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Images of City and their Psychological Impacts in Danny Boyle's Film

Slumdog Millionaire

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By

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Images of City and their Psychological Impacts in Danny Boyle’s Film *Slumdog Millionaire*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Abhishek Sigdel, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research paper is a study of Danny Boyle's film Slumdog Millionaire. It examines the affinity between the fleeting images, speed, energy of a modern city and their impacts upon the psychology of the characters with reference to Mumbai depicted in the film. In course of this study, this research argues that the changing images and impressions of the city play dominant role to form the psyche of the characters that in turn is reflected in their behavioral changes. At the same time, money economy and alienation of the characters in the city are also important for the reciprocal behavior of the characters. The anti-Muslim riot of 1993 gives shocking images and experiences and shows how Jamal and Salim had to lose their mother and home. It is the reason that they had to fall in the trap of Maman, the gangster who exploits slum children by making them beggars. Jamal and Salim had to leave Mumbai in order to escape from the gangster. They earn living by illegal means like theft, cheating and fraud at Tajmahal premises after they fall from the roof of the train. The movement, speed and energy of the town give them the different, unstable psyche and they act according to the stimuli generated by them. To examine all these factors, some observations of Simmel, Baudelaire, Barthes and Kress are brought into conversation.

Key Words: City, stimuli, impressions, psyche, images, money economy, modernization, metropolitan

This research paper studies the depiction of Indian Metropolitan city, Mumbai, in Danny Boyle's film *Slumdog Millionaire* from the perspective of modernity and city studies. The film tells the story of the slum characters of Dharavi slum of Juhu,

Mumbai. In course of the study, the psychology and behavior of the characters generated by the impressions of the city and its images are discussed. How the behavior of the characters changes from time to time and how their behavior is affected by the stimuli generated by the impressions given to them by the city atmosphere are the basic questions this research paper tries to answer.

The fleeting and changing images one encounters in the city and the money economy of the city are crucial factors for a person's psyche and reciprocity of the behavior. These play dominant role in the behavior of Jamal, Salim, Maman and so on. Due to the role of money economy in one's behavior, they involve in illegal activities like theft, robbery and child-smuggling and take advantage of slumdogs. The reactions to the rapidly changing impressions and images of the city demand certain physical and psychological reactions and the characters are shaped by them.

The movie *Slumdog Millionaire* by Danny Boyle represents the slum life of Mumbai, famous commercial metropolitan city of India. A boy from Dharavi Slum of Mumbai, Jamal Malik, is the protagonist of the film. Three phases of the protagonist's life, as a young child, an early teenager, and as an 18 year old are depicted in the film. In the beginning, Jamal is shown playing cricket with Salim and other children from the slums, they are then pursued through the slums by guards and are rescued by their mother, who promises she will punish the boys.

The mother takes Jamal and Salim to school. They learn about *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas and hear only about Athos and Porthos. Soon after that, as the story goes, there is a violence and their mother is brutally murdered in an anti-Muslim riot on their Mumbai slum, a reference to the anti-Muslim attack of 1993 in which Babri Masjid was destroyed. Depiction of anti-Muslim riot and its impacts

upon the boys, Jamal and Salim, are followed in the film. Their mother's death changes their life altogether.

Jamal and Salim run for their lives. As they are trying to escape the violence, they see a depiction of the Hindu God, Rama before they meet Latika. Salim is unwilling to let Latika join in their company but Jamal becomes optimistic and suggests that she could be the Third Musketeer in their team. He invites her to join them and stay with them. They eventually fall into the trap of Maman, a gangster who exploits children making them sing and beg money. Jamal is outside talking to Latika. He is describing a dream that they will attain the upper-class life in future. Maman sends Salim to call Jamal so he can be blinded and made to beg more money as a singer. Salim tips him off and the two escape Maman, while Latika is left behind. She is left intentionally by Salim. Jamal and Salim spend the next few years on trains, selling goods, pickpocketing and sleeping in the luggage area, one day they fall off the train while trying to steal food and re-emerge as adolescents on the ground by the tracks.

The images presented in the movie are the generalized signs of the units that are kept in the movies to move from reality according to Roland Barthes. Barthes is a structuralist, so, he sees images as the signs of the units and points out that they work in a system referring to the concept or things that are further than the individual image, they work as parts of the whole structure that is the film:

In order to move from the reality to its photograph it is in no way necessary to divide up this reality into units and to constitute these units as signs, substantially different from the object they communicate. . . . Certainly, the image is not the reality but at least it is its perfect analogon and it is exactly this analogical perfection which, to commonsense, defines the photograph.

Thus can be seen the special status of the photographic image: it is a message without a code. (Barthes, 1977: 17)

As Barthes suggests in the quote, the meaning suggested by the images is completely different from the object they communicate in unison, as a system. They are just like analogies, they are messages without code referring to the things beyond the messages they carry themselves.

In *Slumdog Millionaire*, multiple images refer to the struggles of the people living in slums. But as the film ends, we can get a message beyond what the individual image suggests. Earning to survive is the major problem among the slum characters on the surface but it can refer the evils the city brings to the poor people's life. Earning a meal is not easy in city for the slumdogs. So, they enter the world of criminal activities. Jamal and Salim steal shoes and cheat tourists as fake tour guides at the Tajmahal befriending the other slum children of Mumbai and selling stolen shoes from the Tajmahal. Eventually, the memory of Latika becomes dominant and Jamal persuades Salim to take the journey back to Mumbai so they can find Latika. They ask the locals and eventually, one of the other children in Maman's clutch tells Jamal that Latika is working as a training prostitute on Pila Street, he also tells Jamal whose photo is printed on the United States one hundred-dollar bill when Jamal presents him with one. This gives Jamal an answer to a question in the television show later.

