Chapter V
Films as Cultural Systems: Interpretive Structural Modelling of
*Slumdog Millionaire*
Film studies is an academic discipline that deals with various theoretical, historical and critical approaches to films. It is sometimes subsumed within media studies and is often compared to television studies. Film studies is concerned more with exploring the narrative, artistic, cultural, economic and political implications of the cinema. In searching for these social ideological values film studies takes a series of critical approaches for the analysis of production theoretical framework, context and creation. As a result of the durability of film as a popular medium it becomes crucial today to consider the evolution of film as a media form in particular.

Today literary theory is moving towards cultural theory which considers every form of cultural practice as text. Researchers are developing and employing theories and methods from disciplines including cultural studies, rhetoric, philosophy, literary theory, psychology, political science, sociology, art history and criticism film theory, information theory etc.

Cultural studies are an academic field grounded in critical theory and literary criticism. It is highly interdisciplinary in nature which provides a reflective network of intellectuals attempting to situate the forces constructing our daily lives. However, it should not be confused with cultural anthropology and ethnic studies in both objective and methodology. Cultural theorists consider how a particular medium or message relates to ideology, social class, nationality, ethnicity and gender rather than investigating a particular culture or area of the world. The approach of cultural theorists is holistic which combines feminist theory, social theory, political
theory, history, philosophy, literary media theory, film/video studies, communication studies, political economy, translation studies, museum studies and art history/criticism to study cultural phenomenon in various societies. Cultural studies have emerged as the direct outcome of globalization.

Films are cultural artifacts created by specific cultures which reflect those cultures and in turn affect them. Film is considered to be an important art-form a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating-the citizens. The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Some films have become popular worldwide attractions by using dubbing or sub-titles that translate the dialogue.

The origin of the name 'film' comes from the fact that photographic film (also called film stock) had historically been the primary medium for recording and displaying motion pictures. Many other terms exist for an individual motion picture, including picture, picture-show, photo-play, and flick. A common name for film in the United States is movie, while the Europeans prefer the cinema. Additional terms for the field in general include the big screen, the silver screen, the cinema and the movies.

Cinema has obtained an artistic and cultural equivalence to literature and other forms. It is constituted through a unique (filmic language) it is not a mere art form to appease popular pleasures: its status as a high art equivalent with its own unique language allows the director to work with material to express himself personally, creatively and artistically.

Today theorists theorize film as aesthetic object in general. They are concerned with the production of art, representation of the real and intersubjective relations.
Film is a potential art-form as significant and profound as painting or song. Art exists to stimulate its audience to provoke thought and stir them to consider what a person believes and why he believes it. The essence of art resides in its being a participatory ritual. Very much like a piece of art a film also operates on a two-fold principle: to delight and to teach. Film is also a literary discourse. In the vein of Wordsworth, Shelley, Shakespeare, Dickens and others whose works are a reflection of their times, films also perform the same function, leaving messages to the generations and as other art forms compel the viewers to contemplate about the present and also transport the viewers to the future. They represent what we were, what we are and imaginatively recreate what we could be. Thus, films as literary discourses or rather as forms of cultural practice provide us ample scope for interpretation and reinterpretation of life.

The Cinema of India consists of films produced across India, including the cinematic culture of Mumbai along with the cinematic traditions of provinces such as Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Cinema as a medium gained popularity in the country. Indian films came to be followed throughout Southeast Asia and the Middle East. As many as 1,000 films in various languages of India are produced annually. Expatriates in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States continue to give rise to international audiences for Hindi-language films.

In the 21st century, Indian cinema, along with the American and Chinese film industries, became a global enterprise. Enhanced technology paved the way for upgradation from established cinematic norms of delivering product, radically altering the manner in which content reached the target audience. Indian cinema found markets in over 90 countries where
films from India are screened. The country also participated in international film festivals. Indian filmmakers such as Shekhar Kapur, Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta etc. found success overseas. The Indian government extended film delegations to foreign countries such as the United States of America and Japan while the country's Film Producers Guild sent similar missions through Europe.

India is the world's largest producer of films, producing close to a thousand films annually. About 600 of the total films produced are in Telugu and Hindi, approximately 300 each, while the remaining are in other languages. However, Hindi films account for about half of the total revenue generated by cinema in India. The provision of 100% foreign direct investment has made the Indian film market attractive for foreign enterprises such as 20th Century Fox, Sony Pictures, and Warner Bros. Prominent Indian enterprises such as Zee, UTV and Adlabs also participated in producing and distributing films. Tax incentives to multiplexes have aided the multiplex boom in India. By 2003 as many as 30 film production companies had been listed in the National Stock Exchange of India, making the commercial presence of the medium felt.

