"Yet we believe his triumph might surely be ours":
The Dickensian Liberalism of *Slumdog Millionaire*

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Abstract:
Ever since its release, Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) has proved controversial for its voyeuristic representation of suffering and violence in the global South, but Western media coverage has routinely attributed reformist intent to the film's making and viewing. Exploring Boyle's film as a neo-Victorian reworking of *Oliver Twist* (1838), I suggest that *Slumdog Millionaire* reveals the complicated permutations of the Dickensian legacy in a global setting. Specifically, I argue that the film's use of the typically liberal form of the *Bildungsroman*, which it borrows from Dickens' novel, naturalises neoliberal narratives of progress and economic globalisation and mobilises a plot of reform and rescue based on audience identification with the protagonist, who is configured as a liberal/neoliberal subject in the making.

Keywords: adaptation, *Bildungsroman,* Dickensian, globalisation, liberalism, neoliberalism, neo-Victorian, postcolonial culture, slum fiction, transnational cinema.

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When *Slumdog Millionaire* was released in 2008, it was greeted by numerous reviews, which celebrated the film as a Dickensian tale. Indeed, the reviewers, such as *Wall Street Journal*'s Joe Morgenstern, who hailed the film's protagonist, Jamal, as "the Oliver Twist of the twenty-first century", seemed to recognise the film's debt to the novel, especially its focus on an orphaned child's encounters with the seamier sides of the city. The film's director, Danny Boyle, and writer, Simon Beaufoy, also acknowledged the overt influence of Dickens' novels on the film in an interview wherein they compared the film's plot to the twists and turns of the Dickensian story: "You can't avoid the shadow of Dickens. It's absolute fable. Highs and lows, slight hysteria, convenience, coincidence, good brother, bad brother, impossibly beautiful and unattainable girl taken away whenever you get close" (Boyle 2011: 140).

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   Indeed, when one looks at the film's plot rife with coincidences and filled with the fantastic rise and fall of fortunes, Boyle and Beaufoy's claims about the film's Dickensian legacy, especially the comparison with *Oliver Twist* (1838), seem to hold water. *Slumdog Millionaire* opens with the protagonist, Jamal Malik, being tortured in a police holding cell in Mumbai. He is one question away from winning twenty million rupees on the reality show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. As Jamal tells his story to the world-weary police inspector, the film flashes back to his past and provides audiences with a tale of three street children in Mumbai: Jamal, his older brother, Salim, and his childhood sweetheart, Latika. While Latika disappears for long intervals from the screen, the film's focus is on Jamal and Salim's struggles to survive after their mother is killed in the 1992-93 religious riots in Mumbai. The filmic narrative depicts the journey of these two boys towards adulthood as they move from place to place within India and take on a variety of odd jobs, including some minor criminal activities. A crucial event in the film, which proves to be a turning point of sorts, is their abduction by the duplicitous crook, Maman, who lures children into his orphanage only to maim or disfigure them and force them to work as beggars. Although Salim has the chance to become a henchman in Maman's gang, he decides to save Jamal from being mutilated by the latter's accomplices. As they escape on the train, Salim intentionally abandons Latika on the railway platform. The story skips forward by a few years; the two brothers return to Mumbai since Jamal still hopes to find Latika. In the events that follow, Salim joins Javed, the most notorious criminal mafia leader in Mumbai, and betrays Jamal by first raping Latika and then handing her over to Javed. The film then skips forward again by several years, and we see Jamal working as a *chaiwallah* (tea server) at a call centre. Still searching for Latika, he manages to trace Salim, who is now a high-ranking member of Javed's crime ring. Jamal succeeds in locating Latika, but their attempt to run away together is violently foiled by Salim. Through a chance series of events, Jamal finds himself a contestant on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*. He appears on the show only in order to send a message to Latika, but fortuitously keeps advancing from one question to another. The show's rather smarmy host, Prem, a social climber with a similar lower-class background, resents Jamal's success and reports him to the police as a cheat. After much torture and interrogation, Jamal proves his innocence to the policeman and returns to the show. When he sees Jamal so close to

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becoming a multi-millionaire, Salim finally helps Latika escape, sacrificing his life in a bloody showdown with Javed and his men. The film ends with Jamal winning millions, being reunited with Latika, and a celebratory Bollywood style song and dance number at the end of the film on a railway platform.

There are certainly inescapable parallels between Dickens' Newgate novel replete with graphic descriptions of East End slums, crime (especially Fagin's gang), and an orphaned child protagonist in the midst of danger and violence and *Slumdog Millionaire*'s use of much the same tropes, such as the Dharavi slum, the Mumbai criminal underworld, and the 1992-93 riots. While film critics prefer to draw a trajectory straight from Charles Dickens' novel to Simon Beaufoy's film script, the novel *Q&A* by Vikas Swarup – the text that provides inspiration for the script – is also in many ways a postcolonial retelling of a Victorian text.[1] As young boys, Ram, the protagonist of Swarup's novel, and his friend Salim are taken to a Juvenile Home for Boys in Delhi that recalls one of the most famous and popular episodes from *Oliver Twist*:

> The mess hall is a large room with cheap flooring and long wooden tables. But the surly head cook sells the meat and chicken that is meant for us to restaurants, and feeds us a daily diet of vegetable stew and thick, blackened chapattis. He picks his nose constantly and scolds anyone who *asks for more*. (Swarup 2005: 91, emphasis added)

Other than these plot-based similarities between *Oliver Twist,* the novel *Q&A,* and *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, I want to suggest that there might be more to Boyle's reiteration of Dickensian aesthetics, which may add to the current debates about the representational politics of neoliberal media. Cognisant of the immense controversy generated by the film about the representation of third-world suffering and the ethics of Western viewing practices, I seek to establish a genealogical relationship between *Oliver Twist*, as a representative text of the Victorian liberal response to poverty in Victorian London, and *Slumdog Millionaire*, a film symptomatic of typical neoliberal framing of present-day third-world misery. While the earlier phase of industrial capitalism – the economic context for *Oliver Twist* – has given way to the contemporary forms of global post-capitalism,

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I explore in this essay how *Slumdog Millionaire* adapts Dickensian liberalism, especially by using the *Bildungsroman* narrative, to posit Jamal, the orphaned Muslim protagonist from the Mumbai slums, as a neoliberal subject, that is, as a subject shaped by the forces of economic liberalisation and the advent of global capital in India. In other words, I explore how the film's narrative of Jamal's becoming, his evolution from an orphan on the streets and a non-citizen to a bourgeois-liberal subject, naturalises neoliberal narratives of development and progress.