Jamal gets Salim to accompany him to Pila Street despite the boy's warnings. They find Latika soon. She is about to leave with them when they are confronted again by Maman. Maman hints that they have to face the punishment for their crimes against him, hitting him and escaping his clutch, years ago. Salim draws a Colt Python revolver and robs Maman and kills him. Jamal, Salim and Latika flee for their lives to a closed hotel. They occupy an empty room, where Salim forces Jamal out

telling him that he is the boss, using the revolver. Latika also persuades Jamal to go because she does not want him to be hurt or killed.

Jamal is working in a call center to earn his bread as a tea-delivery boy i.e. chaiwala. His co-worker asks him to cover for him for some time so that the co-worker can try to enter the India version of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' Jamal takes the opportunity to trace Salim's phone number and uses the phone to call him. They are reunited where Jamal briefly thinks about killing Salim and himself but he just punches Salim in the face. Salim begs for forgiveness and tells Jamal that Latika is long gone. Jamal parts with Salim but he becomes curious about his life as a criminal and wants to understand about it. So he follows Salim to the home of his boss, Javed, and finds that Latika is married to him.

Jamal enters Javed's home trickily. When Javed comes home Latika helps him pretend to be a cook, and later he has to pretend again as a dishwasher. He confesses his love for Latika, who is moved but unfazed, realizing she can do nothing. Jamal invites her to meet him at a railway station where he will wait for her every day at 5 o'clock. Javed becomes angry with Jamal's poor cooking abilities and kicks him out.

Jamal is waiting for Latika one afternoon, when Salim, Javed, and a few other of Javed's stalwarts capture Latika and drive off with her, putting a knife on her face. Jamal is furious and ends up on 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' through unknown means. He is not intending to get rich, but to get Latika's attention so she may find him again. He knows that Latika regularly watches the show. So, he tries to stay on as long as he can, answering the questions based on his past experiences so that Latika would be able to see him regularly.

As Jamal is a "Slumdog" the host of the show, Prem, believes that he is cheating and his belief is strengthened when he tries to feed Jamal a wrong answer

and Jamal still gets it right. So he lets Jamal get arrested before he gets to answer the 20,000,000 Rs. Question, the final question of the show. Jamal is tortured and interrogated by the police to explain how he knew the answers. The Police finds his explanations plausible and allow him to go back and answer the last question. He is supported by thousands of fans in Mumbai who give him their blessings to win the game. He answers the last question (Who is the third musketeer?) of which he never knew the answer. He calls Salim, who has left his phone to Latika. She answers but cannot help him because she doesn't know the answer either. It leaves him with a mental game. Finally, Jamal guesses the answer, A: Aramis, and is right, but he still remains depressed at his lack of success in re-uniting with Latika. However, Latika finds him at the railway station and they finally can be together, as Salim has already killed Javed and is in turn killed by Javed's stalwarts.

One of the main characters of the film is Salim. He is also a slumdog raised with Jamal together and comes from the same Dharavi slum. Salim and Jamal are brothers. In the first round of the game show, Jamal wins 10 million rupees, and only one question behind from winning 20 million rupees. Since he is a slumdog, and could not possibly know all these answers, so they accuse him of cheating. The whole movie shows how he actually knows all of the answers. He knows them not because he is particularly smart, but because of various incidents he has undergone in his life.

Putting these diverse and fleeting episodes into a cohesive story is not easy task for the director Danny Boyle. *Slumdog Millionaire* is captivating visually, from the dirty towns of shabby, small huts to the burgeoning industrial machine and mammoth skyscrapers rising from the same locations some ten years later, everything is very informing. Boyle is able to make each scene real whether he is trying to

capture a fleeting moment of happiness or the pain of homelessness and poverty. One cannot help but feel sympathy for the slum children.

One of the prominent French poets, Charles Baudelaire, has been widely studied as a leader of the Symbolist genre. He is also regarded as a great poet of modernity. In *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne* (1863) Baudelaire suggests that writers and artists should look for the particular experience of modernity, and established a theory of beauty as the age, its fashions, its morals and its emotions. (Mayne 4) The beauty that he found in the modern city was its transitory and fleeting nature which he aimed to recreate in his poetry. He also praised other writers such as Honoré de Balzac, calling him the “painter of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains” (Mayne4). Baudelaire is considered to be the first advocate for such immediate depictions of modernity, so, he was the first person giving value to the literature and art that was specifically focused on conveying the direct experience of modernity, rather than following previous rules and constraints.

Baudelaire gave utmost importance to the objects of observation; for him, the objects of observation were modern city and the modern experience. He also gave much emphasis on the manner of this observation. He fashioned himself as a *flâneur*, and took to the streets as a solitary and distant figure with the sole aim of watching and observing. Most of all he was looking for the quality of modernity within the urban crowd and described it as “an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement” (Baudelaire9). The urban crowd of the nineteenth century was a new phenomenon in itself and the subject of a number of studies. Rather than being composed of a number of individuals, the crowd came to be seen as a separate being with its own motivation. Baudelaire’s writing was therefore driven by this experience of fending off a constant onrush of impressions and shocks,

causing his attention to move quickly from one thing to another in glances, rather than lingering on each object in a gaze.

