

**SEEING WEST AND EAST THROUGH THE CHARACTERS OF
VICTORIA AND ABDUL IN *VICTORIA AND ABDUL* (2017)**

A GRADUATING PAPER

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FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this research is originally my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this research. Other researchers' opinions or findings included in this research are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

Yogyakarta, 05 August 2019

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Saya menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqasyah untuk memenuhi sebagian syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatian yang diberikan, saya ucapkan terimakasih

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SEEING WEST AND EAST THROUGH THE CHARACTERS OF VICTORIA AND ABDUL IN *VICTORIA AND ABDUL* (2017)

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ABSTRACT

. *Victoria and Abdul* is a Hollywood film that portrays Victoria, the queen of England who has close friendship with Abdul, a Muslim servant comes from India. Hollywood film often spreads Western superiority, but in *Victoria and Abdul*, Abdul who represents the East is depicted as superior since he gains positions, facilities, and all things that he wants. Although the portrayal shows that the East is superior, it is not what it looks like. The researcher uses qualitative method. Besides, the researcher also uses Orientalism by Edward Said and film theory by Barsam to analyze the portrayal of the West and the East. The researcher finds by the portrayal of the West and the East such as uncivilized East and civilized West, powerless East and powerful West, opportunistic East and sincere West, naive East and logic West. It indicates that the sturcture and pattern of film *Victoria and Abdul* (2017) is still the same because of the superiority of the West.

Keyword: *West, East, Orientalism, Western domination*

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MELIHAT BARAT DAN TIMUR MELALUI KARAKTER VICTORIA DAN ABDUL DALAM FILM *VICTORIA AND ABDUL* (2017)

Oleh: Zulfa Khoirunnisa

ABSTRAK

Victoria and Abdul (2017) adalah sebuah film Hollywood yang menggambarkan Victoria, Ratu Inggris yang bersahabat dengan Abdul, seorang pelayan muslim dari India. Film Hollywood biasanya menyebarkan stereotip barat yang superior, namun dalam film *Victoria and Abdul*, Abdul yang merepresentasikan Timur digambarkan sebagai superior karena ia memperoleh posisi, fasilitas, dan semua hal yang ia inginkan di dalam kerajaan. Meskipun gambaran tersebut menunjukkan bahwa Timur superior, hal tersebut tidak seperti yang terlihat. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif. Selain itu, peneliti juga menggunakan teori Orientalisme oleh Edward Said dan teori film oleh Barsam untuk menganalisis gambaran Barat dan Timur. Peneliti menemukan gambaran Barat dan Timur yaitu, Timur yang tidak beradaban dan Barat yang berperadaban, Timur yang lemah dan Barat yang kuat, Timur yang oportunistik dan Barat yang tulus, Timur yang naif dan Barat yang logis. Hal tersebut menunjukkan bahwa struktur dan pola film *Victoria and Abdul* (2017) masih sama karena Barat tetap mendominasi.

Kata Kunci: *Barat, Timur, Orientalisme, dominasi Barat*

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MOTTO

When life gets blurry, adjust your

Focus

-- Passion Seekers --



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DEDICATION

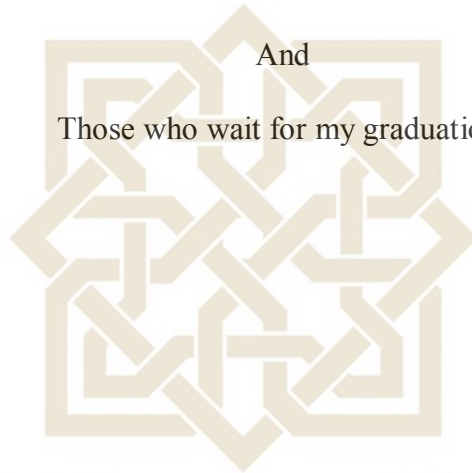
I dedicate this graduating paper to;

My precious parents

My sisters and brother

And

Those who wait for my graduation.



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Yogyakarta, 5 August 2019

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Literature is one of media that human use to express their feeling or thought. According to Klaler, literature is expressive writing that contains of aesthetic and artistic elements (Klarer, 2004:1). Furthermore, Abrams also states that literature imitates reality (Abram, 2009:348). Thus, literature contains values or messages that are taken from real life that director of film wants to deliver.

Nowadays, film is common literature that is known by society. It is new version of literature since the sounds and pictures are recorded (Klaler, 2004: 2). It has techniques and features to express what the director wants to deliver through. The techniques are lighting, camera angle, camera movement, editing, and montage. There are particular features as well such as color of the film, high-contrast or low-contrast, and sensitive or less sensitive material to visually express the story (Klarer, 2004: 60). Those techniques and features make film interesting.

