

**WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE IN STEVEN SODERBERGH'S
ERIN BROCKOVICH: A FEMINIST APPROACH**



Research Paper

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

International film maker has succeeded to attend a phenomenal masterpiece lifting from real story. A lot of various literatures film lifting from it, there is one very inspire and motivate film, especially present for women's spirit. *Erin Brockovich*, those film has been launched in 2000 this very shake off the movie industry. Steven Soderbergh is a director of *Erin Brockovich's* movie. He is a smart director in U.S. That film was nominated for Best Picture Oscars at the 2001 Academy Awards and gave him the first twin director Oscar nomination in almost 60 years and the first ever win. *Erin Brockovich* is written by Susannah Grant and Revisions by Richard Lagravenese. Susannah Grant proposes great story and plot which more concerns the *Erin Brockovich's* life. There are also several supporters who cooperate for finishing this movie. They are Margery Simkin as caster, Thomas Newman as music director, Jeffrey Kurland as costume designer, Anne V. Coastes, A.C.E as editor, Philip Messina as production designer, Ed Lachman, A.S. C as photographer, Gail Lyon

as co-producer, John Hardy and Carla Santos Shamberg as executive producer, and also Danny Devito, Michael Shamberg, and Stacey Sher as producer.

Film, it is must be attended in treat act from actor and actress which have a good competence to bumping act. So, the viewers are able to understand the story of Erin's life in *Erin Brockovich* movie. This film also performs great actors like Julia Roberts as Erin Brockovich, other characterization are Albert Finney as Edward L. Masry, Aaron Eckhart as George, Marg Helgenberger as Donna Jensen, Tracey Walter as Charles Embry, Peter Coyote as Kurt Potter, Valente Rodriguez as Donald, Conchata Ferrell as Brenda, Dawn Didawick as Rosalind, Pat Skipper as Defending Lawyer, Cherry Jones as Pamela Duncan, Erin Brockovich – Ellis as Julia (the waitress). They act in *Erin Brockovich* purely, as if it really occurred in *Erin Brockovich's* time. The duration of its movie is about 2:12 or 132 minutes and used the setting of time was around 1993 or sixteenth century in America. *Erin Brockovich* is also served in the DVD format. It has sales rank about 3,140 bestsellers in DVD. The descriptions of *Erin Brockovich's* DVD are dubbed, PAL, widescreen at format picture. For audio, this film present Dolby Digital Surround,

Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround sound The number of discs just single side only that use English, Francis and German language on 9 Oct 2000 released in Sony Pictures Home Entertainment Studio. But in Universal Studios, it has sales rank about 1,089 in DVD.

This movie fact based is made with the combination of genres between Drama and Comedy, but Julia Roberts and director Steven Soderbergh are far too intelligent to rely solely on high heels and cleavage. Susannah Grant's brassy screenplay fuels this winning combination of star, director, and material, firing on all pistons with maximum efficiency. All of these create this movie to be an amazing performance. This film tells more about the broke and desperate, the twice divorced single mom Erin bosses her way into a clerical job with attorney Ed Masry (Albert Finney), who's indebted to Erin after failing to win her traffic injury case. Erin is soon focused on suspicious connections between a mighty power company, its abuse of toxic chromium, and the poisoned water supply of Hinkley, California, where locals have suffered a legacy of death and disease. Matching the dramatic potency of *Norma Rae* and *Silkwood*, *Erin Brockovich* filters cold facts through warm humanity, especially in Erin's rapport with dying victims and her relationship with George (superbly played by

Aaron Eckhart), a Harley-riding neighbor who offers more devotion than Erin's ever known. Surely some of these details have been embellished for dramatic effect, but the factual basis of *Erin Brockovich* adds a boost of satisfaction, proving that greed, neglect, and corporate arrogance are no match against a passionate crusader.