The Indian diaspora constitutes millions of Indians overseas for which films are made available through mediums such as DVDs and by screening of films in their country of residence wherever commercially feasible. These earnings, accounting to 12% of the revenue generated by a mainstream film, contribute substantially to the overall revenue of Indian cinema, the net worth of which was found to be 1.3 billion US Dollars in 2000. Facilities for film production in the country include Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad, the home of Telugu film industry, the largest film studio complex in the world as certified by Guinness Book of World Records. Music in
Indian cinema is another substantial revenue generator, with the music rights alone accounting for 4-5% of the net revenues generated by a film in India. India is also the home land for Hindi and Tamil cinema Industries which are very popular worldwide. 

The Hindi language film industry of Mumbai—also known as Bollywood—is the largest and most popular branch of Indian cinema. Bollywood initially explored issues of caste and culture in films such as Achhut Kanya (1936) and Sujata (1959). International visibility came to the industry with Raj Kapoor's Awara. Bollywood grew during the 1990s with the release of as many as 215 films in 1991. With Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Bollywood registered its commercial presence in the Western world.

Film theory seeks to develop concise and systematic concepts that apply to the study of film as art. It was started by Ricciotto Canudo's The Birth of the Sixth Art. Formalist film theory, led by Rudolf Arnheim, Béla Balázs, and Siegfried Kracauer, emphasized how film differed from reality, and thus could be considered a valid fine art. André Bazin reacted against this theory by arguing that film's artistic essence lay in its ability to mechanically reproduce reality not in its differences from reality, and this gave rise to realist theory.

Film criticism is the analysis and evaluation of films. In general, these works can be divided into two categories: academic criticism by film scholars and journalistic film criticism that appears regularly in newspapers and other media.

Slumdog Millionaire is a 2008 British drama film directed by Danny Boyle, written by Simon Beaufoy, and co-directed in India by Loveleen Tandan. It is an adaptation of the novel Q & A (2005) by Indian author and diplomat Vikas Swarup. Set and filmed in India, the film tells the
story of Jamal Malik, a young man from the Dharavi slums of Mumbai who appears on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* (Kaun Banega Crorepati in the Hindi version) and exceeds people’s expectations, arousing the suspicions of the game show’s host and of law enforcement officials. The movie combines elements of crime and adventure. *Slumdog Millionaire* was proclaimed by many film critics as the ‘feel Good Movie of the Year’. In February 2009, *Slumdog Millionaire* won eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay. The determination of the movie’s main character Jamal to find his childhood love through years of separation makes this film the quintessential love story and a triumph of good over evil.

After its world premiere at Telluride Film Festival and later screenings at the Toronto International Film Festival and the London Film Festival, *Slumdog Millionaire* had a nationwide grand release in the United Kingdom on 9 January 2009 and in the United States on 12 November 2008. It premiered in Mumbai on 22 January 2009.

The film also won seven of the eleven BAFTA Awards for which it was nominated, including Best Film; all four of the Golden Globe Awards for which it was nominated, including Best Drama Film; and five of the six Critics' Choice Awards for which it was nominated.
Fig. 1 Cognitive Map of The Fictional Film System “Slumdog Millionaire”
Fig. 2 Characters/elements in the Fictional Film System

Jamal Malik is the central character of the film. He is portrayed as a young child, an early teenager, and as an 18 year old. In the beginning of *Slumdog Millionaire*, Jamal is playing cricket with Salim and other children from the Mumbai slums, they are then pursued through the slums by guards and are rescued by their mother, who promises she will punish the boys. She takes them to school where they learn about The Three Musketeers and hear only about Athos and Porthos. Later their mother is brutally murdered in an anti-Muslim rampage on their Mumbai slum, a reference to the anti-Muslim attacks of 1993. The boys flee for their lives and see a depiction of the Hindu God, Rama before they meet Latika. Salim is against having her travel with them but Jamal insists that she could "be the Third Musketeer". He invites her to
stay with them and they eventually meet Maman, a gangster that exploits children to sing for begging money. Jamal is outside, describing the upper-class life that he, Latika, and Salim will one day have, when Maman sends Salim to get him so he can be blinded and make more money as a singer. Salim tips him off and the two escape Maman, while Latika is left behind, intentionally by Salim. Jamal and Salim spend the next few years on trains, selling goods, pickpocketing and sleeping in the luggage area, when one day they fall off of the train while trying to steal food and re-emerge as adolescents on the ground by the tracks.

Jamal and Salim end up as fake tour guides at the Taj Mahal befriending the other slum children of Mumbai and selling stolen shoes from the Taj Mahal. Eventually 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 from Maman's collection of children tells Jamal that Latika is working as a training prostitute on Pila Street, he also tells Jamal who is on the United States one hundred-dollar bill when Jamal presents him with one. Jamal gets Salim to accompany him to Pila Street despite the boy's warnings and they are quickly reunited with Latika, who is about to leave with them when they are confronted again by Maman, who strongly indicates they are all about to face retribution for their "crimes" against him years earlier. Salim draws a Colt Python revolver and robs Maman before killing him. The three flee for their lives to a closed hotel. They occupy an empty room, where Salim forces Jamal out, using the revolver once again. Latika coaxes Jamal to go.