The film, *Slumdog Millionaire*, Mumbai, has made with its slums and skyscrapers, diversity of life and experiences and city of fleeting images, an object of study. It gives its characters' psychology an unsteady stimuli with all its rush of images and the film is also dependent on the continuous flow of diverse images. This research focuses on the psychology and characters' behavior in the reciprocity of their city environment with the rush and flow of the diverse images.

Many critics have opined differently about Boyle's movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. Some regard it as a voice to subalterns, and some as a portrayal of urban poverty. Anna Cristina Mendels places Boyles' Film in the context of the aestheticizing and showcasing of poverty in India for artistic purposes and proceeds to examine "the modes of circulation of those representations in the field of cultural production, as well as their role in enhancing the processes of ever increasing consumption of India related refugees" (472). As her opinion emphasizes, this movie presents a picture of urban poverty in which the reality of slum that exists in the heart of Mumbai and shows how they carry out their low life standards.

Besides this, Mitu Sengupta also raises substantial doubts about both the realism of the film's portrayal of urban poverty in India and whether the film will assist those arguing for the poor. Sengupta argues that "the film's reductive view' of such slums is likely to reinforce negative attitudes to them who live there" (96). Her opinion seems agreeable as evident in film as the priority is given to Western culture and disposition of slum dwellers, the police with regard to material goods, power and dignity. Somehow the forces portrayed in the film seem to be bolstering western culture by denying slums.

Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria and Ulka Anjaria on the other hand, point out the Western representation of troubling history of India in the film. They observe:

With its uncompromising view of Mumbai's underbelly, *Slumdog* wades into the troubling history of western representations of India. Film critics and prominent individuals alike have criticized the film, if not dismissed it outright, for its rehashing of old stereotypes of urban Indian squalor and backwardness. Like most representations of urban poverty, films such as this have the potential to create a sense of a troubled place "out there", disconnected from the comforting world of the viewer. (41)

The critics of the film have criticized the film for the portrayal of the old stereotypes and backwardness with highlight. The representation of the poor and backward aspect of the Indian city presents India as a troubled place. Critics are not satisfied with the film in this respect. This research has more to do with the issue of representation, attempting to see how the environment of the city affects the psychology and shapes the behavior of the characters, the issue of historical representation of India does not become significant.

Further, modernity and the study of the dark sides of the city is the aspect less focused by critics. Unraveling the transformation of the city, J. M. Tyree writes, "*Slumdog Millionaire* depicts the transformation of a world city -Bombay had become Mumbai," Jamal muses - to a place of high-rise condos and call centers that sell mobile phones to patrons in Britain and Scotland" (35). He further writes:

Meanwhile, his brother Salim. . . is "at the center of the center" of the underworld, where gangster developers are changing what "used to be our slum" into the new "all business" India. One of the film's most memorable sequences shows Jamal and Salim entering a life of crime at the Tajmahal,

stealing the shoes and stripping the cars of global tourists, and giving fake tours of the landmark as a “five star hotel” with a magnificent swimming pool.

(35)

Tyree focuses on the transformation of a world city. The name of the city was changed from Bombay to Mumbai that makes the protagonist think about his childhood. The Europeans are the owners of technological gadgets like mobile phones. The dark aspects of the city are the underworld gangsters who are using the slum making it profitable business. Theft, cheating, faking tours and so on are carried out by Jamal and Salim around Tajmahal when they leave the slum after they become orphans. These glimpses give the hints about the dark sides of the modern cities. This research paper studies the representation of modern cities within the framework of modernist and city studies.

Despite what all the critics opine, this movie criticizes it in the light of poverty and their increasing consumption, and representation of Indian history and globalizing India, there are another issues of modernity and metropolitan cities and its dark sides which this research paper tries to deal with.

Ideologically, *Slumdog Millionaire* is a fairytale of neoliberal finance capitalism that depends upon competition and fatalism as the solution to the poverty. Jamal becomes a millionaire coming in the reality show as a poor chaiwala (tea-delivery boy) and there is a happy ending all because of fate as Sohinee Roy observes; “Most of the film’s pleasure comes from its rags-to-riches fairytale plot that ends in the joyful reunion of the young star-crossed lovers” (156). He further writes:

The cinematic techniques further enhance the optimism of this narrative. But the optimism in Boyle’s fairytale is based on an ideological evasion: the avoidance of the structural issues of poverty for a magical solution in a

gameshow win. This ideological evasion makes luck the solution of poverty; thereby, aligning it with the values of neoliberal finance capitalism that informs the context of the film. (156)

The film is full of optimism. The pleasure of the film lies at the fairytale success of the protagonist to become a millionaire as well as reunite with his girlfriend.

Cinematic techniques also pave way for optimism. But the optimism of the film is based on the ideological evasion as it presents the magical solution to poverty avoiding the structural issues of poverty. So, the film aligns with the values of neoliberal capitalism, everybody must chase their dreams to be rich and come out of poverty with the help of luck and actions.

