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**The Vicious Circle of Causality, Fate, and Coincidence: Tom
Tykwer's Influences and Recurrent Themes**

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As a modern German writer, director, and producer, Tom Tykwer is bringing German cinema back into movie theaters worldwide, however, it is difficult to distinguish what it is about Tykwer's films that make them definitively German. With Tykwer pushing further out toward an international audience, his films are gradually being cast with foreign actors, in different languages, and even with foreign scripts, yet Tykwer and others would maintain that all of his films are indeed German (Sturm 1). If we take a look at Tykwer's self-admitted influences, we would find Hitchcock, Scorsese, Truffaut, Wenders, and Spielberg among them (Artechock 3). These make up most of Tykwer's stylistic and cinematographic influences. However, aside from Wenders, we cannot infer any real German film tradition from Tykwer's influences, because the closest we would come, is to Hitchcock's favorite film, Fritz Lang's *Der Muede Tod* (1921) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000033/bio>). This would be quite a lengthy stretch. Yet, these directors have undeniably the greatest cinematographic influence on Tykwer's style, such as framing his films around subjectivity, his use of color to project each character's inner-self, "the wrong man" theme, or his recurrent use of the spiral motif. Tykwer's German flavor and inspiration have more to do with his surroundings and generational issues while growing up in Germany. These aspects influence his recurrent themes of causality, fate, coincidence, monotony, empowerment, and love. Tykwer as a writer is influenced heavily by his German environment, but Tykwer as a director is influenced by a wide range of international directors.

In an interview with Steffen Schäffler, Tykwer points to the fact that early in his development at about age ten--that would have been the year 1975--, he became very good at imitating the films he saw on television, which spurred him on to create his own films, the first of which was a *Godzilla* remake. At age 19 he applied to every film school he knew, however, he was rejected by each. Tykwer did not give up, but instead, he took this as positive reinforcement. Yet

even after much experimentation, nobody understood his films. The films did not seem to have any coherent content (Schäffler 241). Tykwer's experience with film from age 16 to 25 was one of a mass production of garbage, however, through this process he learned a lot about himself and his own influences (Schäffler 242). His first short film, *Because* (1991), cost him 40,000 DM, and he continued making payments to the bank for the following eight years. This film got the attention of a local television station which then produced his second short film, *Epilog* (1992) (Schäffler 241). From there the large German television station ZDF funded his first feature length film, *Die Tödliche Maria* (1993), a 600,000 DM production (Schäffler 242). Tykwer then coauthored Wolfgang Becker's film, *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (1996) while working on the production for *Winterschläfer* (1997) which came out the following year in select theaters in Germany. In August 1998, *Lola rennt* (1998) was opened in German theaters, and soon after became an international hit (<http://www.tykwer-online.de/tom/deu/biografie.htm>). Drained of productive energy, Tykwer began work on *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* (2000) and finished it in 2000. The film received little acclaim, and already during postproduction, Tykwer had already put it behind him and started to work on *Heaven* (2002), written by the Polish directors Piesiewicz and the late Kieslowski (Schultze 2).

"When I discovered the movie theater in the 70's, most of what I saw were American films, until finally Europe came into view. Europe, that was a different and entirely new option for film watching. All of a sudden there were all sorts of films that until that point I never would have watched and probably would not have understood, because I was too young. Truffaut, Fellini, Saura, Berman and all the others appeared before my eyes- entangling me, confusing me, and dismaying me. And in the middle was the German name, Fassbinder. Next to Wenders, Fassbinder remains the most important postwar German film director for me" (Tykwer 10).

This is the foreword for Das Fliegende Auge, a book in which Tykwer interviews cameraman Michael Ballhaus who worked on many of Fassbinder's films. This quote reveals to us the strong influence of American films on Tykwer until age ten, when he believed he was mature enough to comprehend the complexity of European films. It also points out that Wim Wenders is a

significant German influence. Tykwer will admit to most influences, for instance, he admits in an interview with Artechock.de that he admires Hitchcock and believes him to be the true master of film (Artechock 2). For the most part, Tykwer tells us straight out which directors he admires most. Truffaut and Scorsese are mentioned in numerous interviews as well. Those who examine Tykwer's films see strong traces of Hitchcock, Jean Luc Godard, and David Lynch (Schuppach 28). A close analysis of Tykwer's five most recent films reveals both very strong elements of these directors' works as well as recurrent themes of coincidence, causality, fate, and empowerment through love. Each film portrays one of these elements more than the other, but all of his films encompass these same themes.

