**2.2 Visual Text Excellence Exemplar**

*Analyse how verbal AND visual features of a text you have studied are used to give audiences a strong idea.*

Slumdog Millionaire, directed by Danny Boyle, is a film that follows the film’s protagonist, Jamal, as he endeavours on a winning stint on the popular show Who wants to be a Millionaire? Jamal is a slumdog a boy who was raised on the poverty of the Mumbai slums. The director uses setting, colour, juxtaposition and dialogue to give the viewer a strong idea of the importance of money in an impoverished society.

The setting of the Juhu slums gives the audience an insight with the importance of money through the occupants’ lack of. Unimaginable to Western viewers the residents of the slum live in utter poverty, they bathe and wash their clothes in dirty water, they sift through garbage in attempt to find anything of worth to make a small income. The director’s purpose in revealing the terrible poverty to the audience is that it gives a bastion with which one can compare their situation to another’s. The audience can then appreciate the importance of money in an impoverished society because they can see part of their own life in that of the slumlord Jared Khan’s: the car, the suit and the sunglasses, and also appreciate the total poverty that shadows having nothing. The audience is asked to empathise with people who live a life totally different from their own, and understand how money allows them to shape their own destiny through education, travel and opportunities unimaginable to the slumdog.

Secondly, colour shows the importance of money in a different light. The colours of the Juhu slums are bright and vibrant - the colours of a brimming culture and community. However, the colours in the slumlords house, Jared Khan are washed out pastel colours. This colour difference shows the audience that money is not all that is important for survival in life. Dreams and morals are sold cheaply in the slums, shown by the sale of the treasured autographed picture for a mere few coins, but at what cost? Salim betrays Jamal for selfishness and money, when family love is one of the most supporting and important thing in life. This shows the audience how people are betrayed and hurt due to a vicious search for money. The oliver-twist like colours in the Juhu slums show the audience how money consumes community, culture, and spirituality, and the audience is asked, is that right? The audience may understand exactly how important money is in an impoverished society, morals and human decency thrown away for coins that allow survival. In the slums, it is survival of the fittest.

Juxtaposition of the aforementioned Juhu slums and a high rise apartment building gives the audience a strong idea of the importance of money in an impoverished society because it demonstrates how money facilitates dreams. The in-progress high rise, destined to be finished and have well-off citizens of Mumbai is built alongside the Mumbai slums. When Jamal stands in this high rise, looking out at the slums, he is not only above the slums (symbolically showing through his job he is seen as a “better person”), it shows how money allows plans for the future. The people in the slums have no way to shape their destiny, as they are too strangled in the vicious poverty cycle, they can only plan to survive from day to day. The high rise apartment building, however, shows how those with money can plan for the future, as the building owner is planning to accommodate the modernised India that has not been developed yet. This juxtaposition also shows the possibilities and opportunities available through money – the opportunity to chase your dreams and be who you want to be. Through this technique, the audience is able to compare their lives to the lives of those less fortunate, and to appreciate how Westerners and capitalists are able to take hold of their own destiny, because money facilitates freedom and choice.

Finally, the importance of money in an impoverished society is evident in the restriction it places on the blooming of love between main characters Jamal and Latika. When Jamal asks Latika to run away with him so they can be together, Latika replies “and live on what?” The carefreeness and happiness associated with young love is stripped from the pair because between them, they have no money therefore they would not survive. The restrictions p[laced on something as beautiful as love due to lack of money shows the audience again how money facilitates dreams in an impoverished society. Only when Jamal is successful on Who wants to be a Millionaire can they be together. The audience can then understand how important money is in an impoverished society because Jamal and Latika are free from constraints poverty places on every part of one’s life.

In conclusion, through setting colour, juxtaposition and dialogue, Boyle develops the idea of the importance of money in an impoverished society. He shows the audience the hardship placed upon those trapped in the poverty cycle, and how money facilitates opportunities, but also discusses how money can be corrupt. Boyle asks the audience to appreciate their own Western situation and perhaps, only subtly, asks the reader to donate to aid, to help break the terrible poverty cycle and allow people to follow their dreams.

900 words