

## CHAPTER I

### INTROCUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*Freedom Writers* is a drama film released on January 5, 2007 in USA by Paramount Pictures with duration 122 minutes in English. The storyline of the movie took place in Long Beach, California, is about 1992-1995, beginning with scene from the 1992 Los Angeles Riots. The film run time is 122 minutes in VCD and DVD distributed by Paramount Pictures. *Freedom Writers* movie is adopted from the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell who wrote the story based on Woodrow Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California. Erin Gruwell is English teacher in Woodrow Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California. This movie has some award such as a nominator in Humanities Prize Year Result Award Category/ Recipient(s) 2007, and become the winner in Humanities Prize Feature Film Category in 2007. This film was given final rating of PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for violent content, some thematic material, and language.

*Freedom Writers* film is directed by Richard La Gravenese, an American director, and screenplay by Richard La Gravenese, based on *The Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell and her class. The capability of Richard is undoubtedly as a director. Some movies directed by Richard are

*P.S I Love You* (film) December. 21, 2007 *Paris, Je T'Aime* (film) May. 4, 2007, *Freedom Writers* (film) January. 5, 2007, *A Decade under the Influence* (film) April 25, 2003, *Living Out Loud* (film) October. 30, 1998. Richard is prolific scenarist long associated with sensitive woman's films (*Unstrung Heroes, A Little Princess, The Bridges of Madison Country, The Mirror Has Two Faces*), Richard cultivated a reputation for himself as the author of poignant, funny, and humanistic screenplays that gently touch the viewer's emotions without manipulating them. A Big Apple native born October 30, 1959, LaGravenese came of age in Brooklyn and studied acting at New York University's experimental theater wing at the Tisch School for the art. As a student, he honed his skills with dialogue and formed New York and Toronto-based comedy troupe, for which he also wrote sketches.

*Freedom Writers* is the movie that shows class struggle. Fresh-faced, idealistic twenty-three-year-old Erin Gruwell (Hilary Swank) is ready to take on the world as she steps inside Wilson High School for her first day of teaching. Her class, a diverse group of racially charged teenagers from different walks of life African Americans, Latinos, Asians, juvenile delinquents, gang members, and underprivileged student from poor neighborhoods hope for nothing more than to make it through the day. On the surface, the only thing they share is their hatred for each other and the understanding that they are simply being warehoused in the educational system until they are old enough to disappear. Despite her student obstinate

refusal to participate during class, Erin tries various means to engage them on daily basis.

In Long Beach, people will see what you look like. The limitation is very clearly, Black people must carefully if they go out from their home. Because dangerous always in front of them. "In long Beach, it all comes down to what you look like. If you are Latino or Asian, or Black, you could get blasted any time you walk out your door." Eva said in the beginning. Life in the situation is so difficult. They fight each other for territory. They kill each other over race, pride and respect. They fight for what is theirs. And war has been decelerated if some of them are attacked.

Erin Gruwell is an English teacher in Woodrow Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California. When in first time Erin come to the school she saw the difference between senior class (dominated by white people and only one black people) and junior class dominated by black people. Class difference done by school based on the point of view and stereotype that in general The Black People, Hispanic, Cambodia, and other race except White People cannot reach high academic score. According to Erin that caused unfair competition with White People in academic. Racial hostility not only in the outdoor of school but also in the school there is a difference, black people is not proper one class of level with White people.

The headmaster of the school is a Black People. The fact gives sight, he can get the position because he is smart, but the headmaster cannot do

anything to help Erin because he is on "the shadow" of his subordinates that White People. One more, that makes satisfy is the behavior of the teachers that soak "lasts" student in 203's class. Unfortunately all of the teachers are White People that makes difference between Black people and White people in the class. Teachers that must erase the racisms limitation also make fertilizer in racisms. School is an education institution that hoped to decrease the tension but there is also a difference that gives stimulate of racial hostility in the school.

But then, ghetto really steps into focused the picture. A racially motivated gang shooting witnessed by Latino gang members in Erin's class, and an ugly racial cartoon that Erin intercepts during the class, become the most unwittingly dynamic teaching aids. They spark a transformation in the class room, compel them to listen and force her to take off her idealistic blinders and take in the kids' survival stories of their undeclared war on the streets. Erin begins to connect with them. She brings in music. From the Hood, and literature from another kind of ghetto, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and with these simple tools she open her student eyes to the experiences of those suffering intolerance throughout the word and the struggles of those outside own communities.

Knowing that every one of her students has a story to tell, Erin encourages them to keep a daily journal of their thoughts and experiences. After sharing their stories with one another, the students see their shared

experience for the first time and open up to the idea that there are possibilities in life outside of making it to the age of eighteen. Based on a true story, *Freedom Writers* is an inspirational tale and testimony to courage, hope and the human spirit's triumph over intolerance. As the students' diaries transform from schoolwork into life preservers, Erin's commitment to them grows and affects her in ways she did not imagine.

The reason why the writer chose this movie become the object of research are because first this movie give a struggle to the teacher how to make their class or student can enjoy in joining the lesson. Erin can stand among difference. All of her students are black people who think Erin (white people) is the enemy of them. Erin able to make her student sure with her and also make the difference is not matter, they can success with their brain.