Die Tödliche Maria (1993), Tykwer's first feature length film is about a woman (Nina Petri) who has lived like a passive slave to her father for as long as she can remember. When her father becomes a cripple, she is forced to take care of him all on her own. Her father marries her to Heinz (Peter Franke), his poker buddy, who treats her just as poorly. Heinz finds a stash of money that Maria has hidden, and to temporarily escape her punishment, Maria rehashes her life through a series of flashbacks inspired by reading letters that she has written to herself and hidden over the course of many years. Maria's pent up rage explodes when her husband steals her stash of money. This leads her to kill both her husband and her father, the two males who repressed her for years. Her love and obsession with Dieter (Joachim Krol), a neighbor in the apartment downstairs, becomes a chance at an alternative and new life for her, although the film ends with Dieter's distressed expression as he finds out about the murders of the husband and father (Holden 1).

Die Tödliche Maria is much like Fassbinder's film *Martha* (1974), also a TV movie. Fassbinder's film is about a woman who grows up serving her ungrateful mother, and to get away from the situation, marries a man who sadistically makes her his house slave. He then makes her

quit her job, and he sends her mother to an 'old folks home'. Against her husband's demands, Martha befriends a longtime workmate who brings her to her senses about her situation (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0070374/plotsummary>). Where Fassbinder paints a very dramatic and sympathetic story about an abused woman, Tykwer's film may seem somewhat emotionless. Film critic Stephen Holden suggests Tykwer's portrayal of Maria to be quite mocking and coldhearted. Holden compares *Die Tödliche Maria* to Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965) in which the director's presence is constantly felt by the probing camera circles, waiting for the inner-beast to jump out (Holden 1). Yet Schuppach considers the circling of the camera to indicate freefall as with Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). In fact, we see this spiraling motion on the floor underneath Maria when, in a dream sequence, she recalls the first time she menstruated ("Tyktown" 6). Tykwer admits his usage of *Vertigo* in his films, when he said in an interview, "*Of course Vertigo plays a role because of its amazing temporal structure...It is a totally insane construct and besides, Vertigo is one of my most favorite films*" ("Tyktown" 6)!

Tykwer considers subjectivity to come foremost in his films. He explains this when he says, "*The films that got me to the theaters were the ones...where you identify with characters as they go along, be it in Truffaut, Hitchcock's...[etc]*" (Artechock 2). When referring to the *French Connection*, Tykwer mentions that he thinks it is great how one can end up caring about a character who is really a horrible person. Film can bring one close to someone who one would shun on the streets (Mes 2). We see this sort of subjectivity in all of Tykwer's films, yet Maria is constantly the subject of the camera, and even the happenings around her seem to be reflections of herself. An example of this is when the camera encircles Maria and Dieter as they kiss for the first time, thunder rolls outdoors, and one gets the impression that this kiss means a whole lot for these two lovers (Schuppach 175).

As suggested by Sandra Schuppach in her article "Tyktown," *Die Tödliche Maria* features the theme of a woman's empowerment to action through love to a man. Maria is in a constant state of waiting and repetition. She escapes only through reading her letters to herself in which she relives her past. Indeed, the existence of Dieter as a potential support mechanism and object of love gives Maria the strength she needs to finally act, and in this case, kill her husband and father ("Tyktown" 2). This sort of empowerment through love does not always have negative consequences in Tykwer's films, such as in *Lola rennt*. Tykwer's portrayal of his protagonists being stuck in a sort of static state of uselessness is also not uncommon. This theme presents itself many times over in Tykwer's films, especially in *Winterschläfer*.