Jamal is working alone in a call center when a co-worker asks him to cover for him so that the co-worker can try to enter the India version of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*. Jamal takes the
opportunity to use the phone and call Salim and they are reunited where Jamal briefly contemplates killing Salim and himself but settles for punching Salim in the face. Salim begs for forgiveness and tells Jamal that Latika is "long gone". Jamal moves in with Salim and becomes curious about Salim's life as a criminal. Eventually he follows Salim to the home of his boss, Javed, and finds that Latika is married to him. Jamal bluffs his way in, first pretending to be a cook, then a dishwasher. He is let in and 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 kicks Jamal out, angry with Jamal's poor cooking abilities. Jamal is waiting for Latika one afternoon, when Salim, Javed, and a few other of Javed's lieutenants capture Latika and drive off with her, not before knifing her cheek. 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 tries to stay on as long as he can, answering the questions based on his past experiences. Because he is a "Slumdog" the host of the show believes he is cheating and his belief is strengthened when he tries to feed Jamal a wrong answer and Jamal still gets it right. He then has Jamal arrested before he gets to answer the 20,000,000 Rs. question, and Jamal is tortured and interrogated to explain how he knew the answers. The Police find 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?) which Jamal never knew. He calls Salim, who has left his phone to Latika. She answers but cannot help Jamal because she doesn't know either. Eventually Jamal guesses, A: Aramis, and is right, but still 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, for Salim killed Javed and was in turn killed by Javed’s minions. One of the main characters is Salim. He is a slumdog who originally comes from the slum in India. He is the brother of Jamal who is a contestant on a game show called: “Who wants to be a millionaire”. In the first round of the game show, Jamal wins 10 million rupees, and only lacks one question from winning 20 million rupees. Since he is a slumdog, and could not possibly know all these answers, they accuse him of cheating. The whole movie shows why he actually know all of the answers, not because he is particularly smart, but because of happenings in his life.

Putting these diverse episodes into a cohesive story was no easy task for the director Danny Boyle. Visually also _Slumdog Millionaire_ is captivating — from the squalor of the shanty towns to the burgeoning industrial machine and mammoth skyscrapers rising from the same locations some ten years later — everything is eye opening. 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 these children.

At the game show “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”, Jamal was asked the following questions:

1. For ₹1,000 : Who was the star in the 1973 hit film Zanjeer?

   Answer: Amitabh Bacchan

2. For ₹4,000 : A picture of three lions is seen in the national emblem of India. What is written underneath it?
Answer: The truth alone triumphs (Jamal uses his "Ask the Audience" lifeline on this question.)

3. For ₹16,000: In depictions of God Rama, he is famously holding what in his right hand?

   Answer: A bow and arrow

4. For ₹250,000: The song "Darsham Do Ghanshyam" was written by which famous Indian poet?

   Answer: Surdas

5. For ₹1,000,000: On an American One Hundred Dollar Bill, there is a portrait of which American statesman?

   Answer: Benjamin Franklin

6. For ₹2,500,000: Who invented the revolver?

   Answer: Samuel Colt

7. For ₹5,000,000: Cambridge Circus is in which UK city?

   Answer: London

8. For ₹10,000,000: Which cricketer has scored the most first class centuries in history?

   Answer: Jack Hobbs

The host of the show, Prem, tells Jamal ahead of time that the answer to this question is B: Ricky Ponting. Jamal uses his “50:50” lifeline and is left with
choices B: Ricky Ponting and D: Jack Hobbs. Jamal realizes that Prem has tried to sabotage him and answers correctly.

9. For ₹20,000,000: In Alexander Dumas' book "The Three Musketeers", two of the musketeers are called Athos and Porthos. What is the name of the third musketeer?

Answer: Aramis

Jamal uses his last lifeline, "Phone a Friend" to call Salim, but instead reaches Latika. Latika tells him that she is safe. She does not know the answer. However, Jamal relieved to hear Latika is safe, randomly guesses and astoundingly picks the correct answer: Aramis. The whole of India erupts in joy over his incredible run and his good fortune.
Fig. 3 Two Sides of Salim’s Character

The Good and the Bad in Salim

G - Good
B - Bad

Sells the autograph of Amitabh Bachchan obtained by his brother Jamal

G

After his mother’s death takes care of Jamal

G

At Jamal’s request he agrees to keep the young orphan Latika with them

G

Deliberately does not help Latika in boarding a moving train while escaping from Maman’s gang

B

Leads his life by selling goods, pickpocketing, acting as a tourist guide and stealing shoes of the visitors at Tajmahal

B

Rescues Latika and other children from the clutches of Maman by killing him

G

Joins Javed’s gang. He asks Jamal to leave him and Latika alone in the hotel room.

