

From Q&A to *Slumdog Millionaire* – it's written¹

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Slumdog Millionaire (2008)² is a multi-oscared movie adapted from a novel by Vikas Swarup, an Indian diplomat turned writer. The novel was published in 2005, titled *Q&A*.³ In the “Prologue,” eighteen year-old Ram Mohammad Thomas has just been arrested. A dweller in Mumbai’s Dharavi, “Asia’s biggest slum,” he is accused of cheating by the producers of the show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Having never been to school, and appearing to be no genius, the young man could not have answered the quiz on his own, and so be the winner. With this argument, the people who ran the show bring charges against Ram. However, it is also made clear that they have no money to pay the prize, their dishonest scheme consisting of asking questions no one could ever answer, or buying the winner off with much less money. Ram refused to be part of the deal. The host of the show, Prem Kumar, their accomplice and a crook himself, is the one who turns the boy over to the police who, in connivance with the promoters, torture him to extract a guilty confession. Smita Shah, the young woman lawyer who suddenly shows up to rescue him from prison, asks Ram to recount his life story. She wants to test his innocence by having him explain how he managed to answer the questions of the

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quiz. Thus, his story unfolds through episodic *flashbacks*, structured as chapters, the narrative present referring to the moments, between chapters, when Smita plays back the DVD of the programme to watch Ram answering the quiz, as well as his interacting with Kumar, who keeps jeering the contestant all along. Just before the “Epilogue,” the lawyer reveals herself to be Gudyia, a girl whom Ram had saved from her drunken father’s advances years before, while living in a Mumbai *chawl*. Now, it is her turn to help him by proving his innocence. Ram, a modern Indian *picaro* always on the run and living by his wits, is also portrayed as an all American film hero, who not only rescues women in distress, but also gets the girl in the end. With the twenty million rupees won in the show, he pays for the woman he loves, beautiful Nita, forced to prostitute herself by Shyam, her pimp brother. Nita becomes Ram’s “lawfully wedded wife,” the sinful woman made an honest one by a do-gooder who is happy to join the super rich and use his instant good fortune to help victims of poverty and social discrimination like his former self. The book closes in a swirl of riches shadowing the romantic side of the plot. Three years after its publication, Vikas Swarup’s novel was turned into a blockbuster movie that has been earning successive awards including the 2009 Best Picture Award by the Hollywood Academy. Its success is not the consequence of a mega “business strategy” (Bordwell, 2006: 1-18); it is largely due to Danny Boyle’s direction and Simon Beaufoy’s thoughtful screenplay, two of the winners among a talented cast of actors and filmmakers. A movie about India, fashioned by former colonisers from a book written by an Indian novelist, whose depiction of modern India is far from sympathetic, was a delicate undertaking demanding as much cinematic know-how as diplomatic skills.

Still shocked by the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, Simon Beaufoy wonders, in an article published in the *Guardian*,⁴ if they had “made a rather naïve film.” He does not explain what he means by a “naïve film” but, after reading his article, we come to realize that, while in Mumbai, he had no inkling about the city being a possible target for terrorism, despite the frequent eruptions of violence before and after India’s independence from British rule, in 1947. The frequently praised joyfulness of *Slumdog* may indeed reflect a certain naiveté on the part of the British filmmakers who did not know what they were getting into, among other things, the amount of red tape they had to go through before obtaining permission to shoot the movie in crowded Mumbai streets. For most cynical eyes, the “feelgood” movie may look like a gimmick to attract large audiences, eager to take their minds off the ongoing turmoil in the world. Nonetheless, from Mr. Beaufoy’s comments, one gathers that the film’s joyfulness conveys the filmmakers’ genuine rendition to one of the Mumbai “wonders,” its human temper. Together with its apparent

glamour as the heart of financial India, and the centre of a film industry known as Bollywood, Mumbai shelters its squalid ghettos packed with poverty-stricken people who, in the screenwriter's own words, "celebrate life unconditionally, in all its joys and hardships," terrorism being one among the many ordeals they must endure. Soon after the attacks, a member of the Indian crew emailed Mr. Beaufoy this astonishing message: "A few drops of blood cannot stir the spirit of Mumbai and us Indians."