This movie firstly was released on 17th March 2000 in U.S and was produced and distributed in North America by Universal Pictures, and was distributed overseas by Columbia Pictures in U.S. United State is one of the big countries which have created a million great movies. One of them is entitled “*Erin Brockovich*”. This movie is considered as a wonderful movie, so it is successful as box office movie and received many awards. *Erin Brockovich* was released in 2,848 theaters and grossed \$28.1 million on its opening weekend. It went on to make \$125.6 million in North America and \$130.7 million in the rest of the world for a worldwide total of \$256.3 million. But, this movie invites many pro and contra opinions from community. Most of people believe that this movie is an amazing movie which reflects historical fact of Erin. They say that it good portrays because it is tell about purpose, passion, corruption, romance, and how to deal with people so that they respond and deep impression behind the

creation of the great true story that has ever been told and also it is include motivation movie.

A great lesson on how to motivate people!Erin is not equipped professionally to take on this insurmountable task, but she refuses to let that stop her from trying. She's what I would call "ignorance on fire", but she's also smart as a whip. What I love most about this movie is how Roberts's character gets results when others can't. She may not be the most professional (this movie is cleavage city!), or meekest person you'll ever meet (her boss says she could use a good dose of "charm school" - he's right!) but she has a way with people. *Erin Brockovich* teaches all of us a lesson in true leadership, persistence against all odds, and how to motivate people. These victims TRUST her because they know she really CARES, (LaRue, Cris, 2001).

Nevertheless, the writer tells that *Erin Brockovich* also invites many controversies such as the accuracy of this movie. There is a little altered in this movie, so that cause a few controversy. At story plot there is change between fact which in fact and the story displayed, because at the real history life of Erin is Miss Pacific Coast but in film service she is tell that she is Miss Wichita. The viewer except the writer also said that “ In reality, it was Jim Vititoe. Brockovich had never been Miss Wichita. She had been Miss Pacific Coast. According to Brockovich, this detail was deliberately changed by Soderbergh as he thought it was "cute" to have her be beauty queen of the region from which she came. One of the plaintiffs, Carol Smith,

accused the movie of being "mostly lies" ("Erin Brockovich". Movie and Film Review).

More opinion from Indonesian Moslems people to tell *Erin Brockovich* movie there are not about act, climax, role play or etc but they said about actress costume, in this film Erin used a very sexy costume. Then they feel uncomfortable about it.

Pro and contra surely always appear, but an art devoting does not get out of an appreciation. After publishing, *Erin Brockovich* won Oscar. Another 26 wins & 42 nominations, includes many nominations in 2000. From *Julia Robert* as top figure in this film got a lot of appreciation that are not only as nomination but also succeeded to become the winners, which are became the Best Actress in National Board of Review, Best Actress in Screen Actors Guild, Best Actress in British Academy of Film and Television, Best Actress in Los Angeles Film Critics Association, Best Actress in Broadcast Film Critics Association, Best Actress in Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Scie, Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Drama in Hollywood Foreign Press Association. *Albert Finney* as a supporting actor in this film also include as nominees, which are Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Pic in

Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Best Supporting Actor in British Academy of Film and Television, Best Supporting Actor in Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Scie, and also became the winner as Best Supporting Actor in Screen Actors Guild. *Steven Soderbergh* as a director in this film also include as nominees, which are Best Director in Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Scie, Best Director in Directors Guild of America, Best Director in British Academy of Film and Television, Best Director in Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and also became the winner as Best Director in Broadcast Film Critics Association, Best Director in Los Angeles Film Critics Association, Best Director in National Board of Review, Best Director in New York Film Critics Circle, and the last as Best Director in National Society of Film Critics. Besides actress, actor, and director from this film, all other supporter also include as nominee in some event of film appreciation. *Susannah Grant* as Original Screenplay in this film belonging to nominees, which are Best Original Screenplay in British Academy of Film and Television, Best Original Screenplay in Writers Guild of America, and as Best Original Screenplay in Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Scie. Not left behind, *Anne V. Coates* as Best Editing's nominee in British Academy of Film and Television and

Danny De Vito as Best Picture's nominee in Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Scie. All of those are several evidences that *Erin Brockovich* is one of the greatest movies which are able to hypnotize public either in domestic society or widespread society. It is regarded as the movie which has an interacted power and also gave motivate specially for woman. So it can be placed in the world movie.