B

Understanding Latika’s true love for Jamal he helps her escape from Javed by giving her his cell phone and car keys even though he knew the consequence

G

Later Salim asks Jamal to forgive him

G

He gets Latika married to his boss Javed

B
Fig. 4 Triumph of Love in the Consumerist Society: Jamal’s True Love for Latika

Jamal’s True love for Latika

On finding young orphan Latika in a helpless condition he requests Salim to keep her with them.

He sincerely tries to help Latika escape from Maman’s gang.

Even years later he does not forget Latika. With his brother Salim’s help he rescues her from the clutches of Maman.

In the Hotel room when Salim takes out his gun and asks Jamal to leave he initially refuses but at the persuasion of Latika he leaves.

Years later, while working as a tea server at an Indian call centre, Jamal searches the centre’s database for Salim and Latika.

Jamal reunites with Salim, bluffs his way into Javed’s residence and reunites with Latika and professes his love for her.

Knowing that Latika watches the show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” he lands as a contestant in the show with the sole intention of getting noticed by Latika. He makes it to the final question, despite the hostile attitude of the show’s host.

Latika attempts to rendezvous with Jamal but he loses contact with her but continues his search.

Jamal promises to wait for her every day at 5 o’clock at the CST station.
The film’s complex plot structure and subtitles (the actors speak in Hindi for much of the film) require the viewer’s complete attention. The plot takes place mostly in the slums of Mumbai, India. To many Westerners, the Mumbai slums are exotic yet scary place. The setting,
combined with the other aspects of Indian culture exhibited in the film, sustains the interest of the viewer.

*Slumdog Millionaire* realistically portrays the horrors of poverty, particularly in Mumbai’s slums. This is very relevant considering the majority of the world’s population lives below the poverty line. When the brothers Jamal and Salim are orphaned in Hindu-Muslim religious riot, they must defend themselves against the unforgiving slums. This calls attention to the millions of orphaned children left vulnerable with no home or livelihood. Furthermore, *Slumdog Millionaire* is a love story. Though Jamal is frequently separated from his love Latika, he never forgets her. He searches her for years. Almost everyone can relate to being in love and fighting for something important.

The film also throws light on the role of destiny. Jamal and Latika are destined to be together. No matter how long or how far they are separated by unfair circumstances, fate always somehow reunites them. The film revolves around the main character Jamal as he competes on the Indian version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*

*Slumdog Millionaire* is an exotic, authentic portrayal of Indian culture. It constantly cuts from Jamal’s brutal interrogation by the police to the game show setting and then to scenes from different stages in Jamal’s life. However, the plot brilliantly ties itself together in the end, for example, one of the questions Jamal is asked on the game show is “Who invented the first commercially-successful revolver?” The correct answer is Samuel Colt. The scene quickly flashes to Jamal at the police station being asked how a simple “slumdog” like himself could possibly know the answer to such a question without cheating. Next, the camera cuts to a
scene from Jamal’s childhood where his older brother Salim betrays him and takes Latika to the gangster Javed. Salim shoves a Colt revolver in Jamal’s face and says he will shoot him if he does not leave. This is how Jamal knows the answer to the question. Also, the movie’s combination of American and authentic Indian music is very upbeat and inspirational, adding to the film’s optimistic tone. In fact, the song played in the final scene, where Jamal and Latika have finally been reunited permanently is entitled “Jai Ho,” meaning “victory to you” in Hindi. While none of the actors were well-known, they all played their parts effectively, especially the child-actors who played the younger versions of Jamal, Salim and Latika. Many of these children were not actors at all, but Indian children from the slums. This adds much authenticity to the film. The actors Dev Patel (Jamal) and Frieda Pinto (Latika) played the part of star-crossed lovers genuinely.

The narrative of the film is a blending of flashbacks and present-day scenes. As mentioned, the film transitions between the game show setting, the police interrogation, and flashbacks from Jamal’s childhood. Also constant throughout are Jamal’s determination and optimistic attitude. Despite all the awful things that happen to him, like his homelessness, his mother’s murder, and his brother’s cruelty towards him, Jamal never feels sorry for himself. It is this drive and determination that allow him to survive and be reunited with Latika.