Second, Erin is a person who never gives up and gives good example of other teachers. All of teachers should be like Erin. Teachers as educator should be willing to do anything to make their student's progress. Erin is a White teacher, she wants to give a fact that the difference must be erased. White people or other races also have a freedom for education as well as White people. In 203 student's opinion Erin is White people that did not know their suffering, so in this occasion Erin is able to be a friend for them without making the difference become matter between Erin and them. Students become diligent to go to school and their score were increased.

Third struggle is a teacher should be creative, Erin always give a teaching method interesting. Cover every lesson with love and something that enjoy. And teacher should be having large knowledge so we never think individually and finally Erin can clean the racial hostility in her class. Erin be able to change the racial hostility becomes a true friendship, and they can tolerant with other raced. A good results from Erin.

And another struggle is a teacher should never be give up to make their student smart. As a leader, Erin gives motivation to think positively and do not give up and they will become successful person. Erin gives good motivation to her students and Erin also make the class becomes a big family. There is no difference between Black and white people. All of them have some right and they proper to live happily.

Based on these reason the writer studies *Freedom Writers* movie by using sociological theory entitled **RACIAL HOSTILITY IN RICHARD LA GRAVENESE'S MOVIE *FREEDOM WRITERS* (2007): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

## **B. Literature Review**

The study about *Freedom Writers* movie was conducted by Abdul Haris Habibi, student Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (2010), entitled *Self Defense Mechanism of Erin Gruwell in Richard Lagravenese' Freedom Writers Movie: A Psychoanalytic Approach.* He described the interesting

points shown by the character and characterization of the major character, and also setting of this film. In the characters and characterization, this film only focuses on the major character where Erin Gruwell is a new teacher who is able to control her untouchable students. Based on the defense mechanism psychoanalytic approach, defensibility can happen if there is a threatening moments.

The second research is *Struggle for Existence in Erin Gruwell's Freedom Writers Directed by Richard LaGravenese: an Individual Psychological Approach* by Erna Dewi Patmawati . Based on the analysis; the study reveals there are some motives underlying the struggle of Erin Gruwell. The motives are, getting safety in the job, family, respected by other, and the last motive is to actualize the potential as professional teacher.

From the two analyses above, the researcher tries to make a different analysis. Here the researcher focuses the racial hostility in the movie and using sociological approach to analyze the movie. The title of the study is *Racial Hostility in Richard La Gravenese's Movie Freedom Writers (2007): A Sociological Approach*.

### **C. Problem Statement**

Knowing that the problem is the important part of research, the writer purposes the question, "How is the racial hostility reflected in *Freedom Writers* movie?".

#### **D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer focuses this research in analyzing the racial hostility in Richard LaGravenese's *Freedom Writers* movie based on sociological approach.

#### **E. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze Richard LaGravenese's movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
2. To describe the racial hostility in Richard LaGravenese's movie *Freedom Writers* based on a sociological approach.

#### **F. Benefits of the Study**

The benefits of the study are:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The study hoped to give new contribution information to the large body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on Richard LaGravenese's movie.

##### **2. Practical Benefit**

The study is hoped to enrich knowledge and experiment of the writer and other student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other Universities who have interest with literary study on the movie from Sociological Approach.

## **G. Research Method**

### **1. Type of the Study**

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data source are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the movie using sociological perspective. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining the technique of collecting data, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

### **2. Object of the Study**

The object of the study is *Freedom Writers* movie directed by Richard LaGravenese. It analyzed by using sociological approach.

### **3. Types of the Data and the Data Source**

There are two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data that are needed to do this research.

#### **a. Primary Data**

The primary data sources of the study *Freedom Writers* movie directed and written by Richard LaGravenese.

#### **b. Secondary Data**

The secondary data sources of the study are books such as *Sociological of Literature, Sociology of Literature and Drama, Theory*

*of Literature, The Art of technique, Film; an Introduction*, and other sources that support the analysis.

#### **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

In this research the writer uses the documentation method in collecting data. The procedures are as follows:

- a. Watching the movie for the several times.
- b. Reading the movie script.
- c. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- d. Taking notes of important parts in both primary data and secondary data.
- e. Classifying and determining the relevant data.
- f. Taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the movie and the analysis.

#### **5. Technique of the Data Analysis**

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concern with the structural elements of the movie and sociological approach. In addition, the writer also uses the structural analysis of the work. Firstly, the data are arranged in list of data. Secondly, the researcher is looking for a selecting the correlation of data by using the chosen approach. Thirdly, all data from the second step are arranged. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

## H. Research Paper Organization

The research paper organization of the “Racial Hostility In Richard La Gravenese’s Movie *Freedom Writers* (2007): A Sociological Approach” is as follows: Chapter I is Introduction; it consists of the Background of the Study, Literary Review, Problem Statement, Limitation of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Benefits of the Study, Research Method, and Research Paper Organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory; it consist of Sociology of literature, The Perspective of Sociology of Literature, Structural Elements of the Movie, and Theoretical Application. Chapter III is social historical background of American society in the late twentieth century that covers the social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, science and technology, cultural aspect, and religious aspect, Chapter IV is Structural Analysis of *Freedom Writers* movie; (1) Structural Element of the Movie which consists of Characters and Characterizations, Casting, Plot, Technical Element, Point of View, and Theme. (2) Discussion. Chapter V; consists of social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, science and technology, cultural aspect, and religious aspect. Chapter VI is Conclusion and Suggestion.