SEARCHING FOR LOVE IN
JEAN MARC VALLEE’S THE YOUNG VICTORIA MOVIE (2009):
AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH

PUBLICATION ARTICLES
Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for getting Bachelor Degree of Education
in Department English Education

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SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
2012
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ABSTRACT

This study is about searching for love in The Young Victoria movie (2009). This objective of the study is to apply the Existentialist approach to analyze search for love in The Young Victoria movie. The writer uses Sartre’s major point of Existentialism to answer the problem of the study. The type of study is descriptive qualitative research whose data are taken from two data sources: primary and secondary. The study comes to the following conclusion. Firstly, based on the structural analysis of each elements, it shows that the character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme, casting, mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound, and editing are related one another. Second, based on the existentialist analysis, human has different existences which based on different being, choice, anxiety and etc. Human has a freedom to choose and takes responsibility for his choice. The responsibility makes human feel anxiety. Jean Marc Valle shows the struggle from Victoria in searching her love. The Director tries to show the moral value, that human must do some efforts to get his love without sacrifices their obligation. It means that everything must be balanced and human must takes responsibility not only for himself but also for the whole humanity.

Key words: Searching for love, The Young Victoria, Existentialist Approach.

1. Introduction

Background of the Study: Love can be described an intense feeling of interaction an emotional or an emotional state. In ordinary use, love is usually felt by a person. For another person, love is commonly considered impossible to describe. Love is essentially an abstract concept, easier to experience than to
explain. Love is a part of human existence and Existentialist is known as a branch of philosophy which is focused on human existence. Existentialist is not easy to define but existentialist and philosophy has relation of each other. Each philosopher has different way to define the meaning of existentialist. Existentialist analysis has seven major points which consist of Being, Existence before Essence, Consciousness (cogito), Freedom to Choose, Anxiety, Transcendence of Ego, and Nothingness.

_The Young Victoria_ movie was made based on the life and reign of Queen Victoria. The film was directed by Jean-Marc Vallée and written by Julian Fellowes. Graham King, Martin Scorsese served as the film's producers. This movie starring by Emily Blunt as Victoria and Rupert Friend as Prince Albert. _The Young Victoria_ movie was taken in several historical landmark in England. This movie was very successful movie in box office.

The stories of this film start out when a child was born. She is Victoria, the only daughter of the Duchess of Kent (Miranda Richardson). The conflict starts when Princess Victoria of Kent known as the heiress during the last years of the reign of her uncle King William IV. Her father was died when Victoria was a baby, so Victoria raised under a strict rules devised by her mother. Victoria was forbidden even to walk up and down the stairs without a maid to hold her hand. Duchess of Kent was actually being a puppet of an ambitious politician Sir John Conroy (Mark Strong) a comptroller of the Duchess's household.

Sir John Conroy hopes that William IV will die while Victoria is still a minor, thus the Duchess would be appointed Regent, and he would be the power behind the throne through his considerable control of the Duchess. Victoria grows rebellious and resentful of her mother and Conroy's oppressive control of her every move. During an illness, her mother and Conroy attempt to force Victoria to sign papers that would make Conroy her personal secretary upon her majority. Although weak and ill, Victoria is strong enough to vehemently refuse this ploy, throwing the papers on the floor.
Her uncle King Leopold I of Belgium uses his influence through family ties to secure an alliance between Britain and Belgium. He realizes his sister, the Duchess, exerts little influence over Victoria and decides to send his nephew Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld to seduce Victoria. Albert is trained by Baron Stockmar to learn Victoria's interests, including her favorite novels, music and opera. Victoria and Albert talk openly and sincerely and become friends. They had been writing to one another after Albert has returned home.

King William died after Victoria's 18th birthday. After accession, Victoria immediately begins to exert her independence, including moving into her own room and banishing Conroy from her household and coronation. Queen Adelaide advises Victoria against accepting all of Lord Melbourne's proposed ladies-in-waiting, but he persists. Lord Melbourne and Albert begin a battle for influence over Victoria. Albert goes to England to spend more time with Victoria. They bond further, dancing during her coronation and Albert hints at going further with their relationship but Victoria resists.

Lord Melbourne loses a vote in Parliament, leading Victoria to invite Sir Robert Peel of the Tories to form a new government. However, Victoria refuses to allow Peel to replace her ladies-in-waiting, who are allies of Lord Melbourne. Peel in turn refuses the queen's invitation, allowing Melbourne to continue as prime minister. The subsequent crisis damages Victoria's popularity, leading to demonstrations outside the palace and insults hurled at her in public. The loneliness during the turbulence draws Victoria closer to Albert through their letters. She invites Albert to England and proposes marriage.