The film is remarkable for its diverse cinematography. The camera shots and lighting set the mood for different times in the film. For example, the scene where Jamal and Salim are living on top of a train conveys an upbeat mood. The camera shots transition quickly from one to the next, and upbeat hip-hop music plays in the background as the boys are shown trying to make a
living. This filming fills the viewer with hope and adventure as the boys get into mischief while living on the train. In contrast, after the tragic scene where Jamal’s mother is killed, the lighting is dark, and the mood is melancholy. The camera angle is a close-up of little Jamal’s dirty, terrified face staring in shock at the loss of his mother. Jamal and Salim, now homeless, are spending the night in a dirty boxcar to escape the pouring rain. Also the camera movements in scenes in the slums are deliberately shaky, and the angles exhibit the thousands of people living in squalor. This kind of cinematography reflects the chaos and the filth of living in the slums. This film evokes an emotional response from anyone who has had to overcome overwhelming obstacles to obtain true love. Also, any viewer who was orphaned or abused as a child could empathize with Jamal’s miserable childhood. Jamal’s fierce determination to find Latika and his unbelievable streak of correct answers on the game show make him appealing. Viewers want to root for this poor “slumdog”. His innocence also attracts viewers. Unlike Salim, who by the end of the film is a corrupted thug working for Javed, Jamal has no interest in money or power. The only reason he competes on the millionaire game show is to reconnect with Latika. He is there for love. This kind of idealism, which is rare, makes Jamal an admirable character. While Slumdog Millionaire is not completely grounded in the real world, it is still an inspiring, upbeat film. The (story) writing is fantastic, the cinematography is revolutionary, and the game show is an unconventional plot device that keeps the viewer on the edge of his seat. Not many Western films are able to accurately reflect the richness of the Indian culture, but Slumdog Millionaire is very successful in doing so.

Slumdog tells the story of two brothers headed in different directions. Jamal is pure of heart, kind-hearted, endlessly optimistic and most of all, a romantic. Salim, the older brother, is
aggressive, unsentimental, lustful and easily seduced by money and power. Add into the mix
the beautiful Latika (Freida Pinto), an orphan who becomes Jamal’s love and life-rope, but
also a wedge between the brothers. As Jamal fights his way out of the slums into an honest, but
meager life of odd jobs, Salim drifts deeper into crime, eventually becoming “muscle” for a
ruthless Mumbai gangster.

*Slum Dog Millionaire* is rich in themes, both basic and complex. It’s an exuberant celebration of
perseverance and the triumph of the morally sound. The film also explores the power of love to
lift us out of dire circumstances, and of course, the possibility of destiny. It also raises the
question of moral relativism. As an audience, we see how easy it is to cheer as desperate
orphans steal and deceive in order to survive, knowing that circumstance has left them little
other choice. Is their thieving right?

Maybe it’s the theme of victory over adversity that makes *Slumdog Millionaire* the perfect film
for these times. During stressful times of geopolitical strife and financial insecurity, it is
comforting to feel a protecting, guiding hand from above. Just as in the Great Depression when
Hollywood musicals and screwball comedies dominated the screen; uplifting, joyful films
provide more than escapism: they bring solace and assurance that better times are ahead.

*Slumdog Millionaire* is a successful and popular Bollywood film. Bollywood films are movies
that are produced in Mumbai in India, and this is one of the largest film productions in the whole
world.

In the film we can witness the dexterous use of ‘retrospective technique’, which presents the
present and the past parallely. Jamal is eighteen years old, he plays “who want to be a
millionaire?” but suddenly we are transported to the past when he is around five years old running through the slum. Another instance of the co-existence of the past and present occurs when, while watching the T.V. show, he goes back to the past. This blending stimulates suspense, and curiosity.

The two sides of India as described by Aravind Adiga in his debut novel *The White Tiger*—‘India Shining’ and ‘dark India’ are also to be seen in this cinematic system. When they show Jamal as a young boy, we see a part of the poor India. But when we see him as an 18-year old boy, we see the modern industrialized India.

One of the striking features of the film is the use of camera as a ‘third-person’. Through this technique the director has been able to create the magical dramatic effect especially in the scene where Jamal and Salim are running on the streets.

Film is a composite art very much like any other art form. The modern Indian music mesmerizes the audience. We can see Indian songs mixed with rap/hip hop, like the song *Paper Planes*, the famous song “Jai Ho” meaning to be victorious. The suspense in the film is showed through the game show. Jamal doesn’t join to win a lot of money, but only to find out if Latika is safe and alive. He knows that Latika is a big fan of “Who wants to be a millionaire?” and that is why he chooses this way to find out where she is. The suspense is slowly growing each time his answer is correct. At the last question he chooses to call a friend. And the climax is when Latika watches the show and understands that the one Jamal is calling is his brother. But the thing Jamal does not know, is that Latika has Salim’s phone. The phone is in the car, and she reaches...
to answer it before they hung up. Jamal is shocked on hearing Latika’s voice, but he understands that she is safe, and all the money in the world cannot replace that feeling.

**Interpretive structural Modelling of the Fictional Film System of *Slumdog Millionaire***

The process of Structural Modelling consists of several phases: an object system, a complex and ambiguous system which has to be described such as socio cultural and economic exploitation in the Fictional Film System *Slumdog Millionaire*, a representation system which is a well defined set of relations; and an embedding of perceptions of some relevant features (for instance, socio cultural and economic exploitation) of the object system (for example — *Slumdog Millionaire* into the representation system. “Interpretation of the embedded object or representation system in terms of the object system results in an Interpretive Structural Model”.

