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The analysis of the movie “Lost and Delirious”, directed by Lea Pool, under the aspect of love and the way it is presented in the movie

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Remark: I got a B+ for my skilled work. That's quite good, isn't it ? :-D

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1. Plot summary

After her mother had died three years ago because of cancer, Mary "Mouse" Bradford is sent to a girl's boarding school by her father and his new wife. She has to share a room with Pauline and Victoria who take her in friendly and Mary quickly makes friends with her new roommates. One evening Mary sees Victoria and Pauline standing on the roof, kissing each other. She recognizes that her two roommates are a couple and sees how happy Victoria and Pauline are together. This situation changes suddenly when Victoria and Pauline are caught in bed by Allison, Victoria's little sister, and her friends. Since Victoria has been educated very strictly she's afraid of her parent's reaction concerning her relationship with Pauline so she decides to end the relationship and from that point on, she tries to prove to the other students that she's heterosexual and completely refuses Pauline in public. She starts to date Jake Hollander, a boy from a near-by school to prove her heterosexuality to her environment. Pauline decides to fight for her beloved Victoria and tries to get her back, but Victoria is afraid of being refused by her parents and so she continues to refuse Pauline whose tries to win Victoria back end in failure. At the end of the film Pauline forces Jake into a sword-fight for Victoria's love and after hurting him badly she kills herself by jumping off the roof of the school while Victoria and some other girls are watching.

The viewer sees the plot from Mary's point of view for most of the time and while Mary sees how Victoria's and Pauline's relationship breaks up she slowly learns how to deal with her mother's death.

2. The different kinds of love presented in "Lost and Delirious"

2.1 The love between Pauline Oster and Victoria Moller

The way Pauline Oster and Victoria Moller handle their romantic attachment is the main theme of Lost and Delirious. After her birth, Pauline was adopted and she never met her blood parents. However she is feeling a very special connection to her blood mother, this can be seen in the scene where the three girls are sitting in their room writing letters to their parents (17:28 – 23:00) Pauline does not blame her blood mother because she gave her away after her birth and even though she never met her, she tells her that she loves her and offers her a chance for a meeting. She even holds her

blood mother to a higher standard than her adoptive parents, who are people that took care of her while she grew up. She does not feel love for her adoptive parents since she knows that they are not her real ones and she thinks that they are not able to feel true love for her. The glance in her adoptive mother's eyes symbolizes Pauline's dislike for her adoptive parents. In Victoria, Pauline found somebody who really cares for her. This is something Pauline never experienced before so she focuses all her love on Victoria since she never felt such an emotionally deep connection to another person in the past. That is why Pauline is absolutely unable to bear the idea of losing Victoria to somebody else. During the film Victoria does not really explain why she loves Pauline, but it can be guessed that Victoria was deeply stirred when Pauline told her about her feelings for her so she also started to develop a feeling of love for Pauline.

The viewer recognizes that Pauline and Victoria are more than just friends, when Mary sees Victoria and Pauline kissing each other on the roof at night (10:30 – 11:40). Mary is surprised about their close relationship because she has never been confronted with homosexuality when she was still living at Rainy River. It's something completely new to her. At the next morning the three girls are disturbed by Victoria's little sister Allison and her friends (11:45). This scene foreshadows the main conflict in the relationship between Victoria and Pauline when Allison sees Pauline and her sister hugging in bed (38:50). In the following scene Victoria is asked to solve a maths problem in front of the class (13:22 - 16:10). When she is not able to do so, Mrs. Bennett tells her to pay more attention to the lesson and stop gabbing. In Pauline's opinion the word "gabbing" is used to discriminate against women so she criticizes her teacher for using such an abusive term. This scene shows two things. Firstly it conveys Pauline's desire to support her beloved Victoria and secondly it is an example for Pauline's rebellious character. Criticizing a teacher the way Pauline does in this scene requires a lot of courage and self-confidence, and the fact that Pauline gets the attention of the whole class by criticizing her teacher so openly makes the situation even more difficult, but she simply does not care and says what she wants to say. The next scene shows Mary, Pauline and Victoria in their room writing letters to their mothers respectively blood mothers. (17:27 – 23:00). This scene does not only convey Pauline's feelings for her blood mother respectively her adoptive one, Victoria's letter to her mother also foreshadows the great problem she and Pauline will have to deal with later in the movie, the fact that Victoria's conservative parents wouldn't accept her daughter's relationship with a girl. During this scene Victoria criticizes her mother for complaining about her teeth and wanting her to marry a banker, just like she did. These complaints symbolize the conflict Victoria has to deal with. Her mother's ideas for her life are