1.   Dickens Goes Global

Adaptation, as most compellingly noted by Linda Hutcheon, is "both a product and a process of creation and reception", which produces the need for a theoretical approach that is "at once formal and experiential" (Hutcheon 2006: xiv). That is, any attempt at analysing the process of adaptation must be sensible of the fact that both the source or primary text and its various retellings not only encompass various media and genres, but also represent diverse ways of engaging audiences. The particular chain of adaptation and appropriation addressed in this essay includes a Victorian novel, a contemporary Indian novel in English, and a contemporary transnational film, and suggests the necessity of attending to the specific transmutations in every telling and retelling of the story as well as to the uniqueness of each reading/viewing and its socioeconomic context.[2]

In this chain of retellings of the Dickensian novel, *Slumdog Millionaire* emerges as a peculiarly global product: it is at once global and rooted in Anglo-American as much as Indian culture and economic spheres. Roughly one third of the film is in Hindi, while the other two thirds are in English; it is set entirely in India and has British and Indian co-directors (Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan), cast, and crew, and American distributors (Fox Searchlight and Warner Brothers). Moreover, on its release, *Slumdog Millionaire* was upheld as the "film world's first globalised masterpiece" (Morgenstern 2008: 1). On the one hand, due to its transnational character, the film is variously identified as belonging to the British, Hollywood, and/or Indian/Bollywood film industries; a quick look at its revenue figures also confirms its overwhelming success at the international box offices versus its 'domestic' performance, implying that the film's appeal transcended national and cultural borders.[3] On the other hand, however, the ground realities of economic and creative control over

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the film's content, production, and distribution place it very firmly within the British and American film industries. Boyle's account of his negotiations with Warner Brothers in order to shoot some parts in Hindi reveal the strong financial and creative hold Hollywood maintained over this apparently 'global' feature:

> So, Loveleen said, "Listen you should really do it [the opening section of the film] in Hindi." I, of course, thought, *Oh my God what's Warner Brothers going to say if I do that?* (original emphasis) So she adapted the dialogue and as soon as she did it, the kids suddenly came to life. It felt so real suddenly. So, I did ring Warner Brothers and said, "We're going to do the first third in Hindi with English subtitles." They just thought I was losing my mind [...] (Beaufoy, Boyle, and Feld 2008: 141)

As Anjali Pandey perceptively suggests, Boyle's film – despite its unique blend of the global and the local – employs "verbal and visual English", which strategically "sustains a place for global English evanescence" (Pandey 2010). For instance, the use of English text on a black screen at the opening of the film privileges readers of English, and the foregrounding of English text in the frame as a cinematic object worthy of the audience's attention implicitly accords primary importance to English in an apparently bi-lingual film.

Given the film's Anglo-American cultural bearings, it is thus not entirely surprising that *Slumdog Millionaire* is allied so closely with Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and that its target audiences immediately recognised and celebrated that association. Charlotte Boyce and Elodie Rousselot have observed that 'Dickensian' in Anglophone cultures "represents an eminently knowable and assimilable version of the 'Victorian'" (Boyce and Rousselot 2012: 3). Even audience members who are not familiar with Dickens's works first-hand, generally identify and relish the references in a film to a recognisable, even nostalgia-worthy, past. While Dickens' novels influence many neo-Victorian novels, such as Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1998), Michael Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002), Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith* (2002), Dan Simmons' *Drood* (2009), and Lynn Shepherd's *Tom All Alone's* (2012), which revisit Dickensian plots and nineteenth-

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century social realities, they are also regularly referenced in contemporary crime dramas, like *The Wire* (2002-2008) and *Orange is the New Black* (2013-). Matthew Kaiser, in fact, has argued that Dickens' fiction, particularly *Oliver Twist*, becomes a point of departure for all successive slum fiction, including the recent, critically acclaimed series *The Wire*:

> Slum narratives regularly – indeed, transparently – reflect upon their Dickensian foundations. They do not hide this aspect of themselves. *Oliver Twist* (1838) in particular functions in most slum narratives as an extratextual memory, a faded referent, its ghostly outline still visible, but a memory with which the text nonetheless made peace and moved on. (Kaiser 2011: 67)

The term 'Dickensian', however, has a far more convoluted genealogy than just a literary and cultural foundational point that must be acknowledged or dealt with when a contemporary narrative deals with social issues, such as urban poverty or institutionalised oppression; it can indicate a fictional work's desire to blend a reformist agenda with storytelling as well as a fetishised representation of poverty and suffering for the viewing pleasures of the more fortunate. The borderlines between these ethically conscientious stories and exploitative narratives constantly keep moving. For instance, even as critics routinely praised *The Wire* as a 'Dickensian' representation of crime and poverty in Baltimore, the series chose that very term in its third season to both satirise the sentimentalised representations of the poor in the media as well as provide a meta-commentary on a certain spectatorial modality which found pleasure in the depiction of suffering, eschewing any critical understanding of infrastructural faults in urban planning and governance (Simon 2008). In the second season of *Orange is the New Black* – described as 'Dickensian' in critical reviews – a neophyte prison guard listens to the inmate phone calls as part of her surveillance duties and enthusiastically comments on the plethora of lives and experiences she is officially eavesdropping on: "It's so interesting, all these lives; it's like Dickens" (Kohan 2014). Along with a nod to *The Wire*, this moment becomes a way for the writers of the series to oppose a voyeuristic consumption of the lives of others.

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     While the potential for protest and critique in Dickens' fiction cannot be obscured or minimised away, the Dickensian legacy is far more complicated and politically fraught. By and large, scholars examining neo-Victorian adaptations have been optimistic about the latter's potential to offer more critical, revisionist versions of nineteenth-century plots that are sensitive to the hierarchies of gender and class, sometimes even race. Rohan McWilliams, for instance, sees neo-Victorian novels as capable of writing a "history from below" (McWilliams 2009: 108). However, in this essay, I offer the more sombre hypothesis that the cultural genealogy that finds its point of origin in Dickens can also offer up permutations that combine reformist rhetoric with conservative political-economic ideologies: *Slumdog Millionaire* is a case in point. Adopting a neo-Victorian critical approach to *Slumdog Millionaire* enables a "diachronic understanding" of "Victorian" settings, plots, and genres, and deconstructs the separation between the domestic and international, the colony and the metropolis (Kirchknopf 2008: 59). Examining *Slumdog Millionaire* as a neo-Victorian text makes visible the global underpinnings of the Victorian socio-political imaginary as well as the ramifications of Dickensian liberalism in a neoliberal world dominated by global capital.