In modernity studies and the canon of modernism, the city is an important subject matter. According to Michael H. Whitworth, “the critics who shaped the modernist canon believed that the city was important as subject matter, and so they concentrated on texts that met their criteria” (181). Asserting this idea, he clarifies the reason why city is important; “The city is the location where the more visible signs of modernity were to be found in the highest concentration: for example, electric light, motorized transport, boulevards, telephone wires, and department stores” (181). City is the area in which all the modern development and facilities are piled on.

Elaborating on its nature, he continues:

In many cases, particularly imperial capitals, it was where the visible signs of empire manifested themselves, in immigrant communities, in the diversity of accents and languages, and in imperial monuments. It was also the place where historical processes such as intellectual and professional specialization were likely to manifest themselves most tangibly, in, for example, specialized institutions of learning and the headquarters of professional bodies. (181)

According to Whitworth, city is the place where maximum number of visible signs of modernity are found. Modern developments like electric lights, motor ways and vehicles, parks, telephone wires and the departmental stores. Most of the modern cities are once ruled by imperialists, immigrant community, diversity of language and accents as well as imperial monuments. City is also the manifestation of the historical processes of professional specialization with the specialized institutions and professional bodies. These all are presented in Danny Boyle's film *Slumdog Millionaire* in the backdrop of Mumbai.

Just as the city is a modernist phenomenon, film itself is a modernist art. Laura Marcus writes to this connection; "Still photography brought together art, nature and technology in unprecedented ways; film took photography into a new dimension by putting the still image into motion and thus representing a world of, and in, movement. Movement, in turn, had been placed at the heart of the modernist and avant-garde artistic practice" (250). He further clarifies:

Artists attached to the various avant-garde groupings – Futurism, Cubism, Dada, Constructivism – aspired to bring into their work kinesis (motion), rhythmic pattern, collage, simultaneity, "motor space" (in which multiple views of an object are captured in the art work), and a "qualitative space" which broke with traditional perspective and introduced subjective perception.

(250)

According to Marcus, film is a representational art that represents the world with movement. Movement in turn is very crucial subject matter for modernist artistic practice.

Slumdog Millionaire takes place mostly in Mumbai, a commercial hub and a metropolitan city in the Indian state of Maharashtra. In terms of population, Mumbai

has the largest population among the cities in India and the fourth largest population in the world after Tokyo, Mexico City and the New York. The population of the greater metropolitan area is approximately 18.3 million with migration to the city of Mumbai growing at exponential rates each year. As a result, Mumbai has one of the world's largest slum populations: more than 5 million of the city's residents are "slumdogs", living without direct access to water or sanitation. At the same time Mumbai is one of India's leading commercial and cultural centers, home to the country's hugely successful film industry and a booming stock exchange. The city alone pays almost 40 per cent of the nation's taxes. (UNHabitat.org)

In the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, Danny Boyle and photographer Anthony Dod Mantle have captured Mumbai very well. Many scenes are set outside and filmed on location in the streets of the city, which is unusual as Bollywood Films are mostly studio productions. The locations other than Mumbai main city are the Tajmahal in another province of India, the district of Juhu and also Dharavi, the largest slum in Mumbai, housing between 600,000 and 1 million inhabitants. Though the film focuses on only three major characters, it captures vast diversity of Mumbai. It shows the ordinary life of slum dwellers with its narrow streets, public toilets, outdoor washing and crowded public schools. The pathetic conditions in which street kids have to survive by begging, stealing or searching garbage dumps are presented in the film. At the same time, the film also presents the tourists, international businesses, entertainment, gang violence, and random police power and the life of the very rich people.

Slumdog Millionaire also refers to historical events in the city's history for two instances. Jamal and Salim meet on the skyscraper building overlooking the new district which is built on the site of their former slum in one scene. The scene

probably refers to the 2004 slum demolition drive by the Maharashtra government. The campaign that was aimed at removing slums and shanty towns in the city to enhance Mumbai's image and transform it into world-class-city produced a public outcry and had to be halted the following year due to public opposition.

Slumdog Millionaire also mentions the Bombay riots that took place 1993. When Hindu and Muslim populations clashed in the streets of Mumbai, Jamal's mother is killed and the boys have to flee the city.

George Simmel, the pioneer critic of city studies has studied the psychological transformation of a person in a metropolitan city with pre-Freudian psychological analysis; "The fight with nature which primitive man has to wage for his bodily existence attains in this modern form its latest transformation. The eighteenth century called upon man to free himself of all the historical bonds in the state and in religion, in morals and in economics" (183). Simmel clarifies the nature of man and its development:

Man's nature, originally good and common to all, should develop unhampered. In addition to more liberty, the nineteenth century demanded the functional specialization of man and his work; this specialization makes one individual incomparable to another, and each of them indispensable to the highest possible extent. However, this specialization makes each man the more directly dependent upon the supplementary activities of all others. (183)

A primitive man has turned modern fighting with nature for his bodily existence. In the eighteenth century, there was a pressure for a man to free all the historical bonds in the fields of religion, morals and economics which was a man's step to modernity. This journey to modernity became rapid in the nineteenth century with demand of additional liberty and functional specialization of man and his work. This made the

individual beyond comparison with other person as well as it made a man dependent upon the supplementary activities of all the other people. These all developments contributed to the development of the cities.