completely different than her one ones. Victoria wants her parents to accept her relationship with Pauline so they can live together in happiness, but she knows that her parents would not allow this relationship because of their conservative faith. If she decides to stay with Pauline her parents would despise her, but if she decides to fulfil her parent's wishes she has to abandon her beloved Pauline. Victoria uses the image of a little puppy whose teeth are being kicked to convey this conflict. She wants to be loved by her parents, but she also wants to be with Pauline and the fact that her parents would not tolerate her love for Pauline hurts her bad. Victoria confesses that she sometimes even wants her mother to die because of her parent's unwillingness to accept her daughter's love for a girl. This is another prove of her love for Pauline. The scene shows that Pauline does not have any problems with adhering to her love for Victoria in front of other people when Pauline gives Victoria a kiss while Mary is looking at them. The next relevant scene between Pauline and Victoria shows them sitting inside the gazebo, talking about their plans for the holidays (26:14 – 27:14). Victoria tells Pauline that she won't be able to go planting trees with her since she must attend her mother on her trip to Italy. This scene again foreshadows the upcoming conflict between Victoria's family and her wish to be with Pauline. When Allison and her friends enter the room of the three girls and find Pauline and Victoria hugging each other, they're shocked since it can be guessed that they never had to deal with homosexuality before and it's something new to them (38:53 – 39:56) . The fact that Allison sees her sister of all people hugging another girl makes her react even more shocked. Mouse solves this disconcerting situation by sending Allison and her friends away. Victoria immediately knows that her sister will tell their parents about this event so she is absolutely worried since she's afraid of her parent's reaction. Pauline is unable to understand Victoria's reaction since she doesn't have a problem with homosexuality, her love for Victoria is normal to her. The following scene shows Allison and Victoria standing in front of the school talking to each other (38:58 – 41:40) . Victoria defends herself by saying that Pauline came into her bed without her noticing it and explains that she isn't a lesbian. She calms her sister by telling her that she's in love with Jake Hollander. She's able to make Allison not tell their parents about her relationship with Pauline. After Allison leaves Victoria walks away crying so the viewer can guess that she's indeed in love with Pauline and lied because of not wanting to face her parent's reaction. The next relevant scene shows Mary and Victoria walking through the cafeteria (41:58 -43:13). Victoria pretends to not notice Pauline and sits down in front of Cordelia. Victoria tells her that all the rumours about her being a lesbian aren't true. Ironically Cordelia says that homophobic persons should start to recognize that being homosexual isn't wrong and finally grow up so she offers Victoria

a chance to adhere to her love for Pauline, but Victoria is afraid of doing so and says that she isn't a lesbian because she thinks she'll be blamed by her environment if she adheres to her love for Pauline. The next scene shows Mrs Vaughn discussing Shakespeare's "Anthony and Cleopatra" with the class. Pauline shows great interest in Cleopatra's character and she considers the quote "*Shall I abide in this dull world which in thy absence is no better than a sty!*" (43:46 – 43:53) to be appealing. The quote foreshadows Pauline's suicide because after Victoria explains Pauline that their love is a forbidden one and may never be, Pauline does not see any other possibilities than to end her life since she never felt loved by anyone except her blood mother and Victoria. There's nobody left in her life, so she falls down.