     The conversation in the media about *Slumdog Millionaire* repeatedly invokes the film's Dickensian character in order to draw attention to social issues in the global South, like child labour poverty and corruption. On its initial release, as well as its second lease of life following the Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations, *Slumdog Millionaire* was acknowledged as a good old Dickensian melodrama complete with its representation of universal human experience. Morgenstern celebrated the film's evocation of "the rags, riches, horror, hope and irrepressible energy of Third World life with a zest that honors *Oliver Twist*" (Morgenstern 2008). Roger Ebert proclaimed, "[h]e[Jamal] is Oliver Twist. High-spirited and defiant in the worst of times, he survives" (Ebert 2008). Various other reviewers enthusiastically noted the film's celebration of the triumphant "human spirit" (Mendelson 2008; Orr 2008).

     More importantly, the rhetoric surrounding the film was by and large reformist in tone. The review by Richard Chin for *Huffington Post*, perhaps, best epitomises the general response towards the film within American media:

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> What really matters is that this film has focused attention on
> the poverty that's so prevalent in this part of the world. This
> creates a unique opportunity to leverage the success of this
> Best Picture winner into action […]. Popular culture has
> proved an awesome agent of change throughout history […].
> [It] can shock, educate and, yes, even entertain people into
> taking action for a compelling cause. (Chin 2008)

The cast and crew of the film accepted the awards showered on them in the
name of the "children" (Shoard 2009). The additional post-Oscars media
scrutiny focused on the ethics of employing and underpaying slum-based
child actors as the producers of *Slumdog Millionaire* deposited additional
funds for Rubina Ali and Azharuddin Ismail's education and partnered with
NGOs in India, e.g. with the international development organisation *Plan*, to
help children living in Mumbai slums (Kinetz 2009a; Kinetz 2009b).
Despite the reformist rhetoric surrounding the film, it has also been
criticised as "poverty porn", as exploitatively transforming the very real and
difficult living conditions of the underprivileged into armchair tourism and
adventure for first-world viewers (Miles 2009). I would like to posit that
these contradictions in the conversations surrounding *Slumdog Millionaire*
are symptomatic of the politically fraught nature of the Dickensian legacy as
it takes shape in the contemporary context of globalisation and
neoliberalism.

2.   Liberalism and the Bildungsroman
The narrative form of both *Oliver Twist* and *Slumdog Millionaire* is the
Bildungsroman, which focuses on the education and maturation of a
protagonist. The *Bildungsroman*, especially its emphasis on the ideas of
progress and the development of a unique individuality, functions as a
quintessentially liberal narrative in Victorian literature. In his seminal work
in the field of *Bildungsroman* studies, Jerome H. Buckley recognised the
genre's articulation of the aspirations and preoccupations of the English
middle classes. The *Bildungsroman* covered the protagonist's journey from
the country to the city, from innocence to experience, from social
constraints and repression to maturity and creative expression (Buckley
1974: 17-18). Writing about the cultural significance of the *Bildungsroman*
in the West, Franco Moretti defined the genre as "the paradoxical *functional*

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principle of a large part of modern culture" (Moretti 1987: 9, original emphasis). That is, the *Bildungsroman* became a "cultural mechanism" with the potential to represent and explore the tussle between two sets of opposing values, which Moretti roughly identified as "self-determination" and "socialization" (Moretti 1987: 15). Significantly, the *Bildungsroman* seems engaged in the crucial task of generating consensus about liberal-democratic, capitalist society:

> it is not sufficient for modern bourgeois society simply to subdue the drives that oppose the standards of "normality". It is also necessary that, as a "free individual", not as a fearful subject but as a convinced citizen, one perceives the social normal as *one's own*. One must *internalize* them and fuse external compulsion and internal impulses into a new unity until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter. This fusion is what we usually call "consent" or "legitimization." (Moretti 1987: 15-16, original emphasis)

Moretti's rather sanguine take on the *Bildungsroman*'s cultural work of producing consensus by making room for individual freedom must be re-evaluated in light of alternative accounts of the genre by critics such as Uday Mehta and Joshua Esty. Where Buckey and Moretti see the *Bildungsroman* functioning as an effective allegorical mechanism for imagining modern European national cultures, Esty and Mehta suggest constitutive links between the developmental, *telos*-oriented logic of the *Bildungsroman* and capitalist imperialist modernities (Esty 2012: 5-13; Mehta 1999: 83-85). The nineteenth-century liberal discourses of self-help, individual liberty, and self-regulation allowed the rise of the fast-professionalising middle classes, and also dovetailed neatly with the imperialist rhetoric that relegated the working classes and the colonised as unfinished subjects, who needed to be educated, civilised, and formed. Thus, the same evolutionary schema that allowed European nations to imagine their cultural and political systems as the pinnacle of human development, all the while colonising and bringing in line the rudimentary, primitive non-European systems, also accorded normativity to bourgeois-liberal subjectivity.

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        Neoliberalism has also achieved dominance as a socioeconomic ideology in most developed and developing nations by strategically connecting capitalism with bourgeois individualism. From the 1970s onwards, neoliberalism acquired cultural legitimacy by reiterating the core values of nineteenth-century classical liberalism, such as the free market, entrepreneurial freedom, minimal state intervention, and inalienable private property rights, as well as by employing the idea of individual freedom. David Harvey observes:

> The founding fathers of neoliberal thought took political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom as fundamental, as "the central values of civilization". In doing so, they chose wisely, for these are indeed compelling and seductive ideals. These values, they held, were threatened not only by fascism, dictatorships, and communism, but by all forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgments for those of individuals free to choose. (Harvey 2011: 5)

Thus, bourgeois individualism remains the cornerstone – the founding myth even – of liberal and neoliberal societies, which continue to equate free markets with personal liberty. The irony inherent in equating individual autonomy to unbridled capitalism is that it rarely, if ever, translates into reality. As Harvey points out, neoliberalism's use of the liberal ideals of freedom and equality makes it appear like a utopian plan in theory, but in reality, it functions as a political plan that entrenches the accumulated capital and power of the economically privileged (Harvey 2011: 10-11).