Winterschläfer (1997) is a film adaptation from the novel Expense of Spirit by Françoise Pyszora about four mid-twenties to mid-thirties aged individuals plus one older man and their coincidental involvement around the injury and subsequent death of a little girl in a Bavarian mountain village. Laura (Marie-Lou Sellem), a nurse in the local hospital as well as a mediocre theater actress, shares a house with Rebecca (Floriane Daniel), a translator of erotic pulp literature. Rebecca is involved in a hedonistic love-hate relationship with Marco (Heino Ferch), a macho type ski instructor who is also having an affair on the side with one of his students. All three of these characters lack any sort of direction or purpose. One morning Rebecca seduces Marco out of his car into the house, and he leaves his keys in his car with the driver-side door wide open. While Rebecca and Marco are inside the house, René (Ulrich Matthes), a projectionist at the local movie theater who has lost his long-term memory due to a head injury he received in the army from a misfired grenade, drunkenly approaches the house and drives off with the car. Along an icy and narrow road on a mountain pass, Theo (Josef Bierbichler), a local farmer whose business is failing, drives his car with attached horse trailer in the oncoming direction towards René. Theo fumbles

with his CB radio and does not see René until it is too late. René swerves the car off the side of the mountain, but he safely lands, plunged into a thicket of snow where he digs his way out, and forgetting what happened, walks home. Theo ends up flipping his car over, and after coming to, he sees his daughter, who had stowed away in the horse trailer, lying bloodied in the snow. The story goes on to show how René coincidentally becomes involved with Laura after meeting in a bar. Meanwhile, Theo goes hunting for the man with the snake-like scar on the back of his head who he saw walking away from the scene of the accident. Having not seen his face and therefore not knowing it was René, but later discovering the wreckage of the car in the snow, Theo goes hunting for Marco. When Theo finds Marco on one of the ski slopes looking for his student who he believes to have fallen to her death, Theo yells "you killed her!," which then guilt trips Marco into committing suicide by skiing off a cliff. The story ends with Rebecca taking a train presumably back home, and Laura and René end up living together with their newborn child (Winterschläfer 1997).

Again, subjectivity becomes important in order to understand Tykwer's direction style. In an interview, he refers to *Winterschläfer* in which he employs Hitchcock's 'wrong man' concept, "*The guy who has the accident, who loses his memory. In the beginning I always realize the public dislikes him*" (Mes 4). Tykwer puts the viewer of his film through a slight throw when he starts the story off with a character dressed in black that steals a car and causes an accident. This character ends up being the nicest and most pathetic character in the film, whereas Marco starts as a victim, ends as a victim, yet nobody really cares, because he is such an inconsiderate human being. Tykwer obviously borrows from Hitchcock in this sense, as did many other directors that Tykwer admires, namely Scorsese, Fellini, and Lars von Trier (Artechock 3). Again we also see the spiral motif from *Vertigo* (1958) characterized by René's scar on the back of his head. The spiral

symbolizes in this instance amnesia which René has, due to the wound. His freefall is therefore his amnesia ("Tyktown" 6). It is ironic then that Theo, who is fixated on the symbol of the scar, ends up sending Marco to his death by skiing off a cliff--death by freefall. If that is not enough to convince someone how much of this film must have been borrowed from Hitchcock, we can turn to René who appears in many scenes to act like Anthony Perkins in *Psycho* (Holden 2).

Most noticeable in *Winterschläfer* is the feeling of dullness, idleness, and non-motivation that permeates its characters and set. Marco and Rebecca act like spoiled brats, and yet neither of them have any purpose in life. When Marco asks himself how much time one spends in life actually happy, he comes to three years as his answer (Holden 2). The music and snow create a feeling of stagnation and freeze which reflects the characters' own feeling of idleness. Tykwer's film is not just about showing how people his age waste their time, it is to describe a problem he sees in his generation in order to create some sort of discourse to discuss it. Tykwer sees his generation as largely unengaged in any discourse anymore. He blames this on the political reality in Germany in the last twenty years. Both *Winterschläfer* and *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* were meant to exemplify this feeling of life in Germany. Tykwer did not necessarily intend to use *Winterschläfer* to expand on the theme in *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle*, but in hindsight he recognizes that he has been significantly influenced by his work on that film (Artechock 1). In his interview with Artechock.de, Tykwer explains that his generation was raised by parents who wished their children to grow up happier and better than they did. For Tykwer this means the parents gave up on themselves and simply wished it would get better, but they did nothing to improve their own lives (Artechock 2). Yet Tykwer's generation found itself in a state of stagnation, because their parents pampered them too much. He believes that if his parent's generation had worried more about engaging their children intellectually, then "*maybe [his*