Another remark by Simon Beaufoy ties in somehow with his earlier observation on naiveté: "But what does a middle-class white Englishman know of a Mumbai slumdweller's life story? Not much." As for Bollywood, he had occasionally watched a movie on television as a child growing up in his native Yorkshire. Mr. Beaufoy's comment might one fear for the fate of History, did it not intertwine so tightly with his own present, recent and remote past. In fact, Britain's historical association with the Indian subcontinent is not a sporadic one, but an ongoing relationship carried on nowadays through Commonwealth commitments, made even stronger by today's population, old and new comers, children and grandchildren of what was once the British Raj. Another aside coming out of his comment has to do with a common belief that to transpose literary texts to the audiovisual is a mere transference from words to images. It also involves some cultural, or rather, cross-cultural understanding, in this case, to appreciate not only "the life story" of the Mumbai slum dwellers, but also the dynamics going on in modern India, the linguistic and religious diversity, the chasm between rich and poor, or between urban and rural populations, the deeply rooted caste system, the inside liberation movements, more visible during pre-election periods, the belief in destiny as a force ruling people's lives. On his arrival in India, Mr. Beaufoy was overwhelmed by an ancient society about which he knew next to nothing, his "euphoric discovery" revealed in his portrayal of India as "desperately romantic, utterly unashamed of its sentimentality, its generosity, its fierce pride and massive heart." Before him, some of his British ancestors must have felt equally overcome as they arrived in the Indian subcontinent.⁵ The British East India Company, also known as John Company, was a modest trade settlement going back to 1600, the Elizabethan times. Three centuries later, it would become a mighty Empire, Calcutta the centre of British India before it moved to Delhi. Having lost the United States of America, in the late eighteenth-century, the British turned to the East, namely to the subcontinent laid open by Vasco da Gama in 1498. The British Raj was the largest since the Roman Empire, which made Britain a global superpower. After a long struggle, India achieved its independence from Britain in 1947. The British Empire no longer ruled the world, but went on ruling modern Britain, as migrants from

India, Pakistan and other parts of the former Empire have moved to the British Isles looking for a better life.

Mr. Beaufoy, who read the galley proofs of Vikar Swarup's novel, liked it but found its structure difficult to transfer to the screen. The novel had many chapters, each being more like a short story, some not linking together, becoming even longer towards the end of the book. According to the screenwriter, the only link among them was the TV show, a flimsy connection to bring the chapters together. Were the novel transferred to the screen as it was written, its cumbersome structure would prevent the film narrative to flow, not holding the audiences all the way through it. Time narrative was also a problem, as Mr. Beaufoy explains: "the story constantly moves backwards and forwards in time." Actually, it covers three different "timeframes," the protagonist's recent past on the game show, his past life story, told in the present. As it frequently happens among people who work for cinema and television, for Simon Beaufoy, "the past must be as real and as urgent as the present," avoiding the common cinematic ways of handling *flashbacks*, like the "10 years before," or the suggestive "sepia tones," both considered to be artificial. Therefore, the shifts from present to past and past to present are not signalled in the movie, the past sequences working as the protagonist's clues as to how he found the answers to the quiz, the narrative flowing easily. The most obvious way of making a distinction between past and present was to have the children play the roles of the leading actors in their younger years, as in the case of Jamal, Salim and Letika.⁶ Rendered as kids with little or no schooling, they speak Hindi, bringing authenticity to the script. For them, it must have been like a dream come true. Their presence at the Oscars ceremony was a big hit in the West as well as back in India, toning down the complaints against Mr Boyle, the director, and disparaging the negative reviews of his movie, its detractors having described it as "poverty porn," embarrassed, perhaps, for having seen brought into the open "the harsh, unromantic underbelly of India," to quote Salman Rushdie, who commented on both the novel and the film.⁷

The thought of having "money as a motivation for a film" did not excite Mr. Beaufoy who admits having felt his heart sink with the "rags to riches story." He was particularly thrown off by the protagonist in the novel who, after winning the big prize, displays all the riches money can buy, from the expensive Mercedes Benz driven by a private chauffeur to the Ferrari kept in the garage, appearing to vie for the ostentatious life-style of his former employers, the very same people who had exploited him. The protagonist's rendition as a *nouveau-riche* can be interpreted as an oblique criticism of the materialism thriving in modern India, a country known, paradoxically, for the spirituality of its leaders, Mahatma Ghandi outstanding for his

passive struggle for India's independence. The subtle criticism might have worked out in the novel but would hardly have been grasped by film mass audiences. In a sort of impasse, Simon Beaufoy had no choice but fly to Mumbai and come to grips with the real India, so to speak. Once there, he visited one of the city's slums and was stirred by the "excess" of its smells, noises, tastes and colours. The synaesthetic "avalanche," as he describes it, worked like an epiphany by striking him with the idea of turning *Q&A* into a love story, implying the reinvention of the protagonist's "whole journey."