Mrs. Vaughn says that even today people are fascinated by Shakespeare's literature since it deals with boundless love which is something very rare today. Mrs. Vaughn asks the students how they define love. Some other girls think that love is nothing but sex or money and some think it's only needed to make babies. Pauline strictly disagrees with their opinions. To her mind love is the greatest emotion a human being can feel and the only purpose for person to live. She feels more for Victoria than they can imagine and she considers the other student's answers to be insulting her love for Victoria, that's why she gets so angry. Victoria knows that Pauline is referring to her, but she isn't able to adhere to her feelings for Pauline. However she's still very impressed of Pauline's indirect but honest love confession. This can be seen during the following scene which shows Mary and Victoria having a conversation in the library (45:56 – 47:56). In this scene Victoria directly explains the conflict she has to deal with. On the one hand she loves her parents and doesn't want to disappoint them since she loves them and they're a part of her life. She knows that her parents only want the best for her and that's why they educated her the way they did. But on the other hand she really loves Pauline and doesn't want to hurt her by refusing her. She doesn't know how Pauline would take this since she's a very sensitive person so she asks Mary to support Pauline by being her friend. Otherwise Pauline could decay from being refused by her. The next scene shows Pauline and Victoria in their room (47:59 – 49:10). Victoria is preparing herself for her meeting with Jake. The make-up Victoria puts on is another symbol for her desire to convince her environment of being heterosexual. Pauline never wanted her to wear make-up, but now she wants to look beautiful for Jake so he admires her. Pauline wants Victoria all for herself and knows that Victoria loves only her and not Jake so she criticizes her for wearing make-up. Victoria wants Pauline to respect her privacy since that's what friends do. She asks Mary if they are friends or not, but Pauline's definition of the word "friends" is a different one than

Victoria's. Victoria asks Mary if she, Mary and Pauline are normal friends while Pauline means "lover" when she calls Victoria a "friend". Victoria knows what Pauline means, but she still tries to shield herself from the conflict of adhering to Pauline so she plays down their relationship. At the end of the scene Pauline again refers to her much-hated adoptive mother when she says that Victoria had the same brightness in her eyes as her. In this case the image of the bright eyes is used to convey Pauline's bad feelings about Victoria's refusing behaviour. The next relevant scene shows Victoria meeting Jake at night and having sex with him (50:18 – 52:08). They're being observed by Pauline and Mary. When Mary recognizes that Pauline knows what is happening between Victoria and Jake a hard guitar tune is used to convey the suspense of this scene since now Pauline is going to confront Victoria with her, in Pauline's opinion, unacceptable behaviour. Victoria's behaviour is unacceptable by Pauline because she thinks she and Victoria are lovers and she cheated on her. During the next scene Pauline and Victoria are discussing Victoria's meeting with Jake (52:09 – 54:16). Pauline is aggrieved because Victoria lied to her and had sex with Jake. Since sex is a very personal part of a relationship, Pauline thinks that Victoria shouldn't have sex with anyone except her since she considers them to be lovers. Victoria tries to tell Pauline that their relationship was only some kind of experimentation and not that important for their lives. She tells Pauline that she finally found someone she really loves and explains that it's now time for both of them to grow up and end their relationship. The following scene shows Pauline sitting next to her window, crying for Victoria (54:21 – 56:20). The lyrics of the song that's played during this scene give insight into Pauline feelings after being refused. She's asking herself if Victoria will finally decide to admit her love for her officially. (*"how can I go home with nothing to say I know you're going to look at me that way and say what did you do out there, what did you decide, you say you needed time when you had time"*)

The lyrics also convey that Pauline is lost without Victoria's love since she doesn't have anyone to turn to. (*"...the only one who really loves me is you..."*). The next scene shows Victoria talking to some other girls during a football match. She points out Jake's great qualities as a lover and does so to again prove to the other students that she is not a lesbian (58:38 – 59:38). Pauline and Mary are able to hear what Victoria says and this really hurts Pauline because she knows that Victoria is lying. Mary tries to support her by rubbing her shoulder. The next relevant scene shows Pauline standing in front of a mirror in her room (60:28- 63:34). She puts up her hair so she can see what she would look like with short hair. Afterwards she takes the mirror from the wall and carefully looks at herself for a few seconds, then she slams the mirror against the wall. The symbols of Pauline cutting off her hair and destroying the mirror