        Given the potentially imperialist and certainly liberal/neoliberal underpinnings of the *Bildungsroman*, *Slumdog Millionaire*'s use of the narrative of becoming after the fashion of *Oliver Twist* – an orphan street child maturing into bourgeois adulthood – becomes highly significant. Boyle's film follows Dickens' novel in presenting its protagonist as both a classless orphan and a potentially innately bourgeois-liberal in order to attract the audience's sympathies for the protagonist. More importantly, it mobilises a plot of rescue of the protagonist that ultimately validates a neoliberal worldview.

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While *Oliver Twist* combines early-nineteenth-century discourse on physiognomy, aesthetic representational codes, and the liberal imaginings of character to configure Oliver specifically as a subject worthy of rescue, *Slumdog Millionaire* strategically employs casting, accents, and language to achieve the same effect.[4] Despite Dickens' claims about the representative nature of Oliver's character, the story from the very beginning suggests Oliver's difference from those around him through the use language, deportment, and appearance.[5] Oliver is distinguished from his lower-class counterparts by his use of standard English, untainted by the use of urban jargon as opposed to the use of Cockney speech variation by various lower-class characters, such as the Artful Dodger and other members of Fagin's gang.[6] He is characterised as possessing too much "feeling": his refined sensibilities debilitating him when he is faced with callous adults and cruel behaviour and acting as a crucial contrast to characters hardened by poverty, such as "charity boy", Noah Claypole, as well as bureaucratic workhouse officials (Dickens 1992: 25).

In addition to a different speech pattern and deportment, both Dickens' text and George Cruikshank's illustrations present Oliver's physiognomy as different from the caricaturised, almost disfigured faces of the criminal underclass in the novel.[7] For instance, the illustration entitled, "Oliver is introduced to the respectable old gentleman" depicts Oliver's first meeting with Fagin and his gang of pickpockets. Cruikshank presents a caricature of Semitic identity by depicting Fagin with a hooked nose and wielding a pitchfork. The combination of whiskers, top hats, coats, and pipes on the other boys in Fagin's gang suggests their premature adult masculinity, which is very much in contrast to Oliver's diminutive presence in the image. Although Oliver is at the forefront of the image, he is physically the smallest person in the room. Indeed, the image reiterates Oliver's vulnerability, which emerges through repetitive references to Oliver as "little" in the novel (Dickens: 25; Dickens: 26). Additionally, Cruikshank, in the Hogarthian fashion, represents Oliver with symmetrical features, such as a long forehead and a delicate nose, to suggest Oliver's innocent and refined nature in contrast to the distorted faces of the members of the criminal gang, which demonstrate the impact of a life full of vice and excess.[8]

In fact, Oliver's face takes on an indexical function in the text as a sign of his inviolate moral 'character'. "There is something in that boy's

face […] something that touches and interests me", muses Mr. Brownlow, as he instinctually believes in Oliver's innocence based on his appearance (Dickens 1992: 70). The foreshadowing of Oliver's familial relationship with the Maylies aside, Mr. Brownlow's sympathetic interest in Oliver cues readers to read/view Oliver differently. Despite their diverse agendas, various other characters reiterate the significance of Oliver's face. Mr. Brownlow's argumentative friend, Mr.Grimwig, privately acknowledges Oliver's "appearance and manner" to be "unusually prepossessing" (Dickens 1992: 99). Fagin, moreover, plans to capitalise on Oliver's face, since the latter may be used to infiltrate the upper classes with less suspicion and, concomitantly, much more safety as opposed to the lower-class boys whose "looks convict 'em" (Dickens 1992: 141).

The politics of casting in *Slumdog Millionaire* seems to suggest a similar attempt at differentiation: the child actors, Azharuddin Ismail and Rubina Ali, who played the parts of young Salim and Latika, were children living in the slums at the time of the making of the film, while the child actor playing Jamal, Ayush Mahesh Khedekar, was from a more well-to-do middle-class background. The decision to cast children from the slums stemmed from the filmmakers' desire to achieve more authenticity; it was an attempt to find actors who did not speak English well and looked "wiry" and "undernourished" (Horn 2009). Leaving aside the rather debatable issue of authenticity, one may yet question the choice to cast a middle-class child with a better command over English as Jamal. The film uses the class identity of the child actors – their very bodies and accents – to visually and aurally tell viewers that Jamal is different from the other children we see on screen.

The casting decision for the adult Jamal, Salim, and Latika repeats the pattern with little variation. The film casts Dev Patel, a British actor of Indian origin, to play the role of the adult Jamal. Patel's British accent sets him apart from almost every other Indian actor in the film, including Madhur Mittal and Freida Pinto, the two actors who essayed the roles of the adult Salim and Latika. In fact, Madhur Mittal was told to "tan" himself more in order to look intimidating (Canton 2009). While in the film, Jamal's character remains in India throughout and for the most part lives and works in lower-class environments, where English is not the preferred language of communication, the film – through Patel – makes the UK accented English a part of Jamal's characterisation. The film's use of accent ensures that

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Anglophone viewers immediately recognise Jamal's difference and perhaps also identify easily with a more familiar pattern of speech.

In representing Jamal, like Oliver, as unchanged by his environment, *Slumdog Millionaire* embraces the typically Dickensian confluence of a liberal imagining of 'character' with a melodramatic modality. Despite variously living in a home for juvenile delinquents, the workhouse, and an East End slum, Oliver maintains a spotless conscience and a sound understanding of what constitutes moral behaviour and otherwise. On witnessing the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates involved in picking a man's pockets, he is overcome with "horror and alarm" (Dickens 1992: 60). His "horror" at witnessing Dodger's acts of theft, and again on realising that he is involved in an attempted robbery, is thus crucial in establishing his 'character' as quite independent of his circumstances (Dickens 1992: 162).