Simmel points out the psychological basis of the individual living in the modern metropolis. The city affects one's nervous stimulation resulting of swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli:

The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. Man is a differentiating creature. His mind is stimulated by the difference between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it. (183)

Simmel gives us the insight to see into the psychological formation of the individuals living in modern metropolis. The intensification of the nervous stimulation due to swift change of inner and outer stimuli is the very foundation of the psychology of the people living in metropolis. The psychological basis of a character/man is clarified further. Simmel talks about the impressions a person gets:

Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts – all these use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions. These are the psychological conditions which the metropolis creates. (183)

Talking about the complex psychological condition developed by a person in metropolitan city, Simmel points out that man is psychologically a differentiating creature; his mind is stimulated by the momentary impressions and the impressions

preceding them. Only the habitual activities give a person of metropolis less consciousness than the rapidly changing images and discontinuity of the city. This shapes overall psychological condition of a person. In *Slumdog Millionaire*, we can see that the slum boys play cricket within the airport premises. It is quite usual and habituated activity for them, so they are less conscious about even the plane's arrival. But they are more conscious about the violence that is carried out by the rioters because it is unusual happening. Both Jamal and Salim escape the violence but their mother is dead that changes their life altogether making them wandering orphans living with the changing impressions of the changing situations.

The life of Jamal and Salim is shaped by the psychology that is shaped by the activities of the city. The major incidents that demand the different psychological reactions and stimuli in Jamal's life are: i) his witnessing his mother being killed by communal mobs, ii) his begging career with the slum mafia run by Maman, iii) his escape with his brother from the slum mafia, iv) his involvement in thefts and fooling foreign tourists at Tajmahal, v) his return to Mumbai and being employed at the restaurant and searching for his childhood sweetheart, vi) his determination to save Latika from prostitution and tracking his brother involved with the mafia, vii) his participation in the TV quiz show more for Latika's sake than for the prize money, viii) and the final 'Jai ho' episode at the climax of the movie celebrating the reunion of Jamal and Latika. These incidents change the way Jamal lives his life. His psychological condition changes and his action keeps changing as the incidents put him before certain situations.

Simmel elaborates the different roles played by city and rural areas to influence the psychology of a person. He writes; "With each crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life, the city sets

up a deep contrast with small town and rural life with reference to the sensory foundations of psychic life” (183). He further elaborates the distinction between the consciousness of the rural characters and the characters of cities; “The metropolis exacts from man as a discriminating creature a different amount of consciousness than does rural life. Here the rhythm of life and sensory mental imagery flows more slowly, more habitually, and more evenly” (183). Simmel, with this distinction between rural areas and cities argues:

Precisely in this connection the sophisticated character of metropolitan psychic life becomes understandable – as over against small town life which rests more upon deeply felt and emotional relationships. These latter are rooted in the more unconscious layers of the psyche and grow most readily in the steady rhythm of uninterrupted habituations. (183)

The city sets up altogether different psychology upon a person in comparison to small town and rural areas. City and village have different sensory impacts upon a person’s psyche. The amount of consciousness differs in a person in city than in rural areas. The rhythm of life and mental imagery flows slowly, more habitually and more evenly in the village. It is the reason why a person’s psychic life becomes sophisticated in metropolitan cities. The characters in *Slumdog Millionaire* are also influenced by this psychology; power, money and girls are the things a person in a metropolitan wants to attain like the rich strata of the society. As boys from slum, Jamal and Salim also strive for them. Salim becomes a criminal from very early age; Jamal cheats tourists when they escape from the clutch of Maman, a gangster who trains kids to be a beggar. Money is crucial factor for them to survive after they escape. This leads them to involve into anything.

Simmel clarifies the nature of metropolitan that is dominated by money economy. Direct barter of goods and domestic productions are displaced and the amount of work demanded is reduced; “The money economy dominates the metropolis; it has displaced the last survivals of domestic production and the direct barter of goods; it minimizes, from day to day, the amount of work ordered by customers” (185). Simmel further elaborates:

The matter-of-fact attitude is obviously so intimately interrelated with the money economy, which is dominant in the metropolis, that nobody can say whether the intellectualistic mentality first promoted the money economy or whether the latter determined the former. The metropolitan way of life is certainly the most fertile soil for this reciprocity . . . (185)

All the reason behind the end of direct barter of goods and domestic products is the money economy of the metropolitan. Matter-of-fact attitude and behavior seen in the people of the city are also closely connected to money economy. It is not sure if intellectualist mentality promoted money economy or vice versa. The metropolitan way of life has got this kind of reciprocity. Maman in the film *Slumdog Millionaire* keeps Latika when Jamal and Malik escape from his clutch boarding on a moving train; he soon uses her as a prostitute. It is all because of money economy; even the orphans and slumdogs are used for money economy of the metropolis. Money economy does not always result in good and legally acceptable activities; people can do anything for money and the mafias of various kinds, criminal activities and so on prosper in the metropolitans.