Victoria and Albert have a loving marriage, but Albert is frustrated at his initial powerlessness in the household. One morning, while riding in a carriage together, Victoria is fired upon by a would-be assassin. Albert shields her, and his bravery leads to their reconciliation.
The final title card explains that Victoria and Albert had nine children. In memory of him, Victoria had his clothes laid out every day until her death at age 81.

The Young Victoria was directed by Jean-Marc Vallée born March 9, 1963. He is a Canadian movie director. He is best known for the film C.R.A.Z.Y (2005) which is one of the most successful. At the 26th Genie Awards this movie was nominated for 13 awards of which it won 11. Jean-Marc Vallée had Hollywood's red carpet laid out in front of him. He chose, instead, to make the last sort of movie he expected: a traditional costume drama exploring the romance between Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

There are four reasons why the writer is interested to analyze this movie. The first is the character of Victoria as a major character which is staring by Emily Blunt. She is very interesting woman. In this film she portrayed as an intelligent woman for very early age. Second one is setting of this movie. Young Victoria movie took place at several different locations historical landmarks in England. There are Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Belgium Palace, Rosenau Castle etc. This movie also presents about situation in 19th century. Young Victoria movie shows how Victoria Era is dressing up. Third is the uniqueness which is showing on this movie. This movie shows us culture and behavior people in United Kingdom. The last reason is great responses. The film was nominated for three Academy Awards, winning the 2010 Academy Award for Best Costume Design. The film also won for the Best Make-Up and Hair and Best Costume Design at the 63rd British Academy Film Awards.

**Problem Statement** of this research is, “How searching for love reflected in Jean Marc Vallee’s *The Young Victoria* movie using Existentialist Approach?”
Limitation of the Study is analyzing human’s existence in searching for love reflected in *The Young Victoria* movie based on the Sarte’s theory of existentialism.

Objective of the Study is to analyze Jean Marc Vallee’s *The Young Victoria* based on the structural elements of movie and to analyze searching for love reflected in Jean Marc Vallee’s *The Young Victoria* movie using existentialist approach.

Literature Review related to this research paper has been conducted by Indrawati (*UMS*, 2006) with her research entitled *Search For Existence in Shari Springer Berman’s The Nanny Diaries Movie (2007): An Existentialist Approach*. The result of this research firstly shows that based on the structural analysis. All of technical elements have the unity and successful support this movie into good quality. Shari Springer as director wants to convey a moral message that “the awareness of life meaning leads to meaningful action”. It so doing the character of Annie that succes get much impression for a drama-comedy movie.

2. Research Method

In this research, the researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method. The writer analyzes the data from the written script or oral words from The Young Victoria movie film using existentialism approach.

In doing this study, the writer uses two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources. (1) Primary data source is the movie itself, Jean-Marc Vallée *The Young Victoria* movie. (2) Secondary data sources are taken from other sources like author, the material about existentialism, essay, comments, critics, the existentialism books, internet, etc. The methods of collecting data are documentation the picture and note taking, with the steps are: (1) Watching the original movie for several times, (2) Reading the movie script, (3) Determining the character that will be analyzed, (4) Taking notes of important thing both of primary and secondary data sources, (5) Classifying and determining the relevant
data, (6) Notes is the material and other resources that related into the movie and the analysis. The technique used to analize the data in this movie is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the structural elements of this movie and existentialist approach.

3. Existentialism Theory
   a. Notion of Existentialism

   Existentialism is known as a branch of philosophy which is focused on human existence. Existentialist is not easy to define, each philosopher has different way to define the meaning of existentialist. Human has its own existence, unlike plants, animal and other things. Jean-Paul Sartre argued “man makes himself.” Existentialist concern themselves with humanity’s very being with is perpetual struggle to exist. It means that every person have freedom or free will and responsibility for their action.

   Human existence is different “the human being exist actually , by standing out or emerging thought the decisions and act that make this person the unique being that he or she is”

   b. Jean-Paul Satre’s Theory on Existentialism

      1) Being

      In analyzing the nature of human existence, Satre claims that the fundamental distinctive of human “Being”(ontology) lies in man ability to make free choice. Sartre distinguished being into two. First is being -in –itself and second is being –for-itself. Being-in-itself is the principle of objectivity and refers to the being of meaning of things. The subject of being-its-self is human existence.

      2) Existence Before Essence

      Existence before essence could be explained that human were created by God without any aim of life. They are free to choose a choice and decision
anything for their life. Sartre explained that “human life is understandable in the term of an individual man’s existence, his particular experience in life”. That statement means that human existence is the way of human exist in the world. Sartre in Hassan says that:

Man is not existentialism. That first principle is man to approach as subjectively. As Exisetothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle nce that marked by openness toward the future. Hence, a man makes planning for his future (Sartre in Hassan. 1993: 103).

3) Cogito (Self Consciousness)

Sartre (1957: 51) stated that “his existentialism begin with human subjectivity of the Cogito”. Cogito means “I am thinking” and it is stressed on “I” of self just as much as its act of thinking”. Sartre explained that cogito or consciousness is self consciousness, in cogito human think about the profit or loss in his choice.