“The Interpretive Structural Model process transforms complex mental models of systems into visible, well-defined models useful for many purposes”¹. Five *Model Exchange Isomorphisms* (MEIs) are readily identified from mental model through data; Structural Self Interaction Matrix,

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Reachability Matrix, Canonical Form, Structural model to Interpretive Structural Model (Fig. 6).

The perspective adopted here is literary and the model used is descriptive (rather than normative or prescriptive). Primitives employed in this modeling study consist of one appropriate contextual relationship $R : \text{exploit(s)}$ socio-culturally-economically and the element set $S$: Jamal Malik, Latika, Salim Malik, Maman, Javed (Boss of a criminal gang), Prem Kumar (host of the game show), Police Inspector, 8 Head Constable, Arvind the blind child and the other children in Maman’s gang, Jamal’s mother, Adele (the American Tourist), and the Religious Fanatics and Rioters.

The first model exchange isomorphism is accomplished by identifying the modellers (authors’) mental image of the element set $S$ and their relationship $R$ among the elements themselves of the object system of *Slum Dog Millionaire* under consideration. The data in the form of Structural Self Interaction Matrix (SSIM) maybe developed using the following interrogation format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element i</th>
<th>Relation R</th>
<th>Element j</th>
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Is element $i$ connected by relation $R$ with element $j$?

*Fig 6 Model Exchange Isomorphisms (MEI)*
The response of the participant(s) reflects judgment as to the existence of a relation between any two elements and the associated direction of the relation. If the relation $R$ holds from element $i$ to element $j$ and not in both directions, the modeller or group leader responds with a $V$ as symbolic of the direction from the upper element $i$ to the lower element $j$. If the group perceives that the relation holds from element $j$ to element $i$ but not in both directions, the entry $A$ is made as symbolic of the direction from lower displayed element $j$ up to the upper displayed element $i$. If the relation is perceived by the group as valid in both directions, the group leader responds with an $X$ as symbolic of a valid relationship in both directions between elements $i$ and $j$. If the relation between the elements does not appear valid, the appropriate response is a zero (0). A possible Structural Self Interaction Matrix (SSIM) of the embedded
object system (or representation system) of *Slumdog Millionaire* under consideration is given in Fig. 7. The transformation from the SSIM format to the reachability matrix format is accomplished by transforming information in each entry of the SSIM into 1s and 0s in the Reachability Matrix. If the \((i,j)\) entry of SSIM is a 0, then both the \((i,j)\) and \((j,i)\) entries of the reachability matrix become 0. Likewise, if the \((i,j)\) entry of the SSIM is an X then both \((i,j)\) and \((j,i)\) entries of the reachability matrix become 1. If the \((i,j)\) entry in the SSIM is a V, the \((i,j)\) entry in the reachability matrix becomes a 1 and the \((j,i)\) entry becomes a 0. Likewise, if the \((i,j)\) entry in the SSIM is an A the \((i,j)\) entry in the reachability matrix becomes a 0 and the \((j,i)\) entry becomes a 1.

![Fig. 7 Structural Self Interaction Matrix](image)

The resultant reachability matrix for this representation system is given in Fig. 8. Towards transformation of the reachability matrix into a canonical form, it is first converted into a lower
triangular format simultaneously identifying strong relationships between pairs of elements as cycles.

**Fig. 8 Reachability Matrix**

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1 Jamal Malik
2 Latika
3 Salim Malik
4 Maman
5 Javed (Boss of a criminal gang)
6 Prem Kumar (host of the game show)
7 Police Inspector
8 Head Constable
9 Arvind the blind child and the other children in Maman’s gang
10 Jamal’s mother
11 Adele (the American Tourist)
12 Religious Fanatics and Rioters

The intermediate modified reachability matrix with lower triangularization (LTP) and identification of cycles if any is shown in Fig. 9.

**Fig. 9 Modified Reachability Matrix LTP: Lower Triangularization and Cycle Identification**

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1 Jamal Malik
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Minimum Edge Adjacency Matrix (Canonical Form) MEP is then obtained as shown in Figure 10 by reducing to zero all diagonal entries as well as those which can be inferred through transitivity in Matrix LTP of Figure 9.

![Fig. 10 Minimum Edge Adjacency Matrix (Canonical Form) MEP](image)

Structural Model as Digraph G, as shown in Figure 11, is now determined from the connectivity information contained in the foregoing Minimum Edge Adjacency Matrix (Canonical Form) MEP of Figure 10.
Finally, the Interpretive Structural Model (ISM) of Fig. 12 is obtained by superimposing the subjective contextual material on the Structural Model as Digraph shown in Fig. 11.
The ISM of the Fictional Film System *Slumdog Millionaire* depicts the Socio Cultural Economic Exploitation/ victimization of the characters in the film system. The ISM highlights Jamal Malik as the most exploited/ victimized character in the film system. Though Salim Malik is equally exploited it also clearly shows that he played the dual role of the exploited as well as the exploiter in exploiting Jamal and Latika.

