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India through the prism of cinematography

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India through the prism of cinematography

This research is dedicated to demonstrating how India is shown in English cinematography, specifically in the film called “Slumdog Millionaire” [1]. While doing the study we have come across the opinion that the filmmakers’ vision of India is unique and sometimes even seems to be far from the real state of affairs in the country [2]. It seems essential to highlight and to show the difference between the clichéd image and real state of affairs [3].

Undoubtedly, it requires attention that there is a romanticized view of poverty in the movie, implying that simplicity equates to integrity. The film about India selected for consideration confirms the above. Jamal, the protagonist, is depicted as inherently good, pure in heart, despite his upbringing in poverty. He is almost an "untouched" soul, uncorrupted by the harsh realities around him. This can feel like a romanticized view of poverty. This fact has a negative impact on the true representation of the misery and extreme poverty problems [6]. That is why tourists coming to India anticipate that the entire local population will be as kind to them as the main character Jamal in the film. Unfortunately, the truth is completely different: theft and banditry are rampant there [7].

It is worth mentioning that there is a huge number of positive aspects in the film. Actually, India is a multifaceted country with a rich culture that has been formed since time immemorial. Also, citizens of India are very religious, they perform many mesmerizing rituals connected with different spheres of life [5]. Therefore, in order to convey the life in India as it actually is, the director Danny Boyle has lived in India for 1,5 months to absorb all its diversity. The results of this thorough work turned out to be brilliant and convincing. The majority of actors were from India and the main scenes were filmed in Mumbai that is the biggest city and financial center of the country [4]. Boyle portrayed India by balancing authenticity with the desire to create a commercially successful product. It shows a brutal yet romantic view of India, where even in the harshest of conditions there is still room for hope and love.

“Slumdog Millionaire” is a gripping and emotional movie that offers the viewer a glimpse of modern India. However, this view is filtered through the prism of Hollywood tropes and Western perception. The film romanticizes and simplifies complex social issues and uses melodramatic and action elements to captivate the viewer. Despite this, “Slumdog Millionaire” is an important film that has drawn global attention to poverty and injustice in India and sparked debate about the representation of India in Western cinema.

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