4) Freedom to choose

Human has responsibility of himself or herself, because human has freedom to choose and decide good thing or a bad thing in their life. The first important truth about man’s freedom is unbreakable. It means that human has absolute freedom. “I am responsible for myself and for everyone else. I am creating perform certain image of the man of my own choosing. In choosing myself, I chose a man (Hassan, 1993: 104)

5) Anguish (Anxiety)

Anxiety appears when human has to decide the choice in their life. Human feel conscious that his choice will influence their life. The choice will appear with responsibility and risk. All choices will have a consequences and also responsible. As following Sartre quotation,

“the man who involves himself and who realize that he is not only the person choose to be, but also a lawmaker who is, at the same time,
choosing all mankind as well as himself, cannot help escape the feeling of this total and deep responsibility.” (Sartre in Hassan, 1993: 105).

6) Transcendence of Ego

Transcendence of ego is such kind of tendencies for human to more helpful for their society as a useful person or a hero. Human can not life alone in society, they need other person to help.

7) Nothingness

Notingness is the condition when human can not continue their existence. Death is the end of existence. It means that when human die, they will be nothingness.

4. Theory of Love

Love is a basic human emotion, but understanding how and why it happens is not necessarily easy. In fact, for a long time, many people suggested that love was simply something that science couldn't understand. Love is essentially an abstract concept, easier to experience than to explain.

Zick Rubin (1970: 265) proposed that:

“Romantic love is made up of three elements: attachment, caring and intimacy. Attachment is the need to receive care, approval and physical contact with the other person. Caring involves valuing the other persons needs and happiness as much as your own. Intimacy refers to the sharing of thoughts, desires, and feelings with the other person.

5. Research Finding
   a. Being

Being is distinguished into two. First is being-in-itself which concerns with thing’s existence and second is being-for-itself which discusses human existence. Being-in-itself in The Young Victoria movie is shown in the precious crown which means the power based on the meaning of characters.

Based on Victoria’s view, the meaning of crown devotes her life to serve her country and people. Wears crown means that she is responsible to
enhance the welfare of her people. It can be seen when Victoria takes a conversation with Lord Melbourne.

Victoria : I do want to help them, whatever you say. And not just the labouring poor, but the hungry and the homeless. There are people who are lost. Whose business is it to see to their welfare?

Lord Melbourne : Well, in my experience, it's best to let these things develop naturally. If you interfere, you risk overturning the cart.

Victoria : Prince Albert doesn't agree. He's made a study of the working man's condition. He's full to the brim with ideas for their improvement.

Lord Melbourne : Is he indeed? How inspiring.

Scene(TYV, I, 00:49:08,120 --> 00:49:38,829)

From that dialogue we know that Victoria wants to help the labouring poor, the hungry and the homeless. Victoria gets support from Price Albert who made a study of the working man condition. That conversation also shows us that Victoria amazed about Prince Albert did to help people. But, Lord Melbourne as Victoria’s advisor has different argument about that, he suggests Victoria to let all things walk naturally.

b. **Existence before Essence**

The major character in this movie is Victoria, in the process of becoming, Victoria defines herself as being for itself to make her existence in her life. She defines herself as a young woman who was fighting to be a queen and wants to serve her people and country. Victoria’s existence shows when Victoria decides to do her duties as a new queen than spend all the time with her beloved Prince Albert. This is drawn in Victoria’s letter which sends to Albert.

c. **Cogito (Self Consciousness)**

The writer analyzes the existence of major character through the consciousness. It is requirement in human existence as the aspect of existentialism in The Young Victoria movie, it will be analyzed in Victoria as the major character of this movie. The consciousness of Victoria begins when she was down, she got crisis damages of popularity. The loneliness during the turbulence pushes
Victoria closer to Albert through her letters. She invites Albert to England and proposes marriage.

d. Freedom to choose

All characters in *The Young Victoria* movie have a freedom to choose. But in this point the researcher analyzes the freedom to choose through major character that is Victoria.

Victoria: I've had a letter from King Leopold. He proposes extending this visit of Prince Albert.
Lord Melbourne: And what have you answered?
Victoria: Nothing yet.
Lord Melbourne: Well, perhaps you should tell your uncle you need to focus on your new duties right now.

Scene(TYV, I, 00:55:41,710 -- 00:55:57,862)

The conversation above shows that Victoria was confused with King Leopold suggestion to extend the Prince Albert visited. Lord Melbourne as Victoria’s advisor suggest her to answer King Leopold question and stops Albert visiting. He thinks that Victoria must focus on her new duties. Victoria does not know about what will she say to him because she loves Albert and wants to stay with him, but beside that she has so much new duties to serve her public people.

e. Anxiety

Victoria’s anxiety come when she decides to marry with Albert. When the first time everything seems like okay. But, Victoria’s anxiety appears when she starts her business with all her duties.