In her essay 'The Past is a Foreign Country', Elaine Hadley points to the constitutive relationship between property and liberal character: "liberal character needs to imagine itself as lacking particular and material properties at the same time that it derives a necessary stability from particular and material properties" (Hadley 1997: 22). By bringing together the distinct worldviews of melodrama and liberalism, *Oliver Twist* then seems to offer an interesting variation on the idea of self-possession so central to liberal character: on the one hand, Oliver as an orphan with severely limited agency does not seem to fit the parameters of proprietary notion of liberal character, and is, more appropriately, a victim of his circumstances; on the other hand, Oliver maintains a sense of self, which comes across clearly through his moral coherence. He can distinguish right from wrong, and would prefer to give up his life rather than become involved in a robbery (see Dickens 1992: 162).

At the level of the plot, Beaufoy splits the central protagonist of *Slumdog Millionaire* into the parts of two brothers, perhaps to lessen the strain of Dickensian melodrama on the film's realism. So, the film shows Salim immediately embracing a life of violence and crime, while Jamal, like Oliver, maintains his core innocence even through the most trying experiences. Although Jamal indulges in petty crimes for survival, the film always puts Salim at the forefront of these criminal enterprises. As they reach adulthood, their paths have dramatically split into a binary of criminal enterprise and neoliberal labour. The film clearly situates the adult Jamal and Salim in a neoliberal India, an India of skyscrapers and business, an

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India open to global capital and media, and recognised as one of the biggest emerging economies in the world. Jamal and Salim return to a transformed Mumbai, where old and decrepit structures have been replaced by multi-storied buildings. Reunited several years after Salim's betrayal, both brothers are perched on one of the unfinished floors of a skyscraper under construction; the camera pans to show a horizon full of high-rise buildings as Salim tells Jamal:

> That ... used to be our slum. Can you believe that, huh? We used to live right there, man. Now, it's all business. India is at the centre of the world now, *bhai* [brother]. And I, I'm at the centre of the centre. (*Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, 1:14:26, original pause)

Under the leadership of the Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh, India moved towards neoliberalism in the 1990s.[9] The introduction of the 'New Economic Policy' in 1991 cut down on existing protectionist procedures safeguarding indigenous manufacturing and markets, introducing tax cuts for domestic and foreign capital looking to invest, and promoting the privatisation of erstwhile public sectors. In addition to such economic changes, the arrival of satellite channels and cable television profoundly changed the Indian cultural landscape at least as far as urban areas were concerned.

So, crucially set in an increasingly neoliberal India, *Slumdog Millionaire* affirms liberal myths of individual agency, education, and progress through Jamal's character. Like Oliver's predilection for acculturation, which signals to the reader his potential as a liberal subject in the making, *Slumdog Millionaire* posits Jamal as an ideal neoliberal subject. Mr. Brownlow's offer to Oliver – "You shall read them [books], if you behave well" (Dickens 1992: 95) – foregrounds the relationship between self-regulation and acculturation in the liberal model of self-cultivation. Appropriately then, Oliver rejects Fagin's "criminal reading" (Brantlinger 1998: 82) in favour of Mr. Brownlow's bourgeois-liberal cultural model. Instead of Mr. Brownlow's books, the pieces of information that make Jamal a millionaire are the bric-a-brac of economic globalisation. Jamal works as a *chaiwallah* at a British call centre: his acculturation, as a player within the network of circulating people, languages, and commodities, is

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demonstrated when he educates call-centre workers about the personal lives of British tabloid celebrities. His assertion of local, singular knowledge during his police interrogation – "everybody in Juhu knows who stole that policeman's bike" – is merely a performance of place, of local, communitarian knowledge in a film which celebrates global capital (*Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, 16:58).

The organising principle of the film – the game show itself – becomes emblematic of Northern development; Meetu Sengupta very perceptively notes how the *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* show "injects the values of merit and neutrality into a society beleaguered by corruption, communal strife, and class segregation" (Sengupta 2010: 82). The syndicated game show – itself a sign of global media – and its logic of merit-based advancement confirms Jamal's ability and rewards him. The two main occupations Jamal has within the film are those of the tour guide and the call-centre *chaiwallah*: both professions position him in spaces inundated with the influx of international tourists and businesses into India. The transcultural, typically global nature of his work transforms him into an able contestant on the game-show and a worthy neoliberal subject overall. At the same time, Jamal's motivations remain predominantly within the sphere of affect: his love for Latika inspires him to action throughout the film, while the economic gain due to winning the show is incidental. This is a crucial departure from Swarup's novel, where the protagonist wants to win the prize money. Whereas in the novel Ram's desire for the monetary prize becomes a disruption of class hierarchy and a powerful critique of privilege, *Slumdog Millionaire* moves closer to Dickensian liberalism by effacing the economic foundations of the protagonist's identity and motives.

In contrast to Jamal's neoliberal subjecthood, Salim and Latika are placed firmly beyond the sphere of productive globalisation. Latika, as the subjugated and silenced woman of the global South, features only as a victim, particularly as a sexualised object of the gaze. She constantly changes hands in the film as a commodity circulating in the flesh-trade market, a form of economic-criminal organisation – symptomatic of the dysfunctional modernity of the postcolonial state – that is offered as a contrast to the constructive presence of global capital. Latika is always either oppressed or rescued, while her trauma is relegated to the gaps and silences within the diegesis. As a romantic/sex object, she is, even at the end of the film, a "prize" awarded to Jamal as he wins ten million rupees

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(Hardiker and Turbin 2011: 207). While Latika is merely the commodified object silenced by the filmic narrative, Salim presents a different kind of counterpoint to Jamal's productive neoliberal subjectivity. Where Jamal seems to operate solely on affective impulses, Salim turns everything around him into a commodity, including emotions: at the beginning of the film, Salim sells the superstar actor Amitabh Bachchan's autographed photograph, which Jamal had obtained with much difficulty; as the ring leader of a group of beggar children, he hands Latika an infant whose cries can be monetised into more handouts from people; later, he sells Latika herself to Javed. Through Salim, the film represents the seamier sides of a modernising India, embodied by the underbelly of the urban metropolis, Mumbai. As a henchman of Javed, a criminal gang lord, Salim epitomises the illegitimate, legally grey economies of Mumbai's underworld, which seem to be competing with 'legal' corporations for resources. After all, Salim points out to Jamal that Javed owns all the skyscrapers that have been built where their slum used to exist. Salim's difference becomes constitutive of Jamal's normativity: often shown as praying, Salim is overtly Othered as Muslim for Northern audiences, whereas Jamal is never imbued with such signs of religiosity. Jamal embodies corporate neoliberalism in that his ethnicity or his religion is never obtrusively present in the public sphere. With Salim's violent death at the end of the film and Jamal's concomitant win in the game show, Mumbai – functioning as a metonymic space for India – is symbolically cleared for legitimate globalisation.