*generation] would not have elected the same idiotic chancellor for sixteen years" (Artechock 3). He calls this, 'collective unconsciousness' (kollektive Besinnungslosigkeit). He describes the German as a fat yet satisfied person that is even speechless like the chancellor who has lost all ability to communicate correctly. For Tykwer the intellectual situation in Germany is at an all time low, but it is pressing forward. Tykwer does not believe that Germans have gotten stupider, he only thinks that they have become intellectually unengaged. He makes the ultimate comparison when saying that the German chancellor is a perfect representation of the German people, in that "he is fat, unengaged, and sulky, and he has it like a virus" (Artechock 3). If *Winterschläfer* best illustrates the idleness of Tykwer's generation, then *Lola rennt* is supposed to be the film to show his generation how to live again (Artechock 1).*

Lola Rennt (1998) is a film about Lola (Franka Potente), her boyfriend Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu), and their twenty minute race against time to find 100,000 DM to hand off to Manni's drug-dealing boss. The film starts with Manni frantically phoning Lola, summing up how he lost 100,000 DM on the subway that his boss gave to him to launder. He then tells her that he has twenty minutes to get the same amount, or he will be killed. This is basically the only sort of character development we see before the movie sets off, and Lola begins to run. By the end of the first twenty minutes, Lola is thrown out of her father's bank for asking for the money. He tells her that he is not actually his daughter, and that he plans on leaving her and her mother for another woman. Lola then finds Manni holding up a supermarket, and then she pitches in to help him. When they are surrounded by the police, Lola is accidentally shot by a shaky police officer. Lola's resolve is so strong that she bends space and time, and she is able to go back twenty minutes to give it a second try. The second time around, Lola successfully robs her father's bank, but through an unfortunate turn of fate, Manni is run over by an ambulance as he runs toward Lola. Lola bends

space and time a third time, and she puts all of her money down on a single number in a roulette game, and she wins twice as much money than they actually need. Lola and Manni live happily ever after (Lola Rennt 1998).

Tykwer seems obsessed with playing with time in his films. He admits:

time is the factor that totally fascinates me, naturally because I make films, because film gives you this fairy-tale option that you can do whatever to time that you want, that you can stretch or squeeze it as it never happens in life, how we wish it to be, and how we often perceive it. Time is for me extremely subjective, and subjectivity is for me the narrative principle of all my films (Artechock 3).

Lola rennt experiments with the idea of being able to break out of the causal chains that form one's fate. Tykwer wants to show that it is the small things that may happen day to day which cause our lives to veer in a completely different direction. Moments that we consider important to our lives, Tykwer thinks would blow over in a couple of days and have no real significance. He uses the example of the decision to drink a coffee, which causes a person to get into his car several seconds late, thus avoiding an accident on the road (Artechock 4). This motif is evident in Lola's timing. When she causes Herr Meier's unlucky accident in the first run, he is unable to meet with Lola's father for lunch, thus allowing Jutta only enough time to explain that she is pregnant. When Lola bursts in, her father--who we find out is not her father--throws Lola out and does not have time to hear Jutta out. In the second run, Lola again causes Herr Meier's accident, but because she is a bit late to her father's office, Jutta finishes her sentence, informing him that the child is not from him. Then in the third run, Lola does not cause an accident, and Herr Meier goes to lunch with Lola's father, thus interrupting Jutta so that only the fact is made known that she is pregnant (Schuppach 53).

We also see this motif in Kieslowski's *Przypadek/Blind Chance* (1987) as the protagonist is given three chances in life which are all dependent on him catching a train to Warsaw. In the first

he barely catches the train and ends up joining the communist party, in the second he gets on the train in a timely fashion and joins the opposition, and in the third he misses the train, becomes apolitical and dies in a plane accident (Schuppach 51). The difference between the films is that Kieslowski's concentrates on a single moment, predestining a person for a chain of events, whereas Tykwer's shows how small instances in time can change the course of events for the protagonist and other characters.

