The Chaos Theory And The Subconscious Actions In Run Lola Run

Professor Edward Lorenz created the very well-known scientific concept called the chaos theory, which is now better known as the “butterfly effect.” The idea that a small change can result in much bigger changes. A popular example of the butterfly effect is how a butterfly flapping its wings in New Mexico can cause a hurricane in China several weeks later, because everything in between the two events happens as a result of them. Although this is not a literal circumstance, it is a good example of what the theory claims. Throughout the film, “Run Lola Run,” the chaos theory is represented through the subconscious actions she takes in everyday life that end up affecting the fates of both her future and the futures of the individuals that she encounters throughout her mission.

One of the most frequent examples of the butterfly effect throughout the film was the encounters she has with the old lady while walking on the sidewalk. In all three sequences, Lola’s encounter with the old lady changes the fate of her future drastically every time. In the first sequence, Lola basically runs right into the woman. This results in the woman and her husband becoming alcoholics and losing custody of their child. In the second sequence, Lola barely drifts past the woman and this results in the woman buying a winning lottery ticket. In the final third sequence, Lola runs directly past the woman without any kind of interaction. This results in the woman joining the Jehovah’s Witnesses and leaving her husband and child behind. Although there is no evidence that Lola’s interactions with the woman changed the course of her future drastically, we can assume that the butterfly effect plays a role in her future. Maybe the woman was too distracted by Lola bumping into her in the first sequence that she forgot about purchasing a lottery ticket, which resulted in her not winning the lottery and becoming rich and instead resulted in her and her husband becoming alcoholics and losing custody of their child. In the second sequence, the woman was not as affected by Lola because she only drifted past her while running, which resulted in the woman not losing her train of thought and remembering to buy the winning lottery ticket. In the third sequence, Lola runs past the woman freely without any kind of interaction. This results in the woman leaving her family and becoming a Jehovah’s Witness. We can argue that Lola freely running past the woman inspired and motivated the woman to find freedom herself which resulted in her future of becoming a Jehovah’s Witness.

Free will and determinism is one of the key themes shown throughout this film as well. Determinism is the theory that all events can be predicted ahead of time. It is the idea that free will is just an illusion and a human’s fate is completely controlled by outside factors. Whereas, free will is the exact opposite of determinism. To have free will means to be in control of your actions and the decisions you make on a daily basis. We see several situations in the film “Run Lola Run” where the main character Lola, as well as the characters she interacts with, all make different choices in each sequence. In most cases, it seems that Lola is using her free will to make different decisions each time around, but is that necessarily the case? As you take a closer look into the situations Lola is placed in, determinism seems to also place a role in the decisions she makes.

For example, in the last sequence, Lola aggressively runs into a casino in central Berlin, where she hopes she will get extremely lucky and somehow win the $100,000 she needs to save her

boyfriend's life. Lola does not have enough money to pay for the chips, but she decides to take a risk and gets a 100-mark chip and bets all of it on 20-black twice. She is obviously very afraid and anxious and decides to let out a high-pitched scream while the ball is rolling around the wheel. The scream was so ear-splitting that it broke several glasses in the casino and gave the guests extreme discomfort. However, it is due to this scream that the wheel of fortune lands on the number 20 yet again, which results in Lola winning the $100,000 she needs to save Manni. Some may argue that the events that happened prior to this scene are what determined Lola's decision of entering the casino and win the money, hence believing that the theory of determinism played a role in finally getting the money. Although, it is Lola's free will that let her release this excruciating scream that literally rejected the internal and external forces and represented that Lola is in fact in charge of her own destiny. The film represents how life is a game that comes with rules. Lola bends the rules by trying to make the game end the way she wants it to through her screams. Every time she lets out a scream, she is changing the sequence of the game by using her free will, defying the rules of the universe.

Oftentimes, we ask ourselves, what is reality? There is no real definition of what reality really is. How does one know what is really real? These questions frequently arise in our minds while watching the film, "Run Lola Run." At the end of the film, we never really get a definite answer as to which scenario actually occurred or if any of them occurred at all. The sad truth about this film is that there is no "real" ending. Instead, the purpose of this film was to demonstrate and explain the chaos theory, or "butterfly effect," through the three different sequences Lola experienced. This film also gave us a thorough understanding of free will versus determinism and realizing which theory applies to that specific situation.