are used to convey her will to fight and win Victoria's love back. When new recruits join the military they all get the same haircut. This is done to evoke a feeling of community among the recruits and it's also a symbol of leaving the past behind. In Pauline's case this means that she'll stop crying for Victoria and start to fight to get her back. In this scene over the shoulder shots and close-ups of her face are being used to show her intentness to fight for Victoria's love. When Mary enters the room Pauline asks her to pick up a shard and cut off her hair. Mary refuses to do so and tells Pauline that Victoria loves a guy and that cutting off her hair won't change this fact. Pauline screams at Mary and pushes her down to the floor. She thinks that nobody can understand what she's feeling for Victoria since she's the only one she loves so nobody is allowed to give her advice about her behaviour concerning Victoria. Mary wants Pauline to accept Victoria's decision to be with Jake and doesn't want her to suffer because of having been refused by Victoria so she tells her that she should forget about her love since Victoria isn't a lesbian. Pauline doesn't consider herself or Victoria to be lesbians and tells Mary so. She explains that she and Victoria love each other because of the other person's character and personality and not because they are attracted to girls in general. She considers Victoria and herself to be pansensual. During this dialog medium eye level shots of Mary and Pauline are used. They are especially useful when Pauline speaks because the viewer can see the gestures she performs with her arms to underline her explanations. The next scene shows Pauline entering the library while Victoria and some other girls are studying (63:34 – 64:55). She kneels down besides her and starts to recite a small passage from Shakespeare's Macbeth to prove her love to Victoria. This scene again shows that Pauline has got a lot of courage since expressing your love for someone so openly while others are around is everything but easy and the fact that Pauline expresses her love for a person of the same gender makes this situation even more difficult. Victoria is ashamed because of Pauline's public love confession so she tries to cover her face. Victoria doesn't want her relationship with Pauline to go public. The following scene which shows Pauline practicing her fencing skills foreshadows her sword fight with Jake (64:56 – 65:49). This scene shows that Pauline can't stand it to see Victoria together with someone else so she suddenly feels extremely furious because of seeing Victoria and Jake walking together and holding hand. She starts to attack her fencing opponent furiously. The next scene (65:51 - 68:33) shows Pauline entering her room while Victoria is sleeping. Pauline enters Victoria's bed, starts to kiss her and tells her that she can give her greater sexual pleasure than Jake. At this moment she is referring to Victoria's glorifying of Jake's qualities as a lover and tries to convince her of splitting up with Jake so she and Pauline can be together again. Victoria clarifies that she's in love

with Jake, but also tells Pauline that she loves her more than everybody else, but simply may never show her love for Pauline openly since her parents would refuse her if she did so and to Victoria, being refused by her parents would be the most terrible thing that could happen to her. During the party Pauline again tries to win Victoria back (79:50 – 84:10). By directly asking Victoria to dance with her in front of her father's eyes she wants to force her to adhere to her love for her so her conservative family will finally accept its daughter's love for another woman. But Victoria again explains that she and Pauline are normal friends and not lovers. At the end of the scene Pauline runs away and is absolutely depressed since her try to force Victoria into admitting her love for her while her father and other guests are around ended in complete failure. But she does not blame Victoria for refusing her. She's looking for someone she can make responsible for Victoria's decision to fulfil her parent's wishes. She can't blame Victoria since she loves her madly and wants to be with her and she can't blame Victoria's parents either since they left the school after the end of the party. She simply can't get in touch with Victoria's parents so she needs another person to focus her anger on. She decides to blame Jake for Victoria's decision. By beating Jake in the sword-fight she thinks she can make him stop caring for Victoria and believes that she'll come back to her when Jake gives her up. Of course beating Jake doesn't change Pauline's situation since it is not his fault that Victoria refused her to live the life her parents want her to live, but she doesn't recognize that. To her Jake personifies all the problems and all the sorrows she felt when Victoria denied her love for her so she wants to defeat the source of her suffering. When she's able to knock him down and points the sword at him she asks him to give Victoria up. When he refuses to do so she releases all the anger and sadness she felt when Victoria refused her since in her opinion he's the reason for this. When Jake tells her to "fuck" herself she realizes that there's no chance left to get Victoria back. She thinks that Jake will never understand what Victoria meant to her so since she can't get Victoria back she at least wants to make him pay and suffer for loving Victoria. At the moment she jabs the sword into Jake's leg an extreme close-up of her face and a slow motion are being used to convey her feelings. Especially the slow motion is important since it makes her scream sound even more furiously and more painful when she finally releases all her sadness and fury on him. The extreme close-up of her face also supports this. In Pauline's opinion she's the only one who's allowed to love Victoria since she considers herself to have the deepest feelings for her. At this point she already knows that she'll commit suicide since without Victoria there's nobody left in her life. The final scene shows Pauline standing on the roof of the school while Victoria and some other girls are playing football. She again recites a passage from Shakespeare's Macbeth to

