

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE FILM NOTES

Director: Danny Boyle

- Time
- Sound
- Setting
- Acting
- Lighting
- Editing
- Camera Technique
- Cause & Effect
- Point of View

Opening – Flashbacks / Golden Filter with High key Lighting / Sound – Metronome (device that produces regular metrical ticks)

This narrative is a constant structure of flashbacks and flash forwards to events in Jamal's life and the events that brought him to know all the answers. "It was written".

Lighting enforces the setting – The Slums.

Cut backs to reveal to the audience Jamal's memory recounts of his past.

Editing & Colour grading – Bollywood style conventions added to reveal the innocence of the Indian Culture.

Low-key lighting is often employed to enhance the darkness of the brothers experiences growing up. An example of this is when they first meet Lakita in the train carriage.

Golden filters are often used to show the audience the poorness the community and the desperation.

The lights are also reflected on the faces and skin to demonstrate the humidity and dirty complexions.

Dramatic scenes are accompanied with volume increasing, amplified music. Quite often the audience hear drum beats that represent their heart beat increasing in pace and intensity.

Time is conveyed to the audience through the character change as the boys become young men. Jamal and Lakita are ultimately played by 3 actors.

When the boys lives turn positive, the audience can hear the shift in the non-diegetic music. The sound is upbeat and encouraging for the audience.

Diegetic sounds on chaos is constantly heard to create a stressed emotion for the audience. Trains, kids playing and screaming, cars, chickens, crying and street madness.

Scene by Scene Analysis:

Scene 1: Interrogation and Millionaire Show

The film opens with cuttings of Jamal in an interrogation room and Jamal on the Who Wants to be a Millionaire? television show. Danny Boyle is starting his theme in these first few minutes of the film and setting the stage for the rest of the movie. He uses smash cuts to show the two different areas that Jamal is in and these represent the real life (interrogation), and the escapist life (Millionaire show). Boyle uses strong contrasts to accentuate the differences. In the interrogation room, there is a strong orange and red palate along with many close-up shots. This room is real life, therefore it is painful and hard. This pain is shown through the use of close-ups. The escapist world, however, has a nice blue palate and is filled with medium and wide shots. This color change makes the difference between the two very noticeable and the medium and wide shots are showing us how removed from real emotion escapism truly is. We now know that there are these two different worlds in the film, and that they will remain throughout. We will slowly shift from the real world, to the escapist one

Scene 2: Hanging Torture

The police inspector walks in on Jamal hanging with his hands tied to a rope and asks the Sergeant who was interrogating him if he got anything out of him. He says no, and the inspector decided to try a little harder and torture him some more. Throughout this scene, the cinematography is very jumbled with tilted angles. Since we are in the true life world, this could be showing how jumbled and crazy life truly is, unlike the stability of escapism.

Scene 3: Police Chase

We now see Jamal as a child. He is ditching school to play Cricket with his brother, Salim, and friends on government property and the police start to chase them. The very catchy "O...Saya" plays and there is an extremely exciting chase throughout the slums of Bombay. At this point, we are in the world of reality, not escapism. Boyle keeps the cinematography jumbled and tilted throughout this scene, as well, and the chase introduces you to the vastness of the slums. They are very confusing, and it is important to note that Boyle breaks the 180 degree rule many times in order to create this sense of confusion, because that

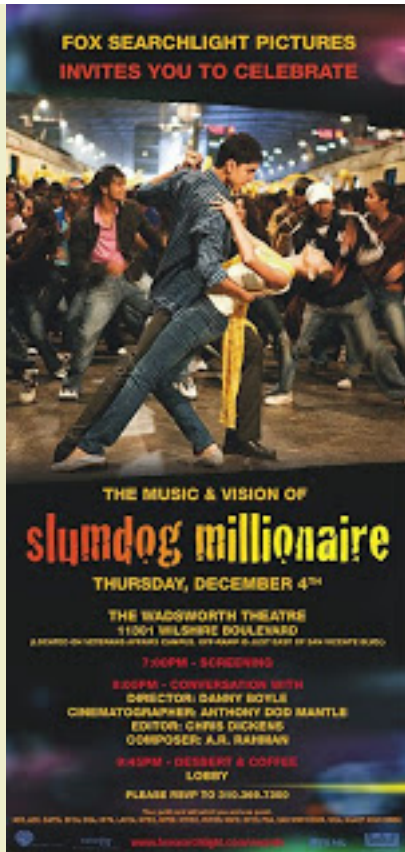
is what the slums of India are. Aerial establishing shots show you just how gigantic these slums are, and Boyle does a great job at showing you this real life situation that Jamal is in. The song playing throughout this scene, "O...Saya", also contributes to the theme. The lyrics say "One day I wanna be a star. So I get to hang in a bar. I go to Vegas and the (unknown lyric). Just to forget my scars." Danny Boyle now shows us the reason for escapism and why it is necessary, to forget scars.