Breaking out of one's fate and out of the causal chain of events which structure a person's life is Tykwer's allusion to the potential of his generation to break out of their monotony. He employs love as the empowering notion, because for Tykwer, *"our power lies in passion"* (Artechock 2). *Lola rennt* portrays the ability of a person to do extraordinary things within twenty minutes time, although a critical viewer would have to note the fairytale-like ending. Perhaps Kieslowski's interpretation of chance and destiny would be more correct, if not too sobering.

In his essay "Berlin, the unchanging symphony of a big city," James Skidmore points to a significant connection between *Lola rennt* and Wim Wender's *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987). The self-questioning narrative style of *Der Himmel über Berlin* is echoed in the prologue in *Lola rennt*. In this prologue, Hans Paetsch narrates the following questions: *"Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going to? How did we come to know what we know? Why do believe anything at all?...But isn't it always at the end the same question and always the same answer"* (Skidmore 2)? In the beginning of Wender's film, the two protagonists Marion and Daniel ask themselves similar questions. Marion asks, *"When a child is a child, that was the time for the asking the following questions: Why am I me and not you? Why am I here and not there? When began time and where does space end"* (Skidmore 2)? This self-questioning of purpose turns itself into the idea that anything is possible, and that anyone can do anything. Just so, the narrative

prologue at the beginning of *Lola rennt* is employed to show the protagonist's breaking point with monotony, realizing finally that something must be done, and that action must be taken (Skidmore 2).

Tykwer again employs the vertigo spiral motif in this film. Lola's 'freefall', characterized by the spinning camera at the beginning of the film as she is about to start her run is yet another instance in which Tykwer borrows the *Vertigo* spiral motif. We see it in numerous points throughout the film as well when Lola experiences freefall, for instance, we see it with the spinning roulette wheel when she bets all her money on one number. Other numerous references to the spiral include Manni waiting "an der Spirale," the bank guard wearing a hat with a spiral on it, Lola as a cartoon running in a spiral down the stairwell of her apartment complex, and in the flashback sequences between runs, Manni and Lola lying on pillows with spirals on them ("Tyktown" 6). 'Vertigo' is a very effective way to produce a feeling of freefall, but the usage of this motif in *Die Tödliche Maria*, *Winterschläfer*, and to the end of *Lola rennt*, Tykwer has most certainly beat it to death. Perhaps this overuse of the same themes is what resulted in his next film turning out so poorly.

Der Krieger und die Kaiserin (2000) is a film about a nurse in a psychiatric ward, Sissi (Franka Potente), who gets hit by a truck and is saved by Bodo (Benno Fürmann) through an amateur tracheotomy. She falls in love with Bodo during this rescue, and after Sissi's recovery, she goes looking for him. Upon locating him, Bodo's brother Walter (Joachim Król) intervenes to push Sissi away from Bodo by explaining to her that Bodo cannot get over the suicide of his wife. When Bodo and Walter are robbing a bank, Sissi is coincidentally there to empty her safe deposit box. When things go wrong and Walter ends up shot, Sissi hides Bodo in her psychiatry ward (Schuppach 59). Unfortunately, two of her patients, Otto (Malchoir Belson) and Steini (Lars

Rudolph), are jealous of her attachment to Bodo, so Otto tries to kill himself, and Steini attempts to kill Bodo and then himself. Bodo is able to get over his past, and he and Sissi flee to France to escape the police (Schuppach 68).

Because this film is nothing more than repetitions of Tykwer's already worn out themes, there need be only slight mention of them. The themes of a static prisoner-like life and a fated love that empower the protagonist to action are again played out in this film. Until Sissi's accident with the truck and her rescue by Bodo, there is no indication that she was engaged in little more than being a lifeless slave to her patients in the psychiatric ward. She emotionlessly attends to Steini's sexual craving by helping him to masturbate, as if she were a woman 'for everything' instead of a nurse (Schuppach 110). In fact, Sissi practically lives in a world of mentally ill patients that she takes for granted, hence the emotionless 'work'. At night she sits in front of the television watching *Miracolo a Milano* (1950), crying. This combined with Tykwer's close-up shots of her sensory receptors (nose, mouth, eyes) indicates her desire to feel (Schuppach 63). Bodo, by contrast, wants to block his emotions in order to stop himself from reliving the pain of his wife's suicide. He is unsuccessful at blocking emotion, however, and he ends up not only sending mixed signals to Sissi, but must come to terms with his wife's death. Sissi's instant attachment to Bodo after he saves her life is her way out of her emotionless prison. When she comes back to the psychiatric ward, Otto sees that she has changed, and he says "*you're afraid that everything will go back to how it was before*" (Schuppach 68). As we should expect from a Tykwer film, nothing can stop Bodo and Sissi from coming together, because it is fate that guides them. To this end, Bodo's brother Walter, Steini, and Otto all end up dead. Walter would not let go of his dream to take Bodo with him to start a new life, Steini was jealous of Bodo and tries to kill him, and Otto simply cannot live without attention from Sissi, ending his life in suicide--although it is unclear whether he dies