The modernization of the city is also seen in relation to historical transformation of Mumbai in the 1990s. According to VandanaBaweja:

The film *Slumdog Millionaire* depicts a key moment in the history of India — the transformation during the 1990s of Bombay into Mumbai. In the film, life trajectories of Jamal Malik (its Muslim protagonist), his Hindu love Latika, and his brother Salim play out against the metamorphosis of the city from conditions of modernity postmodernity. Recent scholarship has suggested this transformation involves the erasure Bombay's former cosmopolitanism. (7)

Transformation is key to modernization of a city. In the 1990s, Bombay was transformed to Mumbai. When there is endless poverty and misery, religion does not become a barrier between Jamal and Latika, the rigid bond of religion can be seen weakened in the metropolis. Jamal is a Muslim and Latika is a Hindu. The transformation of Salim, Jamal's brother, from a poor boy to a criminal who could not be easily deterred, shows the modernization as well as post-modern type of transformation. Lack of religious bond and undisturbed transformation of Jamal and Salim coincide with the modernization reaching up to postmodernity. Transformation from Bombay into Mumbai is also related to the wiping out of the former cosmopolitanism making it feel more localized. Baweja further points out three architectural spaces that help to understand the modernization of Bombay into Mumbai:

Slumdog Millionaire refers to three architectural spaces invested with specific ideological meaning: Dharavi, an organic settlement of vernacular architectures used to represent old Bombay; Lake Castle, an apartment used to depict Bombay's neoliberal transformation into Mumbai; and Victoria Terminus, Gothic Revival train station which serves as a site of contestation between those who serve the city's multiple histories and those who would overwrite them. (7)

The architecture of Dharavi Slum is organic settlement of vernacular architecture that used to represent old Bombay. Lake Castle, the newly built apartment is an architecture to present Bombay's neoliberal transformation into Mumbai and the Victoria Terminus that represents the imperial history contrasting with the multiple histories and overwriting them. Thus, the architecture of the film also presents the modernization and the change that could bring upon the psychology of the characters.

The image shown below is the example of the architecture of rapidly modernizing Mumbai. The skyscrapers are being elevated. Jamal and Salim are talking, sitting on a floor of empty skyscraper under construction. This scene shows the modernization of Mumbai.

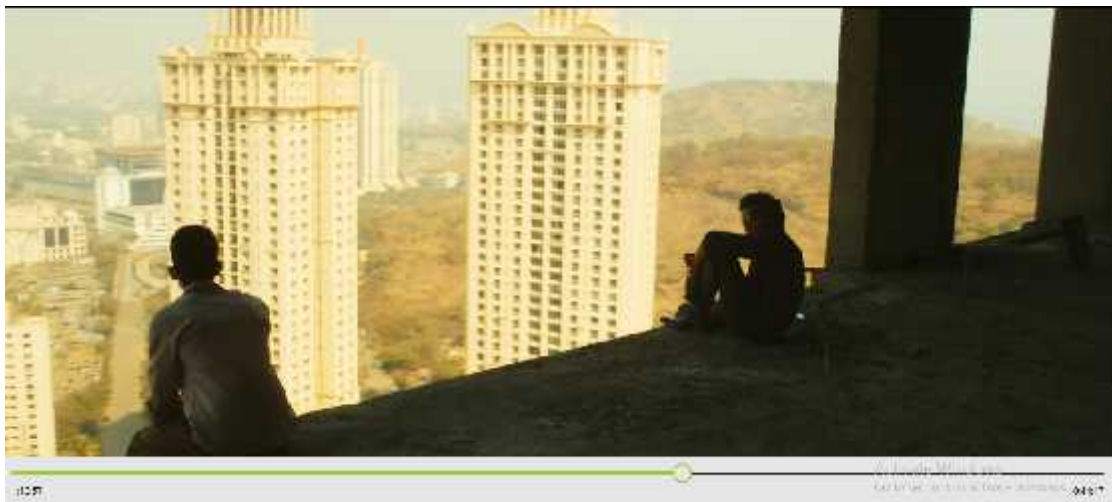


Figure 1: Boys of slum struggling in their life, in the backdrop of city architecture

The most horrible scene of anti-Muslim riot of 1993 has been a driving force that shows the contrast among the architectural structures of the city and affects the central characters Jamal and Salim's psychology altogether. Mister Nandha, a Hindu school-teacher of Jamal threatens of destroying the Babri Masjid in the violent surge. They have already destroyed a Masjid in the locality and chased out the Muslim boys in the name of Lord Ram:

MISTER NANDHA: Ram namsatyahai, Babri Masjidhvasthai.

JAMAL: Mister Nandha?

MISTER NANDHA: We have destroyed your mosque. Now, the followers of Ram will drive you dogs out of our city. (From behind his back he produces a knife and runs towards Jamal, screaming.)

MISTER NANDHA (CONT'D): Ram has returned to his temple! Ram has returned! (They flee, but Jamal turns, sees the girl, frozen. He chases back a few steps, hauls her arm. The spell broken, and they are off.) (32)

Mister Nandha is Jamal's teacher but he is deep into the communal riot. He is a Hindu fanatic believing on the destruction of Masjids and chasing the Muslims out of the slum in the name of Lord Ram. He threatens the slumdogs that the followers of Ram would drive those 'dogs' out of the city. It is the riot where Jamal and Salim have to flee away and see the slum destroyed by fire from higher place. It is the time, when they find Latika. These images of burning slum, its dilapidated and thatched architecture and the rapidly changing images affect the psychology of the characters and change the course of their life. The Hindu history tries to overwrite the Muslim history of the slum. Along with the multiple histories that are over-written by the imperial and Hindu histories, the experience of the speed and energy of the city is clearly seen affecting the psyche and behavior of the characters.

How the same person psyche reacts according to the situation that depends upon the impressions around him. Jamal continually shows love towards Latika from the beginning. He lets her join him and Salim but Salim tries to stop her to join their company. For this he exerts his role as the head of the family:

JAMAL: Go away. Ja, ja!

The girl might not even have heard.

SALIM (CONT'D): She'll have the Security Guard onto us, standing there.

