**Ttotsi merit exemplar Level 2 Film essay**

*Analyse how visual or sound effects were used to emphasis a theme in the visual or oral text(s).*

‘Tsotsi’ (2005) is a movie based on a novel written in the 1950s and directed by Gavin Hood. A very prominent theme written in the film is that of Crime and Poverty. The poverty is inferred to be the cause of crime as could be seen in every slum in reality. Hood uses very visual and sound effects to emphasize this theme, but the combination of sound and visual was the most successful in portraying the theme. Two scenes specifically use a varying degree of the combinations, the first scene when Tsotsi and his gang are searching for target and they succeed when they accost a man on the train. Also overall, the combinations of visual effects such as setting and costume combined with the sound effect of the soundtrack can also emphasize the theme of crime and poverty.

The scene where Hood combines visual and aural effects to emphasise the theme of crime and poverty is when Tsotsi and his gang are in the train station searching for a victim. The station is quite modern looking and so the crime shown emphasises that poverty can create crime anywhere. As Tsotsi and his gang enter the station, the upbeat rap music stops and is replaced with the muffled sounds of the station. This signals the start of their search for a victim. Hood uses quick cuts between mid shots and long shots of people and a mid-shot of Tsotsti to show him sneering and disregarding people he targets. As he spots one particular man, a faint rattlesnake-like noise can be heard. As rattlesnakes use this sound to warn people, it hints at possible danger. As Tsotsi watches the man, the camera cuts between them, getting closer each time, showing Tsotsi watching the man carefully. The background noise becomes more faint as he becomes more focused on the man. As the man pulls out an envelope, the rattlesnake noise is heard again but louder this time. The camera cuts back to an extreme close up of Tsotsi’s eyes and cuts back to the man zooming in towards the envelope, highlighting it and focusing on it as the man pulls money from it. All of these effects combined create anxiety in the viewer. They can see that a crime is about to occur and wish to warn the man. All these effects show how one person someone wishing to harm them without realising a thing can watch so closely. This emphasises that crime can happen anywhere no matter how safe it might seem.

The second scene that emphasises crime and poverty through the use of sound and visual effects is the train when the gang assault the man. As the gang approach the man, the diegetic noises in the background become louder. Noises such as the sound of the train or of people talking can be heard more clearly. This shows how the gang’s senses are being over-stimulated as they perform their crime, for fear and being caught. This creates anxiety in the viewer, which they link to bad deeds as nearly everyone has likely experienced this sensation before. The quick cuts between close-up shots of the gang’s faces show this anxiety through their expressions As the gang rob and ultimately murder the man, the rhythmic sound of the train seems to get faster. Viewers might relate this to the sound of a heartbeat, as someone gets nervous so their anxiety or fear rises. This in turn causes the audiences’ hearts to beat faster which they link to fear and then possibly to crime or bad deeds. The combination of all these effects creates tension in the viewer and helps to create a feeling that something bad is about to happen. This shows how even though they were in a crowded train bad crimes can still happen with others around being oblivious to it happening.

There were some combinations of visual and sound effect that were used throughout the film to emphasize crime and poverty. The film was mostly set in a slum. This was full of huts and shacks made from a variety of materials. It was dirty and unkempt slum. This emphasized the poverty in the film. The upbeat ‘gangster’ rap that accompanied most of these sorts of scenes emphasized the crime as the viewer relates that sort of music to gangsters who perform crimes. Also, along with these two effects, the costumes added some emphasis. Most of the gang wore dark mismatched clothes that were dirty. Some wore leather jackets. These dark clothes can be associated with crime as the dark colours are used to blend in so that they can get away with crimes without sticking out. The dirty and mismatched-ness of them shows the poverty that they come from which is causing them to live lives of crime. All of these effects emphasize crime and poverty for the viewer.

So many different combinations of sound and visual effects were used to emphasize poverty and crime in ‘Tsotsi’. The combination of quick cuts, rattlesnake noises and muffled background noises creates a feeling of being watched. It hints to the audience of how you never know who is lurking in the background watching and waiting. Therefore you should always protect yourself carefully. The combination of exaggerated diegetic noise, the increasing tempo of the train with the quick cuts of the close-ups of the gang’s faces helps to create anxiety and fear in the audience which they would relate to crime and even poverty if one feels hopeless or lost. The combination of setting, clothing and the soundtrack were the most effective at emphasizing poverty and crime as it showed a lot of dirty clothes and places of darkness that is associated with crime and lack of electricity. So overall, Gavin Hood successfully emphasised the theme of crime and poverty through a large variety of combinations of visual and sound effects.