3.   The Neoliberal Subject and the Postcolonial State
Slumdog Millionaire espouses the central tension in *Oliver Twist*: the tussle between two dramatically oppositional modes of existence – the criminal sub-stratum and the normative bourgeois-liberal space – for the protagonist's subjectivity. As the *Bildungsroman* narratives track the contestations between these two modes of being, these texts strategically interpellate audiences into desiring the child protagonist's rescue from the space of danger and harm, and his absorption into the hegemonic space of bourgeois culture. The representation of lower-class spaces, especially the slum, becomes a key tactic in both *Oliver Twist* and *Slumdog Millionaire.*

When describing Oliver's first encounter with an East End slum, Dickens foregrounds the former's terror and disgust, which would surely have resonated with Victorian middle-class readers:

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> A more dirtier or more wretched place he had never seen.
> The street was very narrow and muddy, and the air was
> impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many
> small shops; but the only stock in trade appeared to be heaps
> of children, who even at that time of night, were crawling in
> and out at the doors, or screaming from the inside. The sole
> places that seemed to prosper amid the general blight of the
> place, were the public houses; and in them, the lowest order
> of the Irish were wrangling with might and main. Covered
> ways and yards, where here and there diverged from the main
> street, disclosed little knots of houses, where drunken men
> and women were positively wallowing in filth; and from
> several of the door-ways, great ill-looking fellows were
> cautiously emerging, to all appearance, on no very well-
> disposed or harmless errands. (Dickens 1992: 55)

The phrase "heaps of children" likens young children to superfluous entities amassed inside houses and on streets, while the lack of clear demarcation between the inside and the outside suggests an utter breakdown of respectable domesticity. The reference to "the lowest order of the Irish" utilises racial and cultural stereotypes connected with alcoholism, disorderly and slatternly behaviour, and crime to ensure that Victorian readers are further alienated from the slum space being described. Several scholars have noted how Dickens' novels and journalistic pieces regularly employed the trope of the dangerous and wild city.[10] However, in addition to the use of gothic tropes to represent London, the prose here foregrounds Oliver's sensorial impressions as he walks into the slum and registers the malodorous and dirty environs of the East End. Filtered through Oliver's perceptions, the description of the slum streets evokes readers' revulsion and alarm at the dehumanising impact of such filth on slum inhabitants and strongly suggests Oliver's vulnerability and possible endangerment. As the novel engages in a sensational exploration of the urban underbelly, it offers the middle-class home as the desirable contrast: "Everything was so quiet and neat, and orderly; everybody was quiet and gentle; that after the noise and turbulence in the midst of which he had always lived, it seemed like Heaven itself" (Dickens 1992: 94). While the dangers of the slum spaces suggested the necessity of Oliver's rescue to the reader, the contrast with the middle-class

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home and Oliver's innate sense of the 'sweetness and light' of bourgeois-liberal culture reiterates it. Lauren Goodlad has noted how middle-class domesticity became one of the sources of transcendent values in the Victorian public sphere, especially within reformist discourse (Goodlad 2001: 594). To forward its agenda of social reform, *Oliver Twist* presents the middle-class home with its associations of cleanliness, comfort, education, and culture as the desirable norm; the novel does not present any form of working-class domesticity, which could offer a productive alternative to the world of the Brownlows and the Maylies.

Swarup's novel also describes the slum, but the first-person narration conveys genuine anger and frustration as the protagonist self-identifies as a slum-dweller. Ram tells the reader, "I live in a corner of Mumbai called Dharavi, in a cramped hundred-square-foot shack that has no natural light or ventilation, with a corrugated metal sheet serving as the roof" (Swarup 2005: 133). Instead of separating the protagonist Ram from the working-class multitude that surrounds him, *Q&A* emphasises the representative nature of his miserable living conditions:

> There is no running water and no sanitation. This is all I can afford. But I am not alone in Dharavi. There are a million people like me, packed in a two-hundred-hectare triangle of swampy urban wasteland, where we live like animals and die like insects. […] Dharavi is not a place for the squeamish. Delhi's juvenile home diminished us, but Dharavi's grim landscape debases us. (Swarup 2005: 133)

The repeated use of "us" by the narrator highlights the shared nature of suffering even as readers encounter an individual's experience of living in the slum.

In *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, the film's poetics of garbage transforms the poverty of Mumbai slums into an opaque sensory background. Boyle and cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle's visual representation of Mumbai becomes a veritable palimpsest: Dickens' divided Victorian London meets the dysfunctional modernity of Mumbai. Reviewing the film in the *New Yorker*, Anthony Lane hinted at the literary predecessor of the film's visual politics: "Boyle and his team [...] clearly believe that a city like Mumbai, with its shifting skyline and a population of

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more than fifteen million, is as ripe for storytelling as Dickens' London, and they may be right" (Lane 2008). The film opens with sweeping shots of the Dharavi slums, and the haunting beauty of the specks of colour in the landfills adjacent to the slum aestheticise poverty.[11] The pulsating beats of A.R. Rahman's music, along with the twists and turns of the camera as it follows the young boys running through the streets of Dharavi, renders the cinematic experience into an exciting adventure for viewers. In an interview, Rahman claims that Boyle asked for "no sentiment" in the soundtrack for the film; "And no cello. He didn't want anything depressing. Some scenes are unbearable, and then the music comes in" (qtd. in Gehlawat 2013: 166). Mantle also weaves in panoramic views of Indian deserts (northern India) and *ghaats* (western India) viewed from atop the Indian railways – a non-ironic use of the colonial legacy – for his audience. As the Sri-Lankan-British hip-hop artist M.I.A. sings about "third world democracy", fake visas, and dealing drugs in the background, a long shot of the two boys atop a train reveals the picturesque montage of Indian landscapes ending with nothing less than the Taj Mahal, and this transnational medley of marginality becomes a part of the global commodity that is *Slumdog Millionaire* (*Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, 37).