express her love for Victoria and adds the line "*I rush into the secret house*" from Shakespeare's "Anthony and Cleopatra" to tell Victoria that she'll now commit suicide since she isn't able to live without her love. So she jumps off the roof because she cannot imagine life without Victoria's love. Maybe she thinks that she and Victoria can finally be together after Victoria's death so in this case death means something positive to her.

2.2 **The love Between Victoria Moller and Jake Hollander**

Since the movie mainly conveys Pauline's suffering after being refused by Victoria the viewer could consider Jake to be an evil character because he symbolizes the problems she has got. He is the person Victoria uses show her environment that she's heterosexual. This can be seen during the scene on the football field when Victoria praises Jake's qualities as a lover. The movie does not clearly show if Victoria really loves Jake or if she just uses him to prove her heterosexuality. Both meet for the first time while Pauline, Mary and Victoria are jogging. He asks if they couldn't go to her brother's birthday party together (31:16 – 31:40). The following scene shows that Victoria doesn't feel strong sympathy for Jake. She thinks he's only interested in her because he wants to have sex with her. Victoria says that she'd prefer to do mathematics than to be with Jake and since the viewer sees that Victoria isn't good at maths and doesn't like it, it can be guessed that she doesn't like Jake very much (31:41 – 32:06). After Allison finds Pauline and her sister in the same bed, Victoria says that she's attracted to Jake to calm her so she doesn't tell their parents about Victoria's relationship with Pauline (39:58 – 41:39). At this point it can be guessed that she lied to Allison to calm her so she only uses Jake as a shield to stop Allison and the other people from thinking she's a lesbian. The next relevant scene shows Victoria and Jake having sex (51:03 – 52:11). Since it is night and they don't expect anyone around it can be argued if Victoria only has sex with him to convince herself of being heterosexual or if she really started to love Jake when she got to know him better. When Jake reads Pauline's challenge he doesn't want to meet her at first, but then he changes his mind since Pauline wants to fight with him for Victoria's love. Jake's behaviour in this scene shows that he's really in love with Victoria (79:20 – 79:47). When Pauline knocks him down and menaces him he still doesn't give in and does not obey Pauline's demand. In this situation he has to consider the possibility of being

injured badly or maybe even killed by Pauline if he doesn't give Victoria up. He's in great danger, but he still tells Pauline that he won't give Victoria up so the viewer can see that Jake really loves Victoria since it would have been safer for him to at least tell Pauline to give Victoria up to make her stop menacing him. It can be said that Jake really loves Victoria and even takes the risk of being injured badly to be able to keep her while it's not sure if Victoria really loves him or just uses him to prove her heterosexuality to her environment.

2.3 **The love between Mary Bradford and her dead mother**

Mary's mother died because of cancer three years before the events in the movie take place. After her death, Mary's father married again. While Mary is still feeling a very strong emotional connection to her blood mother she does not feel strong sympathy for her stepmother. This can be seen at the beginning of the movie. In Mary's opinion her blood mother would never have sent her to a boarding school, but her stepmother and her father did. When Pauline and Victoria talk about their mothers they convince Mary to write a fictional letter to her dead mother and in doing so Mary gives the viewer and her roommates insight into her feelings concerning her dead mother. (21:15 -22:22) The loss of a parent is a traumatic experience for everyone and the fact that her mother's death was a very drastic and sad event in Mary's life can be seen by her ability to exactly retell what her mother told her before she died. Mary is able to retell exactly that it smelled like "*sweet, rotten apples*" in her mother's room. Even three years after her mother's death she still knows what her mother said to her before she died. Mary would not be able to retell all these details if the shocking event of her mother's death had not happened.