The original literary work would undergo major changes, some deemed necessary to adapt⁸ it to a different medium like cinema, as with the general narrative structure and the time frames; others were introduced for reasons other than the structural ones involving the emphasis on the love story, characterization, and any sensitive detail hampering the congenial mode of the movie. If Mr Swarup had any objection regarding the revamping of his novel, he remained diplomatically silent about it, even allowing the title of his novel to be changed from *Q&A* to *Q&A – Slumdog Millionaire*, a picture of the two leading actors appearing on the front cover. Had the literary work been written by an already famous writer, Shakespeare and the like, known by readers the world over, the film adaptation might not be that pacific "in both academic criticism and journalistic reviewing" to use Linda Hutcheon's words, as the Canadian scholar comments on transpositions to the visual medium (2006: 2). Literature has had preponderance over cinema, and the author of the literary work has generally had more prestige than the film director. It is always risky to make a film adaptation of a novel that is familiar to the reader, who not only wants the movie to be faithful to its literary source, but also thinks that the book is better than the movie, which is not always the case. But Vikas Swarup was a new comer to the literary circuit and his novel not that well known despite having received good reviews. Therefore, faithfulness was not an issue, and director Danny Boyle was more than willing to assume the *auteur* status. The difficulties with the adaptation and with the shooting of the movie *in loco* did pay off in the end, as we all know.

Mumbai is the central space in the movie, a deviation from Vikas Swatup's novel where Delhi, the capital, and Agra, in northern India, play equally important roles in the novelistic action. For a low budget movie, the Maximum City set the space limits. The guest appearance by one of India's marvels, the Taj Mahal, rescued from becoming a pile of stones by the colonial British, is shown for its touristic/commercial value rather than for its romantic appeal. In the novel, Ram, then a fake tourist guide, compares his own love for Nita to that of the Indian Emperor for his deceased wife, Nita's "flawless beauty" surpassing the "perfection" of the

Taj. However, Mr. Beaufoy missed this sentimental outburst in his “love story.” His attention was focused on Mumbai’s Juhu slum, next to a private airfield. He describes its alleys as if he were still gazing at them: “In these canyons I stumble across dogs, chickens, water pipes, open sewers and thousand of families.” For the slum children, a white English-speaker was “either Mr Bean or Rambo,” mixing the world of cinema and television with their everyday existence, escapism making their wretched lives bearable. They are rendered as urchins ready to do anything for money, a compromise by the filmmakers who, despite Mr. Beaufoy’ dislike of the “rags to rich story,” spiced up their movie with plenty of a money business. Struck by the dreadful physical conditions of the slum, Simon Beaufoy also comments on the common toilet, a three-walled “tiny shack” with a hole in the floorboards and a view over Juhu’s private airfield: “Every morning, the poorest people in the world sit doing their business watching the richest people in the world fly in to do their business.” Actually, a spectacular long shot of the slum is one of the first scenes shown in the movie. The viewer may be led to establish an analogy with the Brazilian *favelas* shot by Fernando Meireles, in *Cidade de Deus* (2002), a film adaptation of Paulo Lins’s novel, where the protagonist, Buscapé, is, too, a picaresque figure like Ram, in the novel by Vikas Swarup. Film intertextuality widens the exposure of child poverty, crime and corruption in both India and Brazil, two emerging superpowers where social conditions do not match their economic growth. In *Slumdog*, we see the alternation of exterior long shots, giving the larger-scale of the slums, with interior shots, some exploring spooky scenes worthy of a *thriller* like the one with the child beggar about to be blinded by a slimy Maman (Ankur Vikal) and his gang. The close-ups underline the character’s basic emotions, as the close-up of the dragon-like Sergeant (Saurabh Shukla) blowing smoke through his mouth to intimidate an already terrified Jamal Malik (Dev Patel). In turn, the protagonist’s close-ups work as evidence of his innocence by showing, for instance, his own disbelief every time a shrill Prem Kumar (Anil Kapoor) announces that the Mumbai *chai-wallah* has just come up with the right answer.