Erin Brockovich has different appeals. There are at least three appeals such as: firstly, from the theme, this movie more concerns the historical facts of *Erin Brockovich* independence, which has a big business, enjoyed a long, fruitful, and powerful life in America, and often expresses a lack of compassion for both employees and single motherhood. *Erin Brockovich* deals with "the American dream" to be educated, employed, take care of children, and in your own home. It is just that, a dream. If all people can really count on is to be deceived by the individuals and companies claiming to help them, what hope is there? This film is a triumph of the human spirit. The story tells about one woman with no hope and no way who challenges the system. Her courage, determination, and compassion show us what is possible when human beings care for each other.

Secondly, deal with movie plot. In *Erin Brockovich* movie early story beginning started by Erin's figure try to look for work to take care of her children. As a single motherhood fellow taking care of three children, Erin has to struggle by herself.

Thirdly, *Erin Brockovich's* movie describes social background of America in 1993. It situates when Erin Brockovich-Ellis who despite the lack of a formal law school education, was instrumental in constructing a case against the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) of California in 1993. Since the release of the movie that shares her story and name, she became host and guest in the many media programs. She is the president of Brockovich Research & Consulting, a consulting firm. She is currently working as a consultant for the New York law firm Weitz & Luxenberg, which has a focus on personal injury claims for asbestos exposure. The one of good things can not be forgotten that this movie is woman struggle in society. It that can portray that woman also has same successfulness energy with man or even more.

Erin Brockovich character and characterization, in this movie reflects feminist spirit, especially women's good intention, which women can fight for social intention level, women can dare struggle,

and women can practice the communication role. There are significant parts which notice to the women's independence. Firstly, in the Erin personality, there is a great that women can care to another people. *Erin Brockovich* movie from act instruction of Steven Soderbergh is *Erin Brockovich's* figure, her having a good personality. As a single motherhood that fighting for her children life by helped others. The social caring is very high, that is make inspiration me that woman also can conduct matter priding upon one self, family, others, friends work even state. There are many problems to punching her, but figure of Erin have high confidence and belief of her self to dare to fight, complete and finally succeed, although the opponent which facing the biggest one company in America (PG&E). Erin does not fear which facing of her opponent, because she knows and assures that she correctness. Truth will always win although have to through of various that very heavy challenges and drubbing, Erin's self-confidence and independence to make proper us imitate as woman for nowadays which ought to keep going forward and strong to facing all live challenge. *Erin Brockovich* movie portray the way of a lawyer job which had law formal education background and someone which do not have formal education background previously.

Secondly, deal with actress cast. Greatness act of a world actress tested in this film. By Julia Robert succeed to play the part of Erin's figure in *Erin Brockovich* movie. Even real Erin also follows to act in this film is although become cameo only.

Independence is an action which must immediately conducted to get what we wish and live on. Probably, those are caused by the purpose, passion, corruption, romance, and how to deal with people so that they respond and deep impression behind the creation of the great true story that has ever been told.

According to those aspects, the researcher would like to explore and analyze women's independence in Steven Soderbergh's *Erin Brockovich* based on the Feminist Perspective, and the title is **WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE IN STEVEN SODERBERGH'S *ERIN BROCKOVICH*: A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

As so far, the researcher has not found other researchers that research *Erin Brockovich* directed by Steven Soderbergh in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and University in Surakarta.

Do not found in there, writer found some paper lifting film *Erin Brockovich* reference from internet to be analyzed.