In her excellent piece on the representation of the cities of the global South in urban studies and popular discourse, Ananya Roy observes how the "apocalyptic and dystopian narrative of the slum" is routinely used to define the developmentally lacking or flawed "megacity" of the third world as the outside to the normative Northern "global city" (Roy 2011: 224-225). Boyle's treatment of the Indian landscape in the film, more specifically, his use of the trope of the urban gothic to portray Dharavi as a space filled with filth, danger, and picturesque decay, employs a similar cache of representational tropes. In fact, contrary to the reality of the "entrepreneurial economy" of Dharavi (Roy 2011: 227), the film presents the slum as an anarchic wasteland; there are no local communities, no viable forms of being offered as alternatives to the world of neoliberalism.

The genealogy of *Slumdog Millionaire* includes the representation of postcolonial India in fiction and films as various as Louis Malle's *Calcutta* (1969), Dominique Lapierre's *City of Joy* (1985) and its 1992 film adaptation, Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* (1988), G.D. Roberts's *Shantaraam* (2003), Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* (2004), and Ross Kauffman and Zana Briski's *Born into Brothels* (2004), which represent

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postcolonial modernity as the failure of the postcolonial state and the
dwindling legacy of colonial modernity. In his essay on *Slumdog
Millionaire*, Ajay Gehlawat observes that "the slum in many ways come to
define India in the Western popular imagination" (Gehlawat 2013: 165).
Returning to Ebert's earlier cited review, one may trace the foundational
presence of traditional Western representational as well as spectatorial
patterns *vis-à-vis* Indian modernity in the critical and popular response to
Slumdog Millionaire:

> People living in the streets. A woman crawling from a
> cardboard box. Men bathing at a fire hydrant. Men relieving
> themselves by the roadside. You stand on one side of the
> Hooghly River, a branch of the Ganges that runs through
> Kolkuta [*sic*], and your friend tells you, "On the other bank
> millions of people live without a single sewer line." (Ebert
> 2008)

This "real India" with its teeming poor on the streets and unimaginable filth,
as per Ebert, coexists with the "new India", which is characterised by a
burgeoning middle class, highly educated professionals, IT hubs, and
exciting literature (Ebert 2008).

    Slumdog Millionaire revels in the dysfunctional modernity of
postcolonial India as it presents the nightmarish world of Jamal's childhood.
This world abounds with cruel teachers, corrupt cops, ruthless social
workers, child prostitution, and a thriving criminal underworld; essentially,
it presents the complete breakdown of all and any administrative and
governmental machinery. One of the scenes from the film shows a
passenger within the railway carriage grabbing hold of Jamal as he and
Salim attempt to steal food from the window and, ultimately, shoving them
off the moving train. The crook in the guise of a social worker, Maman, runs
an orphanage of sorts, luring children into a supposed haven only to
disfigure them and force them to beg on the streets. Prem, the game-show
host, who shares Jamal's humble social origins, is envious of Jamal's
success and tries to trick him into answering the quiz questions incorrectly.
The torture in the police station is normalised to the point of being a tedious
chore for the police inspector. Even the 1992-93 religious riots in Mumbai
are dehistoricised into a sudden inexplicable eruption of violence, into the

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unavoidable risk of living in a third-world slum. The only moment of kindness in the film, albeit caricaturised, comes from American tourists, who hand Jamal a hundred dollar bill, horrified by the terrible beating their driver has given the latter. "You wanted to see a bit of real India. Well, here it is", Jamal tells the shocked tourists (*Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, 46:20). Other than this moment of international philanthropy, violence in Boyle's India is casual, random, and all pervasive; it is the state of things as they are. The slum becomes the predominant trope of identification for India.

The image of young Jamal emerging from a veritable pool of human excreta thus becomes a central metaphor of the film: Jamal – the film seems to tell its audience – must be rescued from the slime of the failed postcolonial state. A film critic for the *Denver Post* perhaps best represents the politics of sympathy at work within neoliberal representations of third-world suffering:

> *Slumdog* invites comparisons to the works of Charles Dickens. Like that author, the film has placed a sympathetic hero into the midst of a powerfully observed if shameful context. That he may escape his fate to pursue his destiny by answering a question on a goofy show is tricky. Still, we sit on the edge of our seats like the movie's citizens, gathered in restaurants and crowded outside electronics stores, to cheer Jamal on. We know it's complicated. Popular cultural fantasies are. *Yet we believe his triumph might surely be ours.* (Kennedy 2008, added emphasis)

This film critic, like the audiences of the global North, believes that Jamal's triumph is hers because the filmic narrative posits Jamal as a neoliberal subject in the making and initiates a dynamic of identification and rescue congruent with Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. The *Denver Post* critic, the Western audiences in general, as well as the heterogeneous Indian multitude within the filmic narrative cheer Jamal's "escape" via the game show, *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, an Indian version of the U.K. show, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. As Latika observes, the popularity of the game show rests on its offer of "a chance to escape" (*Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, 1:20:13). Indeed, through the game show trope, the film enacts the fantasy of liberal agency: the "escape" of a worthy individual from an oppressive system.

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        Significantly, in Swarup's novel, the game-show, *Who Wants to be a Billionaire*, is a syndicated American show, which promises untold riches to its contestants, but does not have the resources to pay the winner. The show's American and Indian producers bring a case of fraud against Ram in order to get out of paying the hefty prize amount (Swarup 2005: 5). The empty promises of prosperity made by this global company, *New Age Telemedia*, become a satirical commentary on the uneven development brought about by neoliberal economies and global capital. *Slumdog Millionaire* transforms this act of corporate violence into the individual act of envy: the show's host, Prem, begrudges Jamal's success and asks the police to investigate him for cheating in the show. The game-show itself remains a way of betterment and, in fact, allows Jamal's *Bildungsroman* to reach its traditional closure of heterosexual coupling.