As to the novel’s many characters, some were combined; others replaced or made to disappear altogether. For instance, the police Inspector (Irrfan Kahn) is a combination of the police Commissioner and Smita Shah, the woman lawyer.⁹ It is the police Inspector, portrayed as a nice cop, who plays back the DVD, and listens to Jamal’s story where the boy explains how he knew the answers to the quiz. Convinced that he is no con, the Inspector lets him go. In the movie, Latika (Freida Pinto), the love of Jamal’s life, works as a prostitute for a boorish type who keeps her locked up inside a colonial-styled bungalow. Latika is also a combination of the women in the novel: Gudiya, the girl from the Mumbai *chawl*; Neerima, the aging

star who no longer plays tragic heroines; and Nita, the beautiful prostitute whom the protagonist marries after becoming a billionaire. The character going through the most remarkable change is Salim (Malhur Mittal), in the novel, a Muslim orphan befriended by Ram. In the end, Salim becomes a Bollywood actor, living happily ever after. He is no one's brother, nor is he Aramis, the third Musketeer of the children's triangle. A French romance by Dumas used as a school textbook to teach poor Indian children both the English language and the values of comradeship seems to be a rather odd innovation by the filmmakers. However, it brings the three leading characters together and, at the same time, dilutes the effects of the English book described by Homi K. Bhabha as "the insignia of colonial authority (2004: 29)."¹⁰ Unlike Ram, Salim is allowed to keep his original name in the movie, where his role is expanded to become a sort of baddie, in opposition to Jamal, who remains pure and innocent all the way through. One question lingers, though, why a poor street child like Salim is turned into a gangster, in the movie, getting killed, instead of Kumar? Among the villains, and there are plenty, the host of the show is certainly the slyest. The disclosure of Kumar's double life as a sinister gigolo and sadistic assassin is the most startling revelation among many in the novel. Neerima had been brutally murdered, and Nita brutally assaulted by him, as Ram would find out. Kumar's criminal record justifies his being done away with at the end of the book, where he commits suicide, or is killed probably by Ram himself. The latter's reason to enter the contest was not to win the money but to "take revenge," finally revealing it to a cowardly Prem Kumar who begs the young man not to kill him. Had Kumar been dispatched on the screen, Jamal's fate would also change, since he would be charged with homicide, no happy end in sight. Another possible answer to Kumar being spared the same fate as Salim may be found in the movie subtext, a celebration of cinema and television as well as of the personalities they fabricate, idolized by millions of viewers all over. In film and television parlance, idols may gradually dissolve or fade, but they should not die right there in front of the viewer, as in accordance with the rules of a classical play. Kumar's death would also dispel many an illusion among viewers who want their screen idols to be treated as heroes. If a tragic hero were needed, he would rather be a streetwise kid turned gangster, like Salim, who redeems himself in the end by letting Latika go free to join her beloved Jamal. That was not written, though.

Concerned with "authenticity," Mr. Beaufoy returned to his "documentary roots," as he puts it, and wandered aimlessly through Mumbai to grasp the city's pulsation and learn as much as he could about the people living there. The panoramic views of Mumbai's undergoing urban mutation resemble a documentary on India, hardly connecting with the main story. Simon Beaufoy watched mutilated

children begging on the streets, as if they were characters out of a Dickens story; he also talked to the vagrants who slept on the hard shoulders of the motorways, indifferent to being crushed by an exhausted lorry driver. The people answered his questions politely with “that very Indian, side-to-side shake of the head” meaning “may be yes, may be no,” he says, or “whatever God wills,” as if their lives were suspended by some hidden force, as Mr. Beaufoy further explains: “In this city of nineteen million people hurtling into the future, there is still, very present, an ancient sense of destiny...” Destiny, fate, chance, luck, charms, coincidences and sudden revelations, all work as a make-believe, or disbelief, device to associate the questions of the quiz with the answers made up of the random data gathered by the protagonist during his previous experiences, starting with Amitabh Bachchan, the movie star whose autographed picture Salim sold for a few rupees; Franklin, the American president on the one hundred dollar bill, shown to him by the blind child beggar whom he met in the Mumbay underground; Surdas, the Indian poet, whose songs he heard in the juvenile training school run by the mobsters. In “A Fine Pickle,” the article mentioned above, Salman Rushdie, who did not like either the movie or Vikas Swarup’s novel, considers it to be “the kind of fantasy writing that gives fantasy writing a bad name” owing to a “series of outrageous coincidences” that, concludes the British writer, make its plot implausible. Mr. Rushdie’s remarks on implausibility also sound somewhat “outrageous” considering, for instance, that one of his characters changes his physical appearance to fit into his devilish role, as in *The Satanic Verses* (1988); and that another, by coming into the world at midnight, precisely when India and Pakistan were separated, communicates with people he never met through telepathy, as in *Midnight’s Children* (1981). Plausible or not, most of the “random accidents” in the protagonist’s life were kept in the script as much as the aura of fate and destiny hovering through the novel. It is the sort of thing that intrigues audiences waiting for some magic to change this world in which we live, an appeal made even stronger by their morbid voyeurism on a far away Asian slum, and their fascination with its exoticism. *Slumdog* is a fairy tale on a grim world where survival is already a fairy tale, Fate or Destiny playing the leading roles, together with Darwinism, and an extraordinary Zest for life. That has been written long ago.