Several authors, A.P. Sage, J.N. Warfield et.al. have reported development of a computerized Interpretive Structural Modelling procedure which would lighten the burden of mathematical formulation and processing of Interpretive Structural Modelling this considerably putting it
within the easy reach of researcher of English Literature. Literary criticism is one area, which should benefit from the use of methods like Interpretive Structural Modelling by transforming abstract, complex and polysemic models of literary works into well defined readily comprehensible structures, viz., interrelationships among important elements of the literary system/text under consideration.

EMERGENT PROPERTIES

*Slumdog Millionaire* – A Multilayered Complex System

As a Human Rights Narrative

The various forms of cultural practices and debates (the responses to these practices) together constitute the cultural framework for the analysis of the film Slumdog Millionaire as cultural text of human Right. It is a film in which ‘Human Rights’ are explicitly or implicitly the key concerns. Narrated by the survivor-victim, it presents a socio- cultural condition of the present day. We can refer to the observation of Derrida, the renowned French philosopher, with reference to human rights:
We must more than ever stand on the side of human rights. We need human rights. We are in need of them and they are in need, for there is always a lack, a shortfall, a falling short, an insufficiency; human rights are never sufficient.\textsuperscript{2}

Ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was ratified by the General assembly of the United Nations (UN) in 1948, one can see a kind of internationalization of this ‘rights regime’ as sometimes it is called. It can also be observed that the rights regime has entered into other fields-philosophy, literature, visual culture etc. The cultural texts of Human Rights incorporate autobiography, Dalit poetry and fiction; films on the plight of the displaced. Cultural texts may not have much evidentiary value in a court of law, but they carry immense value due to their emotional appeal. Stories of suffering, violence, abuse, systemic inequalities enable the construction of human rights archive. Films like \textit{Slumdog Millionnaire}, which is here considered as a cultural text, a narrative of violation, abuse and rights denial, constitutes a space where Human Rights is presented for the common, non-juridical consumption. In the film we can perceive an implicit discursive operation of Human Rights – equal rights, human dignity, protection against torture etc. The film \textit{Slumdog Millionnaire} definitely creates a platform where human rights are recognized, enabled and legislated upon. The overwhelming success of the film and the response of the audience suggests the emergence of a larger culture where torture, caste system, humiliation are unacceptable, and administrations and states are called upon to terminate such practices. As a cultural text of human narrative, \textit{Slumdog Millionnaire} implicitly touches upon the notion of cultural trauma. The characters Jamal and

Salim are representatives of several other victims, displaced and marginalized in the society whose plight is very much similar. Their experiences are shared by many downtrodden across India. Cultural trauma, as Jeffrey Alexander defines it, “occurs when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves an indelible mark upon their group consciousness.”

Slumdog Millionaire may also be treated as a ‘victim narrative’, making us aware of the fact that this voice is one among many silent sufferers. One of the most arresting features of a victim narrative is it always speaks on behalf of others.

As an Atrocity and Trauma Narrative

Slumdog Millionaire is embedded in the uneven socio-economic conditions of the contemporary India. It reflects not only the economic identity of the human, but also his ethical and subjective positions. Rich and influential control the poor, rich order and the poor obey, rich exude power and the poor fear. The film is an illustration of how social inequalities produce suffering humans such as Jamal, Salim and Latika whose trauma is rooted in the structural social condition. Latika’s victimization puts the film within the taxonomy of ‘atrocity narrative’ which depicts how women are abused and deprived of dignity, happiness and independence. In most of the ‘atrocity narratives’, the child – the victim is central to the theme. This aspect is best illustrated in Slumdog Millionaire. Recent research in trauma studies reflects that there are

‘transgenerational trauma’ and ‘cultural trauma’. Nayar defines that “Trauma Beyond the Individual does not negate the individual experience (which constructs the individual as a victim-subject) pushes the frontiers of subjectivity and self-making by locating one’s trauma within a larger trauma narrative. The abuse victim’s story is simultaneously an individual and a general (in terms of gender, caste, class) one”.

An analysis of Slumdog Millionaire reveals that it reflects both psychological trauma as well as Cultural trauma. Though researchers consider psychological trauma individual and personal and go for the segregation of the two kinds, a study of the traumatic experiences of the main characters in the film Slumdog Millionaire shows how psychological and cultural factors are interconnected. We also find ‘transgenerational trauma’ in the film as the suffering of these poor is not restricted to any specific time frame, any particular event, rather it is endless. The lives of Jamal and Latika show continuous oppression and how it leaves an adverse impact on their psyche.