Scene 4: Amitabh Bachan

Jamal is back to being older and we see the first question of the Millionaire show. It is, Who was the star of the 1973 hit film Zanjeer? We are now in a flashback and back to the real world. Danny Boyle continues his color motifs in this scene because he is in the red and orange palette. Salim locks Jamal in his outhouse when Amitabh Bachan's helicopter is about to land because Jamal lost him a costumer a few minutes before. This is important because it characterizes Salim and his thirst for money. Jamal has a picture of Bachan and jumps through the outhouse and into the remains just so he can run and get Bachan's autograph. Boyle is showing us the importance that society places on escapism and how much it means to people. They will do anything for it, even jump into a huge pile of feces. Later that night, Salim sells the autograph. This shows Salim's desperation for money. He is willing to sell out his own family for it. Salim will have a battle throughout the entire film with this desire.

Scene 5: The Second Question

The second question of the Millionaire show is about the national emblem of India. When Jamal uses a lifeline,



the police chief says that his five year old daughter could have answered that question. Then Jamal challenges the chief and shows his true street smarts. This is beginning to show the escapist part of the story. How can a person with only street smarts make it that far on the millionaire show? In real life, he probably wouldn't get very far. However, in escapism, he certainly would.

Scene 6: The Death of a Mother

The third question is about God Rama. What is he holding in his right hand? We then flashback to Jamal and Salim's slum where there is a religious attack. Their mother dies and while they are running from anyone trying to kill them, they see a little girl dressed as God Rama. This gives Jamal the answer to the question, but we see that the little girl is painted blue. Why is this girl here? The blue motif symbolizes escapism, so it does not matter why she is there. It is helping Jamal in the escapist world. We then see the corruption of the police and the real world, when they sit back watching the horrors unfold. This is the real world, and it is hard. We also meet Latika, who joins Jamal and Salim on their run out of the slum.

Scene 7: The Rain and the Shed

We now see Salim and Jamal trying to sleep in an old shed. It is raining out and Latika is out of the shed. Jamal and Salim argue over whether to let her in, further developing a conflict between the two boys. Jamal invites her in and they begin their adventure together. The rain behind both of them as they introduce themselves has the blue palate, which is foreshadowing the escapist nature their relationship will soon have.

Scene 8: Darshan Do Ghanshyam

The fourth question asks which poet wrote the song Darshan Do Ghanshyam. The trio is then 'rescued' by a man they call a saint, and they are still in the real world. The mans name is Maman and they do not know what he will do to them, though. He gives them food, drinks and a bed and there are many other children at the home with them. After Salim gets mad at Latika for making fun of his singing (showing a budding rivalry between them also) the man makes Salim his new assistant. He is the boss over the children, who are forced to beg for money. This fulfills Salim's desire to be the alpha-male and a rivalry between Salim and Jamal/Latika is developed through a series of events. Salim witnesses the blinding of a child in a sort of final test of singing ability (singing Darshan Do Ghanshyam) and then the man tells him to go get Jamal. Even though it is dark during this scene, Boyle keeps constant his color motifs. Salim shows a sign of a soul when he is hesitant to get Jamal and the man says that it is decision time. Does he want to be a beggar, or a man like him? During this, we see Jamal and Latika's love grow through conversations of their aspiration. Latika follows Jamal and Salim to the test and watches from afar. Salim decides to stick with his brother and run from Maman and blind his friend. The trio run from Maman and Salim and Jamal manage to hop on a train. And just when you think Salim has a soul, he decides to let go of Latika's hand as she almost gets on the train. Salim wants to beat her in Jamal's approval. We are introduced to "Latika's theme", a leitmotif. Again, this is hard but the real world.

Scene 9: Living on the Train

The boys live on trains, with a montage set to MIA's "Paperplanes." The boys struggle for money, and the characterization comes through. There are many shots of Salim counting money (notice the lyrics of Paperplanes "All I wanna do is take your money") and of Jamal just dreaming, waiting for Latika. We now see that Salim represents money and Jamal represents love. This is the begginings of our sub-theme.

Scene 10: The Taj Mahal

The boys end up at the Taj Mahal a few years older. And this is where Boyle shows that we are switching from a realist story to an escapist one by providing us with a huge clue. We switch from the Hindi language to the English one, the language we associate with our own escapism. The boys then make money from being fake tour guides (Jamal's job) and stealing shoes (Salim's job), another difference between the boys. Jamal has people while Salim has materials. Soon, Jamal scams a \$100 bill out of an American couple and witnesses an Opera that he associates with Latika. This escapist opera is like the slowly-turning escapist Latika.

Scene 11: Benjamin Franklin

The next question is who is on the American \$100 bill. While questioning, the police chief states "Funny, you don't seem interested in money" furthering Jamal from the concept of money and developing the sub-theme. We then return to the real world, where Jamal has forced Salim back to Mumbai to search for Latika, which he does during her leitmotif. Jamal soon runs into the boy who was blinded by Maman, and this is in a very realistic world. The colors are very red and orange. Jamal gives him the \$100 bill and the boy identifies him as Benjamin Franklin. Jamal asks where Latika is and he tells her she is a prostitute on Pilar Street.

