealing and already has a significant impact on the viewer. Repetition of "get your old man a beer would you" emphasises how there is no development because alcohol, which is introduced during childhood, hinders a family's ability to evolve. After viewing Molloy's infomercial, audience members question if choices exist in their life.

Chance is also an imperative aspect of Run Lola Run which has been intertwined throughout the film in order to create suspense and hope for its viewers. This theme is explicitly encountered in the casino scene of Lola's final run which highlights the unpredictable probability of a just and fair outcome. Lola, by chance, arrives in front of a casino. This destined incident is further reinforced by the positioning of the protagonist and the building. The framing of the camera presents Lola in the foreground and the casino in the background, indicating a link between the two and the coincidence of the current circumstance. The fact that Lola won a large sum of money in a short period of time embeds hope into the audience or concluded the suspenseful atmosphere created by the manipulation of speed and the jump shots between close-ups of Lola's facial expression and the roulette wheel. However, the audience did not anticipate that Lola will place another bet on the number twenty-an important motif in the film. The chances of a number recurring twice in a row in roulette are very slim, however, by chance, she manages to win twice. This indicates to the audience that it is fate for Lola to get the money in order to save Manni, even though she determines her own fate by screaming.

Those who are presented with a distinctively visual text immediately engage and involve with the text, regardless of its medium. Tykwer and Lefebvre recognise and effectively express, through vivid images, different powers which influence life. Run Lola Run also utilises visually captivating techniques to draw attention to the importance of choice which "Drinkwise Australia: Drink Cycle" (2008) also achieves. Each text has an individual approach to its key issue and generates a remarkable impact on their responders.