It is about time to zoom in on the picaresque protagonist of the novel, where he goes by the name of Ram Mohammad Thompson, Mohammad for his friend Salim; Thompson for his Waspish Australian employers. His names embrace the three major religious groups in India, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The tensions between Hindus and Muslims are a long-term predicament, and one of the causes behind the Mumbay terrorist attacks, supposedly planned by

fundamentalists in neighbouring Pakistan, the issue remaining conveniently involved in a cloud of mutual accusations. The long episode of the novel in which the impostor who, passing himself off as a hero, describes the atrocities committed by both sides during the war between India and Pakistan,¹¹ has no resemblance to the tribal riots, in the movie, where the boys' mother is killed. After recounting the episode, Jamal blames Ram and Allah for her death, but his mumbling of both names leave most viewers wondering as to what he is talking about. Regarding Christianity, a reminder of colonial times, it was brought to the subcontinent by European missionaries and has been thriving ever since. Would film audiences grasp the symbolism of the protagonist's three names? Or, the reason why he omits his first name when, in the book, he meets Salim for the first time? Likely not. Therefore, Ram, the bartender at *Jim's bar* in Mumbai – alcohol being a religious transgression – becomes, in the movie, Jamal Malik, a *chai-wallah* in a British call centre of Mumbai. His job combines Indian tradition with the latest British/Indian technology. Jamal Malik, both Arabic names, are vague enough patronymics to suggest no affiliation to a particular faith. In the movie, it is never explained, though, how an ignorant Indian boy, who is not even aware of the Mahatma's existence, speaks English fluently, which gives him advantage over his slum friends who speak only Hindi. His having learnt the "Queen's English" with an English priest who, in the novel, also teaches the Indian orphan to sing "Baa Baa Black Sheep" might have appeared to some as one colonialist perversity. Curiously, Mr. Beaufoy, who goes through pains in detailing the difficulties he had with the film adaptation, refers neither to the change of the protagonist's name, in the movie, nor to his fluency in English, as if it were to be taken for granted. Skin colour remarks and the scenes of sexual harassment by paedophiles were also omitted in his screenplay. In a film, such as *Slumdog*, produced for mass communication and amusement, the filmmakers' main preoccupation was to free it from as much controversy as possible in order not to offend anyone, the politically correct mode prevailing, so much more when it involved a potentially explosive issue like religion not to speak of postcolonial sensitivities always about to be stirred up. The casting of British-born Dev Patel as the leading actor, a new comer to the big screen, turned out to be a good choice despite his accent giving him away as a non-Indian. His performance as the nonplussed contestant of the money show is believable, a compromise that soothed old wounds in both India and Britain by bringing to the foreground the positive side of the reencounter between East and West, this time made possible through cinema.

Simon Beaufoy transformed *Q&A* into something "bordering the melodrama" by mixing violent scenes with burlesque ones, as when "a torture scene is followed

by a comedy toilet scene, and the blinding of a child by a Buster Keatonesque stunt sequence.” The closing Bollywood sequence takes place on the platform of an old railway station, its British Indian architecture evoking the intertwining of two life stories as the dancers move gracefully in a swirl of colours.¹² Bollywood, the act of dance and music “part traditional, part hip hop, part disco,” was an appropriation by the filmmakers to give authenticity to a movie filmed in Mumbai, adding an extra dimension to it by making the happy ending even happier; together with “Be Victorious” (Jay Ho), it also conveys the message of hope that is implicit in the novel by Vicar Swarup. At a cinematic level, the grand finale stands as a Bollywood colonization¹³ of the American musical, once imported from America to India, later on Indianised and re-exported both to America and to the world through British/Indian acting and filmmaking, and the co-financing of a French distributor, Fox Searchlight Pictures. *Slumdog Millionaire* is another illustration of film globalization. Bygones may not always be bygones, but they are gone enough, though, to make people feel like jumping on the platform to join the dancers in the movie.