Scene 12: Pilar Street

Salim and Jamal go to Pilar street to find Latika. They do (Salim refers to her as sexy when they first see her, showing that Salim now has an attraction as well) however she is in the middle of a dance for a customer and they interrupt. Note that Latika is wearing a blue dress and the room they are in is blue, further mystifying her and making her seem like a concept, not a person. The brothel is a hard place to be in, it's very cluttered and sad. Latika recognizes them immediately and they are about to leave when Maman shows up. This seems sort of unlikely and cliché, and it is. We are slowly morphing into the escapist world and this is a step. S



Salim shoots

Maman and the trio runs to an abandoned hotel.

Scene 13: The Hotel and the Gangsters

The next question on the show is who invented the revolver? But, we flash back to the trio hiding in the hotel. Salim is enjoying alcohol while Jamal is finding a towel for Latika, who is taking a shower. Salim leaves when he notices Latika's preference for Jamal. This is showing even more competitiveness between the boys. Salim finds Maman's enemy and tells him that he killed Maman, hoping for protection. He walks through the very realistic streets of Mumbai, which are lit in orange. Boyle is always showing either a realistic or escapist scenario. Meanwhile, Jamal and Latika are enjoying each others company in the hotel, furthering their cliched love. When Salim returns, he forces Jamal out of the room with a revolver and says "I'm number one now!" And Latika also suggests Jamal leave. Since Salim represents money and power, this is showing Latika's desire for money, not love.

Scene 14: Interrogation and Tea

Jamal explodes over the Sergeant calling Latika the bitch of the slum and the chief says that "money and women are the two reasons for making mistakes" showing the immense power of both the topics. We now see older Jamal working at a cellular phone company for England, serving tea to everybody. We have now shifted even further into the escapist world. Each time a question goes by, it gets even more coincidental that Jamal knows it. The call room in which Jamal finally reaches Salim is shot in mostly blue, showing how unrealistic it really is. He and Salim arrange a meeting.

Scene 15: Reuniting

Jamal answers another question correct (about England) and there is a meeting between Salim and Jamal. Salim claims that he deserted Jamal to protect him, when Jamal knows that he did it for money and power over the girl. Salim has had success in the gangster world and has lots of money. Note, he is dressed in blue showing that it is unlikely that this would happen. The story becomes more cliched when Jamal follows Salim to reunite with Latika, who is married to the head gangster.

Scene 16: Seeing Latika

Jamal manages to get inside of Latika's home, where they embrace. Latika obviously returns Jamal's feelings, but is hesitant. She asks now what after they just see her. Who Wants to be a Millionaire? is on her television and Jamal wonders why everyone likes the program. Boyle now provides us with the biggest clue to his theme. Latika answers "It's a chance to escape, isn't it? Walk into another life." Now Boyle has directly associated the Millionaire show with escapism. Latika's husband



returns, and we see how vile he is to her. It shows that money is not all that it promises. Jamal tells Latika to meet him at the train station, but she wants him to forget her because she doesn't think it is worth it. Jamal says "I love you" and Latika answers "So what."

Scene 17: The Station and 50/50

Jamal waits at the train station and sees Latika there. Here leitmotif and Jamal dressed in blue clues us in to the fact that this is escapism in the real world. Salim and his men run after and capture Latika and they barely get away, cutting her face where Jamal can watch. This is very escapist and cliché, Jamal almost gets her but they barely get away. Now Jamal has to work even harder to get her. We are almost in a complete escapist world now. The host of Who Wants to be a Millionaire tells Jamal an answer to the question while they are both in the bathroom. Jamal, however, chooses the other option and gets the question correct. The host gave him the wrong answer because Jamal was now overshadowing him. The host has now taken on the same role as Salim, money-hungry and desiring to be the alpha-male. But, whenever the show is on the air, he is very funny and happy for Jamal. This shows the lies that escapism presents even further. The host then has him arrested right before the final question to assert his status as the star of the show.

Scene 18: The Final Question

Jamal is now back on the show and the whole of India is watching, including Latika and Salim. Salim redeems himself by helping Latika escape the grasp of her husband, but it is not enough to escape his past. He fills a bathtub full of rupees and gets shot in it. This shows how even though Salim (money) tried to redeem himself, his past and what he represented failed. The ending of the movie is very cliché, showing that we have switched to an escapist world. The final question is the perfect one and Jamal calls Latika for help. He has no clue and guesses and he answers correctly. Even though the plot is cliché, it is captured beautifully and Boyle uses many editing techniques to keep you on the edge of your seat. It is an exciting, fun ending. Just what escapism aims to be. Fun and exciting, not life. After the climax of Jamal winning the millions, we see him at the train station where he runs into Latika. It's a beautiful finale, where they kiss and the audience cries. Even more escapism

Scene 19: The Dance

Many people hate the dance scene at the end of the film. But I disagree. It is the final statement of Boyle to say that this is escapism. The film is set in India, which has Bollywood. Bollywood produces the most escapist stories in the entire world and India loves it. There are many dance scenes, and this one is just saying that the end of this film is fun escapism. Not life. We see Love conquer Money and the odds. But, this is not the real life portrayed in the beginning. It is escapism