JAMAL: Not if we let her in.

SALIM: No.

JAMAL: She could be the third musketeer.

SALIM: I am the head of this family, now. And I say no. Piss off, you. (35)

Jamal insists with Salim to let Latika join the group showing the possibility that she could be the third musketeer. Salim is negative to Jamal's idea to let her join in their group from the very beginning. When they escape from the gangster, Maman, and catch the running train, Salim leaves Latika's hand even when she could be taken in. These reactions are because of the impressions he feels in those times. But after they return to Mumbai from Tajmahal where they carried out a series of illegal activities to earn their living, Salim's behavior is different. Jamal and Salim find Latika working as a prostitute under Maman's clutch in Pila Street and Salim shoots Maman and they escape to an empty hotel room. Salim drinks and kicks Jamal out this time on gunpoint and takes Latika in:

SALIM: I am the elder. And I am the boss. For once, you do as I say.

JAMAL: No.

Salim pulls Latika to her feet.

SALIM: I saved your bloody life, didn't I?

LATIKA: Salim, please-

SALIM: - chup, sali. (107)

This time, Salim has got a gun; he regards himself as elder and boss. He does not care about anything, terrorizes both Jamal and Latika, kicks Jamal out and slams door taking Latika in. This marks the parting of the ways between two brothers. This instance shows how characters act according to the images and impressions around

them. At the same time, the speed and energy of the city is also responsible for his behavioral shift.

The speed and energy of the city led to a new conception of space in the nineteenth century. The city as a space of an infinite and centerless three-dimensional extension in which changes were described in terms of the action and interaction of forces, rather than the previous conviction that the cosmos was a finite place, in which things sought their proper place. Therefore, for Baudelaire, the city became an irritable nervous energy rather than a static place. He sought to express this energy in his poetry through the raw description of the ever-changing surface appearances which encompassed the entire visual field, rather than focusing on each object in turn. This was much like the spirit of Impressionist painting at the time, which was concerned with the primary facts of sensation.

Surface appearances were most important due to the idea of vision being located within the observer so that visual truth was no longer placed within the external environment but within the subjectivity of the observer. This is also true in case of the changes that are seen in Salim in *Slumdog Millionaire*. Therefore when describing the city, Baudelaire did not use descriptive detail, which comes from external reality, but impressionistic detail, which is controlled by the mind. Baudelaire described the city only as he was able to experience it, through changing surface appearances and sensations, and with a preference for colour over form. This focus on Impressionistic detail can be found in many works of literature in the nineteenth century. In Zola's *La Curée* for example, the character Renée is shown looking through a window on to the boulevard. Unlike Baudelaire, whose eye is always on guard, Renée's vision is passive as she cannot hold the urban scene in coherent focus so that the bright and mobile forms in the city become a blur. This gives the

impression of the movement and energy of city within her eye, rather than focusing on the reality of distinct actions and occurrences.

Slumdog Millionaire by Danny Boyle captures the changes, fleeting images and impressions as well as the movement and energy that generate different and continually changing stimuli among the characters. Boyle has used fast scenes and fleeting images in between a television reality show capturing the nature of city. At the same time, he has also presented how these images and impressions are responsible to shape the psyche of the characters and how their behavior depend on them. The slumdog protagonist, Jamal, after a series of different reactions to the situations, goes to the reality TV show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” as response to the barriers that are between him and Latika and tastes a success at the end.

Number of writers have also depicted city as a center of alienation in their works. They changed the ordinary representation of the city with depiction of its problems. This trend began in the nineteenth century and continued in the twentieth century. The sense of alienation was the writers’ emotional reaction and psychological response to the situations they encountered in the cities.

Baudelaire has also recorded his sense of alienation that was affected by the transformation of Paris by Haussmann in the middle of the twentieth century. He was raised in Paris and he saw the streets he used to play regularly changing, there was a sense of loss, alienation and discontinuity in Baudelaire in the process of change. (Weinstain, 145-51)

For instance, Baudelaire wanders through the streets of Paris in *Le Cygne*. He sees the debris of the modern city that informs about the prehistory of Paris and the past of the poet. He recreates city through his imagination and memory to bring permanence to a changes that transform the city as strange and alienating space. He

was also fascinated by the urban window, which triggered the imagination in him. In his great prose poem *Les Yeux des Pauvres*, the window through to the interior of a café invites a fantasy of comfort and luxury, far from the reality of the city. (Caws, 187-89) Baudelaire, therefore, wandered the streets not merely to observe the forms and energy of the city, but to allow those visual forms to take him on a journey of the mind and imagination, creating a city of his mind rather than a physical place.

The alienation of the characters is well depicted in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. The alienation of the Jamal Malik becomes evident when he is pushed out of the room when they return back to Mumbai after their struggle in train and around TajMahal in the search of Latika. When Salim shoots Maman, the captivator of Latika, they stay at empty hotel room. Jamal is threatened by his brother Salim at gunpoint and forces him to live alone slamming the door of the room.



Figure 2: Alienating city, Jamal knocking at the door after being thrown out of the room

The scene presented in this picture is the scene just after Jamal is thrown out of the room in night time by his own brother Salim and he is hopelessly knocking the

door from outside. He is destined to live his life alone and even his only relative, Salim, is too harsh and merciless with him. He takes Latika with him, throwing Jamal out of the door at gunpoint and slamming the door. The poor brothers who had struggled together are unable to continue the familial relationship because of their difference in approaches. Salim is already molded into a gangster mindset and he can commit any crime for power, money and physical pleasure. His personality is the outcome of the cruel city that always apathetic to weak and poor people. In the process of growing up, he turns to be a person exactly similar to the people in the city, apathetic to the feelings and running only after his personal interests.