First researcher is Ann Mary Doane entitled “Film Director Steven Soderbergh” in 2006. This paper explains that, although Steven Soderbergh has had prize-winning commercial film successes such as *Traffic*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Ocean's Eleven*, *Ocean's Twelve*, *Syriana* and *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, he also is known for his art house films such as *The Limey*. The author relates that, born in 1963, Soderbergh, who began filmmaking when he was only 13, was the youngest producer or director to win the Palme d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival, which he was awarded in 1989 for *Sex, Lies and Videotape*. The paper relates that Soderbergh's seminal filmmaking techniques include the use of non-linear narratives to show different perspectives, a docudrama filming style that creates an aura of reality and the use of pastoral scenery. This brief paper discusses the career and techniques of film producer and director Steven Soderbergh.

Second researcher is Christine K. Horold entitled “Erin Brockovich, Anderson Et Al V. Pacific Gas & Electric Company” in 2009. This paper explains about uses Chromium by PG&E in *Erin*

Brockovich's movie. In this paper study about *Erin Brockovich's* movie from Erin's case handled.

All those references, the writer makes different analysis. In previous studies on both papers explains about *Erin Brockovich's* film from movie maker and law suit. In this paper, the writer explains that film in literature view with feminist approach.

C. Problem Statement

The problem in this research is “How is women’s independence reflected in *Erin Brockovich* directed by Steven Soderbergh?”

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses on analyzing women characters and it is focused on women’s independence by applying feminist approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To analyze the structural elements in the movie of *Erin Brockovich*
2. To analyze women’s independence in Steven Soderbergh’s *Erin Brockovich* based on feminist approach

F. Benefits of the Study

There are two benefits of this study. Firstly, comes from theoretical benefit, this study can give additional information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly to the study of Steven Soderbergh's *Erin Brockovich*. Secondly, seen from practical benefit, this study can get deep understanding in literary field about Steven Soderbergh's *Erin Brockovich* based on Feminist approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the researcher uses the descriptive qualitative as the type of the research. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which result the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative because the researcher collects the data then analyzes them and concludes them.

2. Data and Data Source

a. Data

The data in this research are events and dialogue in the movie of *Erin Brockovich* directed by Steven Soderbergh.

b. Data Source

1) Primary Data Source

Primary data source is the movie and script of *Erin Brockovich* directed by Steven Soderbergh, particularly the dialogues and actions reflecting the feminist of the story and the character that support the research.

2) Secondary Data

Secondary data sources are any related to the primary data such as information about this movie, website and book about Feminist approach.

3. Technique of Collecting Data

There are six steps in method of data collecting:

- a. Watching the movie repeatedly to get deeper understanding
- b. Browsing the internet to get some information related to the object of the study
- c. Reading the book to find out the theory, data and information about the object of the study

- d. Taking notes of important data from both primary and secondary data.
 - e. Arranging the data info into several parts according to its classification
4. Technique of Analysis Data

In this paper, the researcher uses descriptive technique in analyzing data. Descriptive technique is to explore some information, state implicitly within both of primary and secondary data source. The writer makes some interpretations of the movie dealing with character of the major characters which the researcher wants to analyze using Feminist Approach.

H. Research Paper

The writer organizes the research paper into six chapters. First chapter is introduction, which contains the Introduction, consisting of Background of the Study, Literature Review, Problem Statement, Objective of the Study, and Benefit of the study and Research Method. Second chapter is dealing with Underlying Theory that consists of The Notion of Feminism, Basic Concept of Feminism, Structural Elements of the Movie and

Theoretical Application. Third chapter deals with Social Historical Background of United Kingdom Society in the Late Twentieth Century. Fourth chapter is Structural Analysis that concerns structural analysis of the movie which includes structural elements of the movie, such as Narrative Elements and Technical Elements. Fifth is Feminist Analysis. Finally chapter six draws Conclusion and Suggestion.