or not (Schuppach 68).

Der Krieger und die Kaiserin would seem to be Tykwer's perfection of his themes. He finally puts them all together in a film and is clearly able to articulate himself. Tykwer's allusions to a generation of idle and emotionless Germans finds its place in this film better than his previous three films, mostly because he centralizes the storyline on this motif of releasing oneself from idleness through the power of love. The setting of the film in Germany as well as playing out large portions of the film in a psychiatric ward lend themselves very well toward this end, but by this point, anyone who has ever seen a Tykwer film before this one would be sorely disappointed and unimpressed. This film received nothing but bad reviews. Film critic Christopher Null describes *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* as a "mishmash of heist flicks and David Lynch movies" (Null 1). Film Critic Tor Thorsen says "fans of Kieslowski at his most hebetudinous might enjoy this sluggish melodrama" (Thorsen 1). This reference to Kieslowski in this 2001 review ironically foreshadows Tykwer's next film, *Heaven*.

Heaven (2002) was written by the late Polish director Kieslowski and directed by Tom Tykwer. In this film, an English teacher in Turin named Philippa (Cate Blanchett) attempts to take revenge on the drug dealer Vendice (Stefano Santospago) who caused the death of her husband and students through drug overdoses. Philippa plants a bomb in the trashcan in Vendice's office, but as the trash is being taken out, it kills a father and his children instead of its desired target. Philippa turns herself in to the police where she explains her story to Filippo (Giovanna Ribisi), a police officer who translates for her. Filippo falls in love with Philippa, and he helps Philippa kill Vendice by giving her a gun and holding the door closed while she shoots him. Both escape to the Tuscan countryside, finding out that both of them have the same birthday by seven years. Philippa, in fact, had her first communion on the day of Filippo's birth. As the two reconcile themselves for

death, they both shave their heads and fall deeper in love. By the end of the film, Tykwer makes telling the two apart a very confusing endeavor. The film ends with Philippa and Filippo flying away, attached to a police helicopter, into the unending sky until they cannot be seen anymore (Schuppach 70).

Heaven is riddled with overhead shots to give the presence of God, albeit a God that cannot intervene (Schuppach 75). This brings to mind the overhead shots of Berlin in Wender's *Der Himmel über Berlin*. The obvious religious connection to morality seems to be twisted more toward Tykwer's understanding of fate and destiny. Philippa and Filippo are born on the same day of the year, and Philippa at age seven experiences her first communion on Filippo's birthday. This predestines the two characters through a heavenly medium. While on the run, Philippa and Filippo attempt to absolve their sins in order to prepare themselves for their journey to heaven. Philippa tells all of her life's sins to Filippo, who responds by telling her that he loves her. Again Tykwer connects his theme of predestined love through the story's already existing religious overtones. After this they shave their heads--an allusion to catholic monks and absolving their sins. From this point on the two become nearly indistinguishable, or as one might infer from Tykwer's interpretation, they have become completely intertwined in one another's destiny (Schuppach 77).