Images as presented in the films, are discussed in various ways. In this research, as the problems of cities and their impacts upon individual behavior are discussed in terms of the images presented in the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, the image Salim throwing his brother Jamal out of the room can be seen as both from the Simmel's term 'money economy' that affects the personal behavior of the characters as well from the perspective of the neoliberal ideology that governs the market.

Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen have discussed the nature of images and the ways in which they can be studied in their book *Reading Images*. They talk about the nature of image:

Images, like language, will display regularities, which can be made the subject of relatively formal description. We call this a 'grammar' to draw attention to culturally produced regularity. More specifically, we have borrowed 'semiotic orientations', features which we taken to be general to all human meaning-making, irrespective of mode. For instance, we think that the distinction between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' is a general cultural/semiotic issue which can be realized linguistically as well as visually . . . (20)

They observe that images also display irregularities like language and they can be analyzed with formal descriptions. That formal description of images can be termed as the grammar of the images that is culturally mediated and presented as regular despite the irregularities in the images. People have taken the ways of meaning generation irrespective of the ways the images are produced. They can both be understood linguistically and visually. It is the semantic convention that determines the meaning of the images.

In *Slumdog Millionaire*, the story moves very fast. It is the story recalled in fragments in between the TV reality show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” So, the images are presented with very rapid movement. The presentation of images correlates with the short time span of the movie and proceeding of the plot. The fast moving images also correlate with the fast moving images of the city in Simmelian terminology that in turn affect the psychology of the characters and affect their behaviors and actions.

To sum up, the story of the film and the swift images correlate with each other. The swiftness of the images in the city generates stimuli in the characters for the prompt reactions to the situation due to which there is always a sense of urgency in their actions and decision making. The struggle of Jamal and Salim is hell bent to create the better future. Salim takes up the route of underworld with this urgency while Jamal uses the legal route to test his luck in the reality TV show. His action is determined not by the impulse of being rich overnight rather letting Latika see him on the television screen. He becomes a millionaire as well as successful lover to reunite with Latika.

While talking about cinematography, the film maker has used fast moving images as well as the employment of quickly changing scenes. The plot has sense of

urgency and quickness. There is no use of long shots. The sense of urgency is generated by the time frame of the TV program “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” and thus, the investigation of the police upon Jamal, the opening scene of the movie, is short and full of flashbacks that present Jamal’s city experience from as a little boy living in slum through which he has gathered the answers for the questions asked for him to answer in the show.



Figure3: Inspector directing sergeant Srivastava to make Jamal speak the truth

This image is shot as the close up shot to depict the seriousness in the facial expression in police officials’ face. Jamal is seen dangling in background; his hands are tied by a rope and the rope is tied to the ceiling presenting the harshness of the police investigation. Since there is very little time for the next show, this punishment does not last long, Jamal is untied and kept at chair and inquired. He recounts the various experiences through which he has got the clues about the answers to the questions that are asked to him in the TV show. The images and events change rapidly, marking the speed of the images in the city.

The lifestyle of the slum-dwellers is depicted in-between the flashbacks of Jamal. The images in such cases are not close up images. There is distance between

the camera and the surroundings of the slum. The economic activities of the quite adult slum-dwellers depends upon combing through the garbage, collecting the plastics to make some money and the children are given the duties of begging. The image included shows the act of plastic collecting adult slum-dwellers that is shot from a distance.



Figure4: Adult slum-dwellers collecting the plastic to make money

In contrast to the fast moving shots of the city, this shot of slum-dwellers is slow. The life of slum-dwellers is slower than the busy people of the city is depicted in the movie with this shot. Along with the plastic gathering, the children are given foods, given a vehicle ride, manipulated and used according to the purpose of the mafia. Maman manipulating the children being their intimate and well-wisher is depicted in the shot in which Maman visits the dumping site and gives Jamal and Salim coke to drink.



Figure5: Mamangiving Jamal and Salim coke to drink

This shot is close-up, the facial expression of cunning gangster Maman is depicted well. He provides Jamal and Salim with cold drink on the scorching hot day while they are sitting inside a ragged tent made of old sacks. The city people do not spend money just for charity without any advantage over them. Their actions depend on the monetary economy of the city. Soon, it becomes clear that Maman has manipulated large number of slum children and wants them to be professional beggars and thus, getting the profit from their begging.



This shot shows the dark side of the slum where the gangster is coercing the children to sing a song and forcefully blinding them so as to make the children more pitiable beggars so that they are pitied and given more alms by the city dwellers. The manipulation of the children and evil conduct being guided with the profit motive is depicted with medium shot.

Further the film maker has captured fast and rapid images in various instances so as to depict the speed of the city. The image of moving train and struggle of Jamal and Salim while catching the train during their escape from gangster are shot with great speed in the film so as to generate the fleeting, quickness of images of the city giving the audience experience of the speed of the city.



Figure 7: Jamal and Salim struggling in moving train

Looking at the shots and images used in the film, we can conclude that the speed of the fleeting images of city and the money economy of the city has affected the behavior of the characters.

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