        Neoliberal globalisation, thus, is offered as the only alternative to dysfunctional Indian modernity. Jamal's near miraculous mastery of English enables his movement from the margins to the centre while Hindi remains the language of childhood and deprivation. Jamal's movement from Hindi to English, his job in the British call-centre, and his success in a British-based game-show signal his growth as a protagonist and serve to coalesce the *telos* of the *Bildungsroman* with the process of becoming a productive subject in neoliberal global economy. This is not to claim that the film does not critique globalisation, but rather that the film offers a binary between productive and exploitative models of globalisation. The most stringent critique of exploitative globalisation is offered through the figure of the Fagin-like Maman, who, behind the façade of an NGO, maims and disfigures children so that they earn more money as beggars. Even as it opens up the space for a critique of globalisation, however, the film individualises corruption and violence. Thus, although Maman tempts Jamal and Salim with bottles of Coca-Cola, he ultimately stands for the corrupt locals who misuse the signage of global capital. If Maman represents indigenous corruption, then the American tourists who hand a badly beaten Jamal a hundred dollar bill as a sign of 'the real America' represent the myopic paternalism of the West. Such failed examples of international transactions, however, only support the model of productive globalisation, which 'write' Jamal's destiny, his success.

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4.   Conclusion: Bollywood Lite

Transformed into a global commodity, *Slumdog Millionaire* combines the two temporalities of Dickens' London and present-day Mumbai as a palimpsest-like chronotope for its story. Boyle's lament about the loss of Dickensian storytelling in the West is significant:

> We've lost that [Dickensian storytelling, absolute fable] in the West; we've exiled the extreme stuff to fantasy and superhero movies. The stuff that's left is very cerebral, quite dry, serious drama. […] But for this film, Simon embraced this rich, architecture style of Dickensian writing. (Boyle and Dunham 2011: 140)

Aside from the problematic use of redundant categories like "cerebral" and "fable" to characterise the West and India respectively, Boyle's observations indicate that *Slumdog Millionaire* utilises Dickens as a lens to understand postcolonial India in an anachronistic fashion as the recognisable past of the more developed West. This nostalgia works dangerously enough to affirm a trajectory of progress where the global South is still placed in the position of deficit.

Along with Dickens, *Slumdog Millionaire* also uses the thematic and aesthetic conventions of popular Hindi cinema. Boyle acknowledged the influence of popular Hindi films, such as *Deewaar* (1975), *Satya* (1998), and *Black Friday* (2004), on *Slumdog Millionaire* (Kumar 2008). Loveleen Tandon, the casting director and co-director of the film, also mentions the influence of the 1970s film-writing duo Salim-Javed on Boyle (qtd. in Anon. 2009). Within the film, the photograph of Amitabh Bachchan and scenes from *Deewaar* act as a supposed homage to Hindi popular cinema. Indeed, the plot of *Slumdog Millionaire* also borrows the melodramatic motif of the bad brother versus the good brother from popular Hindi films, particularly *Deewaar.*

However, *Slumdog Millionaire*'s engagement with Hindi cinema is fetishistic at best as the social critique, which was very central to all the examples cited by Boyle, is strangely absent from his film. The popular Hindi films of the 1970s, such as *Deewaar* and *Zanjeer* (1973), all starring Amitabh Bachchan, often revolved around underdog protagonists pitted against a callous and exploitative social system. These films responded to

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the failure of the Nehruvian socialist project and the growing gap between the poor and the upper classes. The anger and protest articulated in these films were the reason behind Bachchan's epithet of 'the angry young man'. *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, employs the aesthetics of Hindi cinema as pastiche, emptied of any meaningful social and historical content. The familiar Dickensian tale is garnished with Bollywood *masala* for Western audiences without incorporating the latter's social *angst*. It is thus not only the recognisability of the Oliver Twist-like Jamal, which pleases Northern viewers, but the film as well: *Slumdog Millionaire* functions as an aesthetic object, which seems growingly familiar, but enticingly not quite.

Though Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* overtly adapts Swarup's novel, it is closer ideologically to Dickens' *Oliver Twist* in its celebration of the liberal/neoliberal narratives of progress and evolution through the figure of its central protagonist, who remains uniquely and frustratingly inviolate and removed from his slum environment and whose rescue and simultaneous movement into a liberal-bourgeois social location functions as the central logic of the plot. This essay has been an exploration of the rather pernicious geopolitical implications of the Dickensian liberal legacy as it coalesces with the metanarratives of globalisation and neoliberalism. Through its strategic retelling of the Dickensian *Bildungsroman, Slumdog Millionaire* and its reception in Northern and Western media selectively make visible and affirm certain aspects of globalisation and neoliberal development, while dubiously suppressing the actual social-material ramifications of global capitalism for postcolonial and subaltern communities.

Notes

1. See Barbara Korte's essay on the literary representations of poverty and global audiences, particularly centred on Vikas Swarup's *Q&A* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (Korte 2011).
2. While creative acts of adaptation and appropriation often seem interchangeable, Julie Sanders points out how appropriation can often eschew adaptation's deferential approach towards the original text in favour of "critique" or even "assault" (Sanders 2006: 4).
3. *The Numbers* website lists the domestic and international box office figures for *Slumdog Millionaire* (Anon. 2013).

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4. Dickens' *oeuvre* was central to the Victorian configurations of liberal culture, and it may be safely suggested that *Oliver Twist*, despite its early-nineteenth-century publication date, both anticipated and helped to shape mid-century liberal culture in Britain.

5. Dickens writes in the preface to the novel about Oliver's representativeness: "I wish to shew, in little Oliver, the principle of good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last" (Dickens 1992: xxxv).

6. For discussions of the politics of language in *Oliver Twist*, see Ginsburg 1987 and Michael 1993.

7. The evidence seeking pseudo-science of physiognomy, first developed by Johann Caspar Lavater, was increasingly considered as an important avenue to the visible coding of an individual's personality and motivations. While literary authors such as Charlotte Brontë played on readers' expectations of such methods of decoding, as in the gypsy scene of *Jane Eyre* (1847), where she ironised easy face readings, physiognomy was, in the 1840s, still placed in the service of documenting 'scientific' evidence about bodily texts.

8. For an interesting discussion of illustrations in Charles Dickens' novels, see Meisel 1983 and Andrews 2008.

9. See Das 2012 for a detailed discussion of the impact of neoliberal policies in India.

10. See Walkowitz 1992, Joseph McLaughlin 2000, and Ridenhour 2013 for varied approaches to the Victorian literary and non-fictional representations of the urban space.

11. See Nandini Chandra on how the Dharavi landscape of poverty is made aesthetic and harmonious by cinematography and musical score (Chandra 2009: 34-35).

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