When Tykwer read the script for *Heaven* he instantly felt as if he "*had written it [him]self*" (Dirk 1). Yet this script underwent quite a transition from its original state to the one used for the film. *Heaven* was written first in Polish, and then it was translated to French, then English. Tykwer then made a rewrite of the script in German, and this version was finally translated back into English (Schuppach 236). Perhaps he just saw a perfect opportunity to apply his fairytale-like themes of love and destiny again in another film. Tykwer says he did not feel like he was reading a foreign script with foreign ideas, rather, he felt he was reading his own script (Dirk 1). Tykwer

makes it clear in an interview that he was trying to bring the viewer emotionally closer to the perpetrator of these crimes in order to overcome "the type of moral distancing which one would typically undergo in such an instance" (Dirk 2). Yet Manohla Dargis, film critic for the Los Angeles Times, comments that "*Tykwer's surface flash isn't just a poor fit with Kieslowski's lyrical pessimism; it completely contradicts everything Kieslowski's work aspired to, including the condition of art*" (Dargis 1). Kieslowski was interested in the ambiguity of morals, but Tykwer's interpretation of *Heaven* paints a very black and white picture of morality as he has turned this into a tragic love story (Dargis 2). It seems that Tykwer is more interested in bringing the viewer closer to Philippa's character than exploring the ambiguity of morality portrayed by her mistaken killing of a father and his children through a vigilante action. From our understanding of Tykwer now, it would make sense that he would want so much to bring us closer to a character with whom he tries to get us to "*identify and go along with*" (Artechock 2). This is Tykwer's beloved subjectivity which he accredits Hitchcock, Scorsese, Fellini, and Lars von Trier as having endowed him with (Artechock 3). Tykwer justifies himself in an interview by saying, "*I also met a few times with the co-author and talked a bit, but I actually told him 'I would actually like to have nothing to do with you, rather, I need to make this completely into my own film.'* He liked this idea and said it would also be what Kieslowski would have wanted" (Schuppach 235).

Tykwer strives to be an international filmmaker who deals with global themes. For a director who admits that *Winterschläfer* was directed for a German audience, it is ironic that he does not agree with German filmmakers who produce films directed only toward Germans:

The personal aspects stand in the front, but not in the sense of private aspects- I try to divide the two. That is a complicated differentiation in the German language, because they sometimes refer to each other. But it is so important that films don't have that effect - and I believe that German film suffered because of it. I think [that in] German theater in the 80's, that one has the feeling, this is a private event that a filmmaker just made for himself and his friends, and it is so introspective that it does not open itself up and does not widen its horizon

that is supposed to allow for communication. I believe that films should communicate, and that they should also have this enlightening power in order to convey something, because they otherwise are enough for those who already understand what it's about, and that just does not interest me (Schuppach 224).

Tykwer sees himself as part of a film movement in Germany and elsewhere which brings up subject matters to make the audience want to talk about the film after they see it. If such a movement is gaining ground in Germany, it would take German cinema into a direction it has never clearly defined for itself. Tykwer says there is a much larger presence of German film floating around now than before, and that it will be easier for the youngest German filmmakers to make it internationally. As of now, however, German films are not highly prized on the foreign film market, according to Tykwer (Artechock 4). A Los Angeles Times article entitled "Made by Which Nation?" questions whether Tykwer's film *Heaven* could actually be considered part of the tradition of German cinema following, that if Roland Emmerich could make a film like *Independence Day* (1996) and have it deemed American, then where would that place Tom Tykwer with *Heaven* (Williams 2)? Tykwer replied to such a question, by saying "*That which is German in me, is in this film*" (Sturm 1). However, Tykwer goes on to explain that German topography has had the greatest influence on him for his films (Sturm 1). It is unclear whether he literally means topography, or if Tykwer is referring to the social topography, or rather, the idleness that plagues his generation which has inspired his main theme throughout all of his films. This would make the most sense, because even if *Heaven* was filmed outside of Germany with non-German actors, it retains Tykwer's interpretation--an interpretation that is influenced by a generation of idleness. Lastly, Tykwer appears to be most influenced by Hitchcock, especially his fascination with subjectivity and 'Vertigo', however, his unconscious copying of plots from Kieslowski, Wenders, and Fassbinder make it apparent that Tykwer took many of his cues from German and European directors. Tykwer is either a hypocritical self-conscious filmmaker, or he is

simply naive. Tykwer respects authenticity above all, which he better explains when he says, *"that's why Lost World or Godzilla get on my nerves, because these films are [cookie-cutter copies] (Rezept-scheiss)"* (Artechock 4). So if Tykwer really despises directors that shoot remakes or cookie-cutter films, he should wish to break out of his habitual pattern of themes and try to actually make something completely original. This is by no means a discredit to his spectacular visuals and music, but as far as plot and themes go, Tykwer may not be as original as he thinks.

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