

Comparison of slumdog millionaire and a girl walks home alone at night

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Although the setting of *Slumdog Millionaire* by Danny Boyle and *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night* by Ana Lily Amirpour are different, they both use the plot structure and symbolism to present the common theme: the destiny, which can be shaped by choices and actions.

The life story of the protagonist Jamal Malik in *Slumdog Millionaire* is built through the game show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” and a series of his flashbacks revealing how his life experiences gave him the right answers to every quiz question in the show. It displays the way he formed his destiny. On the day when running away from the Hindu rioters who brutally killed his mother just because of the religious difference, Jamal accidentally met Latika. Driven by the sympathy, he asked that lonely little girl to run together and then offered her a shelter in an empty container at a hardly raining night despite his elder brother’s opposition. Latika started to become Jamal’s destiny that he himself created and was also his belief which motivated him to find her twice later on. The first time they separated is during the escape from a cold-blooded gangster who made money by gathering the street kids and forcing them to become professional beggars. Some years after that, despite life-risking, Jamal came back Chowpatty to search Latika and rescued her. He said to her, “I knew I’d find you in the end. It’s our destiny” (0: 59: 50). However, he then had to go away after being threatened by his brother who wanted to be with Latika. Many years later, he became a person who serves tea to the workers at a call center of a mobile phone company while his brother turned into a gangster. Though they both grew up in the slums, they chose different ways to survive their poverty and to create their own lives. Jamal tried to find Latika again and

found her at a gangster house in Bombay. Unfortunately, she could not flee with him because of being controlled by the gangster. Once again, he tried to shape his destiny by his decision, joining the game show “ Who Wants To Be A Millionaire” as a means to free Latika as according to her, it is “ a chance to escape” and to “ walk in another life”. Lack of education, he hardly could know the answers to the quiz on a wide range of topics. However, he won the top prize of the show and became a millionaire. There is no answer to his happy ending other than “ It is written”, or, “ It is destiny”. Jamal’s destiny is the result of his choices and actions. If he had not earned an honest living by being a chaiwallah at a mobile phone company’s call center, he would never have known how to get the chance to join the game show. If he had not been a contestant on the game show, he would never have become the millionaire. He tried to change the life he was given, created his own life, chose the paths he took that made him who he is ultimately destined to become. Finding Latika at the railway station in the last scene of the film, he said, “ This is our destiny” (1: 47: 56). Eventually, a young uneducated man whose life was full of poverty and tragedy got his destiny, becoming a millionaire and enjoying the true love after many painful life experiences.

A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night portrays the main character The Girl as scary and lethal, but human in appearance and motive. She is a chador-wearing female vampire who wanders in Bad City at night to stalk. Parallellly, she is also a pretty young girl wearing a striped shirt and putting on lipstick, preying on immoral men. She created her own destiny and shaped it with her

decisions and actions. The life of The Girl and Arash, the male protagonist in the film, unfold in story tracking by incidents. If in Slumdog Millionaire, Latika is Jamal's destiny, we can say Arash is The Girl's destiny. Unlike other bloodthirsty predators, The Girl set her own code of ethics for her aim. Her targets are depraved guys such as the drug dealer and pimp Saeed, the prostitute and drug addict Hossein. Besides feeding on the bad dudes, she also focused on the ones that seemed to be the prospective good guys. For example, she followed a beggar boy (0: 35: 35), barred him from coming home, kept asking him, " Are you a good boy?". Then she showed her fangs to frighten him and said, " Till the end of your life, I'll be watching you. Be a good boy!". She formed her own way to live a vampire's life and made choices of her justice-driven actions. One night, she met Arash in Dracula costume when he was staring at a street lamp due to getting lost after leaving a party. Their relationship started when he felt her coldness and tried to warm her by embracing her in his cape. Then, she took him to her home by using her skateboard. During the scene at her house, he came up behind her, she turned back, gazed at his eyes, then tilted his head back and stared at his neck. Then she approached his neck as if she was going to suck his blood. However, she leaned her face against his chest instead (0: 54: 00). Arash is not really a good guy. He stole earrings from a rich girl and took over the business of a local drug dealer after his death. But he is not really a bad guy either. He struggled with taking care of a father addicted to drug and prostitute, and with the payment of his father's debts to the drug seller who forced his precious vintage car. The Girl decided not to kill Arash and

her choice developed their relationship and shaped her destiny afterward when she left the Bad City with him to start a new life.

Symbolism is another film element in both films that the filmmakers rely on to convey the theme of destiny. In *Slumdog Millionaire*, the color yellow, color of sunshine, in some element of Latika's clothing symbolizes the deeper meaning of Jamal's destiny. The image of Latika in his mind was a beautiful girl in a yellow tunic, the bright color standing out amongst the crowds in the bustling railway station. Additionally, in the last scene, she had a shining yellow scarf when they finally reunited after the twists and turns of life. In India, the color yellow represents the happiness, it implies that the destiny Jamal created is the happiness of being with the girl he loved. She is the brilliant sunshine in his impoverished and tragic life and also a motivation force driving him to choose the paths and actions to get his destiny. In *A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night*, the chador of The Girl is used to contribute to the theme of destiny. When she was riding the skateboard down the desolate streets of Bad City at night for stalking, her chador flapped behind her like the wings which are associated with freedom. The Girl's chador indicates her freedom in creating her own life of a vampire. In addition, her chador looks like the cape of Batman, a fictional superhero, who courageously defended his city from dangerous criminals. Similar to Batman, The Girl killed the depraved guys to protect Bad City. Her chador represents her choices and actions that made her who she was eventually destined to develop.

The plot structure and symbolism are important elements in Slumdog Millionaire and A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night. They help the filmmakers to convey the significant message to their audience that we have control over our destiny. Both Jamal and The Girl played the primary role in shaping their own destiny which was determined by their life choices and then was gained by their actions. Unlike the fate which just gives them the opportunities, like opening the door in front of them, however, when they decided to walk through that door and put it in action, it is when they shaped their destiny.