Mary's friendship with Joe Manzies, the gardener, is another symbol for her connection to her mother. When she first meets him she asks if she is allowed to help him gardening (24:25 - 26:14). As she tells him she was always gardening with her mother and the fact that Manzies is a gardener reminds Mary of her mother. During their first meeting Manzies says that Mary is the first one to offer her help for gardening in twenty years. This shows that the act of gardening and Manzies as a person are special to Mary because in Manzies' act of gardening Mary feels remembered of her dead mother since she also loved gardening. After asking if a new age is dawning because Mary is willing to help him he considers his question to be funny. This is a first

sign of his humour which is another thing he has in common with Mary's dead mother. The next relevant scene shows Mary helping Manzies gardening (34:39 – 35:32). When Mary told Victoria and Pauline about her mother she was in tears and talking about her relationship with her dead mother was very hard for her, but she doesn't have problems to talk to Manzies openly about her relationship to her dead mother. She feels more familiar with him than with Pauline or Victoria since his character has got quite many similarities to her mother's one. The worm eggs are another symbol of showing Manzies' way of humour that reminds Mary of her mother. When Allison asks Mary if the rumours about her being homosexual like Pauline are true, Mary says that she's not interested in what other people think, but she doesn't know if what she said was right so she asks Manzies for advice (56:53 - 58:38). She considers Manzies to be a wise man because of his similarities to her mother. After Pauline asked Mary to cut off her hair and told her that she'll fight for Victoria's love Mary again asks Manzies for advice because Pauline's attitude changed so drastically. Symbols of nature are being used to describe Pauline's changing process. Mary wants to know what to do if Pauline tries to kill herself because she was abandoned by Victoria, but Manzies can't help her in this case. He doesn't know what to do (70:36 – 71:29). After Pauline committed suicide Mary recognizes how special her relationship to her mother has been. When she was still alive, she always supported Mary and Mary could always talk to her when she had problems. That's the great difference between Mary and Pauline. Pauline never had anybody to turn to except Victoria and when Victoria refused her she didn't have anybody left to turn to. If she had had someone to turn to and talk about her feelings for Victoria she would not have run out of perspectives after Victoria abandoned her. It can be guessed that Pauline's tragic death hadn't happened if she had had the kind of support Mary got from her mother. The fact that Mary doesn't forget what her dead mother looked like after Pauline's death shows that Pauline's downfall made her realize how special the relationship between her and her mother has been.

3. Conclusion

After analyzing the main relationships of the film it can be said that the film does not give one ultimate definition for what love is since every character experienced different ways of love so love is something different for everyone. Some characters think love is money, or sex, some think its only purpose is to make sure new children are being born and others think that it's something completely different. Victoria's greatest wish is to be loved and accepted by her parents so she tries everything to make them proud of her while Pauline tries everything to get Victoria back after being refused by her. That's

the only thing that matters to her and when she sees that she can't get her back she doesn't see any perspectives for her life so she decides to kill herself. Mouse finally learns how to deal with her blood mother's death after she sees what Pauline went through while fighting for Victoria.

In my opinion the viewer can learn three very important things from this film. Firstly it teaches the viewer that he respectively she should not be afraid of homosexuality and should not discriminate against gay or lesbian people because of their sexual orientation since today we know that homosexuality does not lead to any diseases or abnormalities and is not wrong at all, so the viewer should be open-minded about it since there's nothing wrong about being gay or a lesbian. Secondly nobody should blame his respectively her partner's new boy- or girlfriend after a break-up. Since mostly the new partner is not responsible for the break-up and did not intend it either. However if you do blame him / her you aren't allowed to bluster into this like Pauline did since her injuring of Jake is absolutely irresponsible.

The movie also wants the viewer to think about his relationship to his parents. There may be times where you consider their advices and wishes for your life to be wrong and you may not agree with them, but you always have to remember that they only want your best and if your wishes for your life are different than their ones you should talk to them about this and tell them what you think, feel and consider to be good for you so you don't end up like Victoria who lost her beloved Pauline because she didn't have enough courage to talk with her parents about her wishes and feelings. Maybe her parents would have accepted her daughter's love for Pauline if she had only told them about her true feelings even though they educated their daughters very strictly.

List of literature

“Lost and Delirious” – English DVD