As Sensational Literature

Slumdog Millionaire contains several features of sensational literature. The sensational deviates from the Gothic in its situating of shocking events not in lonely castles but in domestic settings and everyday life. The aim of a sensational story is to evoke strong response from the readers/spectators. These tales are based on risk, danger and suffering which are an integral

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part of common man’s life especially downtrodden. The victimized Jamal is akin to the besieged victim of sensational literature. Poverty and misery frame the lives of these individuals.

**As a Slum-Subaltern Project**

‘Slum household’ is described “as a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area lacking durable housing, sufficient living area, secure tenure and access to clean water and sanitation. Though segregated slums for the poor is an aftermath of Industrial Revolution, today one-in-three of all city dwellers live in slums. Over 90 per cent of this underclass are in the developing world, with South Asia having the largest share, followed by eastern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.”

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), the Italian Marxist and theoretician is believed to have introduced the term ‘Subaltern’ which means inferior status, quality, or importance. During his imprisonment, Gramsci kept prison notes where he wrote about ‘subaltern social groups. He propounded the idea that these social groups are not united and which cannot unite until they become a ‘state.’

“In the South Asian context the term ‘subaltern’ may be applied to those groups that have been subordinated in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and the like. Gramsci

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considered the subaltern as a historically determined category that exists within particular historical, economic, political, social, and cultural contexts. He tried to know the process, development, and lineage of the subaltern: how their social conditions were developed; how some groups survived at the margins of society, and how others succeeded in their ascent from a subordinate social position to a dominant one.6

According to Subaltern theory, norms are established by those in power and imposed on the "Other" who has had no voice because of race, class, or gender.

The fiction and the film have been acclaimed as well as criticized by critics. Most of the people find it very realistic in portraying slum-life based on Swarup’s novel. It is indeed a ruthless realistic and shocking presentation of our slums whether we like it or not. However there are certain dehumanizing, grotesque scenes which appear unpleasant, for instance the scene in which the young Jamal dives in through the septic hole and wades across the mire fully covered in human excrement.

The slum dwellers may be the poorest of the poor, but they are to be respected as persons in a world. Amitabh Bacchan rightly reacted when he wrote, “if SM projects India as [a] third-world, dirty, underbelly developing nation and causes pain and disgust among nationalists and patriots, let it be known that a murky underbelly exists and thrives even in the most developed nations”7

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The fiction and the film have a universal appeal as the characters are representative of everyman in every age. The prominent episodes in Jamal’s life that draw our attention are: i) his witnessing his mother being killed by communal mobs, ii) his begging career with the slum mafia, iii) his escape with his brother from the slum mafia, iv) his involvement in thefts and duping foreign tourists at Taj Mahal, 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 that climaxes the movie in the traditional Indian style bringing warmth to the frigid audience with the union of lovers.

*Slumdog Millionaire* has captivated the attention of global audience as it depicts the slum reality of the metropolitan cities of the world today. Slum-Subaltern has got its voice heard to some extent, seeking redressive measures. The rags to riches story of Jamal finally climaxing in emotional union with Latika affirms human values of love and compassion in a consumerist society, providing some consolation to the audience, where only one relationship matters that is of buyers and sellers.

The story narrated in episodic flashbacks with three sets of actors of three different age groups from the real slums renders it a powerful presentation in the film. It revolves around love, friendship, betrayal, poverty and hope. In the wake of all this, Kofi Atta Annan’s (the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations - 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2006)
appeal for global attention to solve the slum crisis through determined political will of nations, may be reiterated here:

Slums represent the worst of urban poverty and inequality. Yet the world has the resources, know-how and power to reach the target established in the Millennium Declaration. ... the best practices it identifies, will enable all actors involved to overcome the apathy and lack of political will that have been a barrier to progress, and move ahead with greater determination and knowledge in our common effort to help the world’s slum dwellers to attain lives of dignity, prosperity and peace”.

Slumdog Millionaire remains a powerful fictional and celluloid pointer to the rapidly growing planet of the slums. The objective of such a representation in any form-media or texts in general is to create a deeper consciousness in the audience to oppose such ‘othering of some, and contemplate on how recurrence of such events can be stopped in the future.

As a footnote on the transitions in consciousness levels of the “three musketeers”, viz. Jamal, Salim and Latika, in the cinematic-literary creation “Slumdog Millionaire” the researcher would like to identify the following emergence pattern. Subjected to the maximum degree of exploitation / victimization and therefore suffering, Jamal succeeds in making transition from material / physical consciousness through cognitive / mental consciousness to the level of

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almost spiritual consciousness propelled by the force of true love. Latika being the next most victimized / exploited musketeer with no role as exploiter shows emergence of transition from material consciousness to almost spiritual consciousness as a result of reciprocating the true love of Jamal. The middle musketeer Salim while also considerably exploited / victimized has a dual role of occasional exploiter / victimizer of both the other musketeers and others, and therefore shows emergence in transition between consciousness levels from material / physical level to mental / cognitive level only.