Many films are created by imitating reality. One of issues of real life that is imitated and often brought up in film is colonialism. *Victoria & Abdul* is one of films that tells a story in colonialism era. Usually films that take place during the era of colonialism tell the cruelty of colonizers. Unlike the other films, *Victoria & Abdul* tells about a friendship between a queen of colonizer country named Victoria and a young Muslim servant who comes from colonized county named Abdul. This film was directed by Stephen Frear and released in 2017. The story is based on a book with the same title written by Shrabani Basu. As a country that

rules India, England asks India to send two people to be servants in a ceremonial event. Abdul and his friend are sent to England. Eventually Victoria and Abdul become close friends. The royal family become very anxious because of the friendship of Victoria and Abdul. They consider their influence within the palace decreased after Abdul's arrival. Therefore, they strongly oppose their friendship.

Abdul, a Muslim and an Indian who represents the East is depicted as superior. It is because he is the one who teaches Queen Victoria the language of Urdu and makes the queen opposes her family. He is also a man who is successful in gaining facilities and positions within the palace. On the other hand, Queen Victoria who represents the West is depicted as superior as well because she has authority. She is also an educated woman. Therefore, the researcher focuses on how film *Victoria and Abdul* (2017) actually portray the West and the East.

The portrayal of the West and the East is an important issue because it shows hegemonic stereotype between them. By analyzing the portrayal of the West and the East, the structure and pattern of film will be known. To analyze this issue, the researcher uses Orientalism by Edward Said. According to Said, "Orientalism is the way Europe has ruled the Orient (the East), and also how the Orient has been stated about, reviewed, and taught institutionally. In other word, Orientalism is the Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient." (Said, 2003:3). Thus, this issue contains of stereotypical view of West toward East that West reconstructs images and qualities of East. It is used by the West to state that it has all of opposite qualities of the East.

This graduating paper is a foremost endeavor to examine domination and superiority by analyzing the portrayal of West and East that are represented by characters of Victoria and Abdul.

1.2. Research Questions

How does *Victoria and Abdul* (2017) portray the West and the East through the characters of Victoria and Abdul?

1.3. Objective of Study

Based on the research question above, this objective of this research is to explain the Western domination that is shown by portrayal of orientalism in film *Victoria and Abdul*.

1.4. Significance of Study

This research is significant to show the existence of thought of colonizer in Hollywood film. It shows how Hollywood film becomes a media to perpetuate stereotype of Western domination and superiority.

1.5. Literature Reviews

The researcher has found several previous researches that are similar to this research. The first research uses the same object but different theory. It is a graduating paper entitled *Cooperative Principle Reflecting The Power Relation in "Victoria and Abdul" Movie* by Silviana Chintya Putri (2015). She analyzes cooperative principle through the characters of Victoria and Abdul. Cooperative principle is the study about how people make a good cooperation in communication to interact smoothly in purpose to achieve the goals of interaction. In this research, she uses qualitative method. She finds that Victoria who has

higher social class than Abdul produces flouting maxim of relation to show her power. On the other hand, Abdul produces view violating or flouting maxim because he has lack of power.

The other research that use the same object is a journal entitled *An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used By Characters in Victoria and Abdul Movie 2017* by Ketrin Viollita. In her research, she focuses on the type of politeness strategies and the type most frequently appeared. Beside the type of politeness strategy, she also focuses on the character and the utterances that are used by them. The data that she uses are taken from the conversation among the characters. The politeness strategies are used by five characters namely Queen Victoria, Abdul, Bertie, Dr Reid, and Alick Yorke. She finds that bald on record are mostly used by the characters. The Bald is used to show and emphasize the power, social status, or close relationship among the characters on the film.

The other research is a graduating paper entitled *Orientalism as Portrayed in The Great Wall Movie* by Ridho Hanif Yoghi Artanto. He focuses on the Western domination and superiority over the East. Thus, he uses Orientalism theory to analyze the problem. He also uses qualitative method. In his research, he finds that Orientalism issues are brought up through *The Great Wall* movie. It is shown by the contrasting aspects between the East and the West that leads to the Western domination over the East.

The last is a graduating paper by Cadipa Dyaksa Prawara entitled *A Post-Colonial Study: Orientalism as Portrayed in The Karate Kid Movie*. He focuses on the inequality that is shown by the characters of the film. He uses qualitative

method as well as library research method. In his research, he concludes that the West constructs and depicts the qualities both the East and the West at the same time to show its superiority.

In the previous researches, there are two researches that use *Victoria & Abdul* as object of research. On the other hand, there are also researches that use the same theory as this research but use different object. Thus, the novelty of this research is the problem since the researcher focuses on the portrayal of the West and the East through the characters of Victoria and Abdul in *Victoria and Abdul* (2017).

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1. Orientalism

The researcher applies Edward Said's Orientalism as main theory since this film contains of Western stereotypical view and conception of the East. Orientalism is used as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient (the East) by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, and ruling over it. In other word, it is the Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 2003:3).

The Western attempt to dominate rises the authority to state everything about the Orient and construct the images and qualities of it. Thus, Orientalism is examined as a discourse by which European culture is able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively (Said, 2003:3). The Western conception of the

East helps defining the West as its contrast. It also subjugates the East and emphasizes the Western domination and superiority.