Albert: What is it?
Victoria: Just a question for Lord M.
Albert: Could I help?
Victoria: It'll keep.

Scene(TYV, I, 01:17:54,510 -- 01:18:03,703)

This conversation shows that Albert bored with all Victoria’s duty and he still does not do anything. Albert wants to help Victoria to answer some Question
from Lord Melbourne, but Victoria refused that. It makes Albert disappointed and lefted Victoria in her room.

f. Transcendence of Ego

Transcendence of Ego in *The Young Victoria* movie is shown through Victoria as a major character. Victoria’s ego comes when she and Albert have different arguments about sharing Victoria’s work. Victoria and Albert were quarreled. They have different views about how to run the political system in the palace. Albert does something with Sir Robert, and it makes Victoria think that Albert tries to control her. Victoria feels unrespected because Albert never asks reference from Victoria and never gets permission from her to change how the palace is run.

g. Nothingness

In *The Young Victoria* movie, there are situations which reflect Nothingness. When Victoria became Queen, she is too young to manage England. Lord Melbourne as her advisor tries to control Victoria. It makes Victoria do some mistakes and people hate them. This is the condition which reflected the nothingness of Victoria.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the major character in *The Young Victoria* movie, in this movie shows Victoria’s effort to search her love and love is part of human existence. Victoria as a major character gives the important part in the meaning of love and effort to get it which based on the Sarte’s theory of existentialism.

In *The Young Victoria* movie, Jean Marc Valee shows Victoria as the major character has effort to search her love. Victoria faces so many troubles to get her love. She must choose between serve her people or her love. As a
young woman, Victoria is great queen. She gives the best that she can do just to serve her people. She is good woman who loves her family.

Victoria’s existence as a child who was growing up under strict rules from Duchess of Kent. Victoria is the only heiress in Kensington Palace. She became queen in 18 years old when her uncle King William I was passed away. As a queen, she has a freedom to choose and decide what he wants, exactly she also has a big responsibility for her act.

In The Young Victoria movie, the director shows human life in searching for love and decides the existence. Human existence makes human must choose which start on his consciousness. Consciousness is one aspect of existentialism which has point to analyze the major character. In The Young Victoria movie, consciousness shows that love is a part of life. Humans need love to make their life meaningful and they must do some efforts to get love. This movie shows how humans with their existence must be aware and realize that love is an important thing which really needed. Consciousness is absolutely needed because everything that human does actually have some risk.

In The Young Victoria movie, Jean Marc Valle shows humans life on his freedom to choose. Freedom to choose is the condition when humans have a freedom in making choices. Victoria as a major character has a freedom to choose her own choice. She must take the responsibility for herself and for other people. Victoria chooses to serve her people and ignore by Albert. Victoria has an opportunity to choose anything that she consider is good and bad for her life with all risk.

When human must choose and decide something, the choice will show a responsibility and effect of his choice. The anxiety in The Young Victoria movie was shown when Victoria chooses to marry with Albert. Victoria feels worried because Albert’s adaptation cannot walk clearly. Albert feels that he
is ignored by Victoria, it because Victoria too busied with all her new duty. The anxiety also shows when Albert was shooting by assassin. Victoria feels worried, she was afraid if Albert will leave her.

Everyone has an ego, sometimes ego arises in high level. Human has different level of ego, this condition is called transcendence of ego. Victoria as a major character has an ego, her ego comes when her husband Albert tries to do something without her permission. It makes Victoria angry because she thinks that Palace is her responsibility and no one can make decision except her.

The next point which is shown in *The Young Victoria* movie is human existence will end when he dies. Human existence starts when he achieves full consciousness and freedom to choose, but when he does not achieve them it is called nothingness condition. Nothingness is the limitation of human existence and death is a form of human limitation. For example when King William IV passed away in 71 years old.

In this movie, Jean Marc Valle shows the struggle from Victoria in searching her love. For some people love can be the source of life. It means people can’t live without love. Love has different meaning by different people. But, almost all people agree that love can make live happier and also love can defeat anything. Existentialism is a theory which discusses human existence. Human existence has a big relation to love because love has a big part in human life.

In this movie, Victoria as a queen with all strict rules and so many duty faced so many obstacles in searching her love. Victoria chooses to devote her life to serve her people but being ignored by Albert. Her people start hate her when she always hears her advisor who pushes her to do bad things. Victoria feels alone and at that time she is aware that Albert can help her. Victoria decides to marry with Albert and both of them reign England together. The aspects of existentialism have shown in this movie, being,
existence before essence, cogito, freedom to choose, anxiety, transcendence of ego, and finally nothingness were built in this movie and related to each other.

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