As a major player in today’s globalized world, India has become a special target for criticism not only from outsiders, but also from insiders, including those of the Indian Diaspora. English-speaking Indian authors like Aravind Adiga, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, to name a few, or an out-inside-out Salman Rushdie, whose sharp criticism on pro-Partition Indian society is well known, portray India as a postcolonial mixed-up society where great wealth and high technology strive side by side with poverty, greed, corruption and paedophilia, as in Vikas Swarup’s novel. The Third- about to become First-World is still coping with illiteracy, child exploitation, disease and malnutrition, afflictions that have not been eradicated in the West either. With the latest financial crash, we became suddenly aware that vices gone undercover for years have just removed their disguises, greed and corruption running loose both in the West and in the East. To understand it should not make one feel resigned, as if our lives were in Fate’s hands, accepting, like the people in Mumbai, “whoever one is and whatever one is doing,” some obviously being much better off, and doing far better than others. It may help, though, to recognize our own shortcomings and be less judgmental of others.

As far as the joyfulness and resilience of the Mumbai people, “no terrorist attack will ever change that,” writes Simon Beaufoy, who, like the Indians themselves, must have seen it written somewhere.

NOTES

- ¹ This paper was the departure for an informal discussion during a session held on the 21st April 2009, included in a series of debates under the topic “Choque das Comunicações”, organized by Eduardo Cintra Torres, Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Cultura, Universidade Católica de Lisboa.
- ² Cast: Dev Patel; Ayush Mahesh Khedekar; Freida Pinto; Rubina Ali; Madhur Mittal; Azharudin Mohammed Ismail; Sanchita Choudhary; Anil Kapoor; Irrfan Khan. Directed by Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandam (co-director in India); screenwriting by Simon Beaufoy; cinematography by Anthony Dod Mantel; Editing by Chris Dickens; original score and song by A. R. Raham; production designing by Mark Digby; produced by Christian Colson; released by Fox Searchlight Pictures.
- ³ We used the later edition of Vikas Swarup's novel, *Q&A – Slumdog Millionaire* (2009), London: A Black Swan Book.
- ⁴ See Simon Beaufoy, “Life on the Hard Shoulder,” where the screenwriter recalls his experience in Mumbai while they were shooting the movie (www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/dec/12).
- ⁵ For an overall view on the British in India, see Piers Brendon (2008), “An English Barrack in the Oriental Seas, Britannia's Indian Empire” in *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997*, London: Vintage Books, pp. 30-60.
- ⁶ The hiring of the children to appear in the movie lead to accusations of child exploitation, a charge that was promptly denied by Danny Boyle and his Indian co-director, Loveleen Tandem. In appreciation for Mumbai's hospitality, the filmmakers have donated part of the movie proceeds, nearly eight hundred thousand American dollars, to a charity for the education of the city's poorest children. By the same token, the “Jay Ho Trust” will ensure the education of the two child stars playing the youngest Jamal and Latika in the movie.
- ⁷ See Salman Rushdie, “A fine pickle,” where the British writer does not spare anyone, from Vikas Swarup to Danny Boyle, the filmmaker (www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/feb/28).
- ⁸ Like Brian McFarlane, who makes a distinction between transference and “adaptation proper,” we use the latter to refer “to the processes by which other novelistic elements must find quite different equivalences in the film medium, when such equivalences are sought or are available at all.” *Novel to Film, An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996), Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 13.
- ⁹ An Indian Commissioner might have been an officer of too high a rank to be shown as responsible for the torture of a poor street kid; Smita was too clever a woman by half in a subcontinent where, with some exceptions, women still do what they are told by their male relatives.
- ¹⁰ According to Bhabha, in the old Empire, the dominating discourse set racial and cultural differences, both assimilation and resistance coexisting. It resulted in what the scholar designates as hybridization, regarded as a subversive way to defy colonial authority. “Signs Taken for Wonders,” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (2004), eds. Ashcroft/Griffiths/Tiffin, London, New York: Routledge, pp. 29-35.
- ¹¹ We refer to “A Soldier's Tale” in *Q&A – Slumdog Millionaire*, pp. 194-222.
- ¹² Both the old station and the Mumbai Taj Hotel were hit by the terrorist attacks.
- ¹³ See Thomas Leitch (2007), *Film Adaptation & Its Discontents, From Gone With the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 109-110.

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