As cited in Said's book, relationship between the West and the East is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said, 2003:5). The West constructs the images and qualities of the East to show its superiority. There is also a collective thought identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans (Said, 2003:7). It emphasizes how "us" and "those" are different or in other words, Non-West owns every opposite quality of the West. The identification of "us" shows the domination of the West while the identification of "those" shows that the East is dominated by the West. In short, it is the idea as well as a hegemony of Western superiority over Eastern backwardness.

Because of the backwardness of the East, the West regards that the East needs to be helped and to be enlighten. It is in line with what Edward Said found as cited in Bertens (2008) that Orientalism is created to spread hegemonic purposes. Those are to legalize imperialism and to make false conviction that the West is capable to bring civilization to the East (Bertens, 2008).

1.6.2. Film theory

The researcher uses film theories as second theory to analyze the film. The film theories are *mise-en-scène* and cinematography by Barsam. *Mise-en-scène* comes from French that literally means staging. The term refers to the overall look and feel of a film. It is the sum of everything that audience sees, hears, and experiences while viewing it (Barsam, 2010:156). Therefore, what the

director wants to deliver in the film depends on the *mise-en-scène* since it influences the mood and thought of audience.

There are two important components of *mise-en-scène*. They are design and composition. Design is the process by which the look of the setting, props, lighting, and actor is determined. While composition is the organization of actors and objects within the space of every shots (p156). Each component has no meaning in itself. It must be combinations of the components within a frame that contribute overall meaning to a shot or scene. Thus, the components of *mise-en-scène* are the soul of a film since they are really powerful to make a film feels real.

According to Barsam and Monahan, cinematography is the process of capturing moving images on film or a digital storage device (p208). Although cinematography seems useful to please viewer with beautiful images on the screen, actually it is an intricate language that can contribute meaning in film. In cinematography, camera is a means of meaning maker. The angles, heights, and movements of the camera produce certain meaning in each shot. By describing the differences shots through compositions within the frame, including implied proximity to the camera, depth, camera angle and height, scale, camera movement, etc. this theory can help telling the story and convey the meanings of the film visually (p208).

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

The kind of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009:1). This research uses qualitative method since the data of the research are analyzed through non-statistical process. In other words, qualitative method is the type of non-statistical inquiry. Qualitative method makes use of descriptions in detail.

1.7.2. Data Sources

The main data of this research are taken from the film *Victoria and Abdul*. The data unit that are used as the main data are scenes, signs, actions, and dialogues that are related to characters of Victoria and Abdul. The supporting data are taken from other sources such as books, journals, and internet related to this research.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

There are several steps of the researcher to collect the data. First of All, the researcher reads film *Victoria and Abdul* to understand the film by identifying the theme, characters and characterizations, summary, plot, and setting. Then, the researcher collects the data related to the characters of Victoria and Abdul. After that, the researcher makes some categories such as scene, sign, action, and dialogue. Then, the researcher chooses the data that contain variables of different background, different attitude, different personality, and unequal power. Then, the researcher analyzes the data.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

There are several steps that are used by the researcher to analyze the data. First of all, the researcher analyzes different background, different attitude, different personality, and unequal power using Orientalism. After that, the researcher compare and contrast those different aspects. Then, the researcher finds the superiority of the West and Inferiority of The East. The last, the researcher analyzes power and hegemony relation between the West and the East using Orientalism theory.

1.8. Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapter. Chapter one is introduction. This chapter consists of background of study, problem statement, objective of study, significance of study, literature reviews, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. Chapter two explains intrinsic elements of film *Victoria and Abdul*. Chapter three is analysis. In the third chapter, the data that have been collected is going to be analyzed. The last chapter is conclusion that shows the result of the research.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

The researcher focuses on the portrayal of the West and the East to know the hegemony relation between them. By analyzing the hegemony relation, it shows the structure and pattern of the film. In film *Victoria and Abdul* (2017) Queen Victoria is colonizer (Western) while Abdul is colonized (Eastern). The unique thing is that they become close friends later. Victoria is a queen who is kind-hearted and Abdul always looks for the queen's attention. Eventually, he gets a lot of things such as positions, facilities, and all things that he wants. Although he is depicted as superior, it is not what it looks like.

The researcher finds the portrayal of the West and the East such as uncivilized East and civilized West, powerless East and powerful West, opportunistic East and sincere West, naive East and logic West. It means this film has the same structure and pattern as other Hollywood film. It shows the stereotypical view of West toward East.

4.2. Suggestion

Victoria & Abdul tells about friendship between Victoria who is colonizer and Abdul who is colonized. Thus, the researcher focuses on the portrayal West and East through the characters of Victoria and Abdul by using Orientalism theory. Besides Orientalism theory, Binary Opposition theory is also interesting to be applied to analyze contrasting aspects in this film.

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