

**SELF DEFENSE MECHANISM OF ERIN GRUWELL IN RICHARD  
LAGRAVENESE' *FREEDOM WRITERS* MOVIE:  
A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH**



**Research Paper**

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by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

In English literature, people use the word 'literature' in at least two different ways. Very often it simply means anything written, timetables, catalogues, text-books, travel brochures and so on. Literature is also a permanent writing, which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards life and the world.

Feelings, thought and attitude are part of psychology so in this case literary works which relate to with psychology is able to be analyzed with many kinds of psychology approach, the literary works such as poem, film, novel, drama, songs etc. One of literary works is film which consists of dialogues, actors, producers and other film stuff on a wide screen cinema. The different of film from drama or novel is film uses a cinematography and casting. From the above literary works, the writer tries to focus on the film analysis. The film is "*Freedom Writers*" by Richard LaGravenese.

Richard LaGravenese the director of the *Freedom Writers* was born in Brooklyn, New York he is the son of a taxi driver. He graduated from New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Experimental Theatre Program. He currently lives in Manhattan, NY on Central Park West with his daughter Lily and wife Ann. ([http://www. Huffingtonpost .com/richard-lagravenese/ emfreedomem-banned\\_b\\_110299.html](http://www.Huffingtonpost.com/richard-lagravenese/emfreedomem-banned_b_110299.html)).

*The Freedom Writers* is a 2007 drama film starring Hilary Swank, Scott Glenn, Imelda Staunton and Patrick Dempsey. It is based on the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* by teacher Erin Gruwell who wrote the story based on Woodrow Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California. The title is a play on both the terms of "Freedom Riders", the black and white civil rights activists who tested the U.S. Supreme Court decision ordering the desegregation of interstate buses in 1961, and Freedom Fighters, as in somebody who fights for freedom. The idea for the film came from journalist Tracey Durning, who made a documentary about Erin Gruwell for the ABC News program Primetime Live. Durning served as co-executive producer of the film. ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-lagravenese/emfreedomem-banned\\_b\\_110299.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-lagravenese/emfreedomem-banned_b_110299.html)).

The theory used by the writer is Freud theory named defense mechanism. Here the writer tries to focus on the defense of the major character when she faces the problems from her student and the teacher. Freud theory related with *id*, *ego* and *Superego*. Where Sigmund Freud's Theory is quite complex and although his writings on psychosexual development set the groundwork for how people personalities developed, it was only one of five parts to his overall theory of personality. He also believed that different driving forces develop during these stages which play an important role in how the people interact with the world.

The name of Freud theory is psychoanalysis where the structure of the personality in psychoanalytic theory is threefold. Freud divided it into the *id*,

the ego, and the superego. Only the ego was visible or on the surface, while the id and the superego remains below, but each has its own effects on the personality, nonetheless. Now the ego has a difficult time satisfying both the id and the superego, but it doesn't have to do so without help. The ego has some tools it can use in its job as the mediator; tools that help defend the ego. These are called Ego Defense Mechanisms or Defenses. When the ego has a difficult time making both the id and the superego happy, it will employ one or more of these defenses: denial, displacement, intellectualization, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression and sublimation. (Oscar, D in [http:// peace.saumag.edu/ faculty/Kardas/ Courses/GPWeiten/ C12Personality/EgoIDSuper.html](http://peace.saumag.edu/faculty/Kardas/Courses/GPWeiten/C12Personality/EgoIDSuper.html)).

From the background above, the defense mechanism of Freud, the freedom writers film and psychoanalysis, the writer tries to make an analysis entitle “*Self Defense Mechanism of Erin Gruwell in Richard LaGravenese Freedom Writers: Psychoanalysis Approach*” the film makes the researcher interested in Erin Gruwell experience in the way he makes a decision to gather her students and run from the problems from the student and the teacher.

## **B. Literature Review**

Antok Setiadi laksana (2009) Sebelas Maret University, entitle “The anxiety of the major character “Erin Grewell in Richard Lagravenese’ movie *Freedom Writers: Psychoanalysis Approach*. The research is descriptive research which also explains about women’s side. But here, he explains

about the anxiety of Erin Gruwell as the major character. Firstly, he explains about the id, ego, and super ego of the major character, and then he explains about the realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety, and moral anxiety. The result of the analysis is that he found 19 dialogues related to realistic anxiety, 12 dialogues related to moral anxiety and 19 dialogues related to neurotic anxiety. All of the anxieties views from women's side.

From the two analyses above, the researcher tries to make a different analysis. Here the researcher focuses the analysis on the struggle based on defense mechanism of Freudm, Psychoanalysis approach. The title of the study is "*Self Defense Mechanism of Erin Gruwell in Richard LaGravenese Freedom Writers: Psychoanalysis Approach*"

### **C. Problem Statement**

The main problem of this research will be, "How is the defense mechanism used by Erin Gruwell in keeping her opinion in facing the problems from her students and the teacher reflected in *Freedom Writers*?"

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

To carry out the study, the researcher will limit the study; the researcher tries to focus on the problems of defense did by Erin Gruwell.

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

Based on the above problem statement, the objectives of the study will be:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie
2. To discuss defense mechanism of Erin Gruwell viewed from psychoanalysis perspective.

## **F. Benefit of the Study**

The benefits of this study are as follows:

### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

To give information and knowledge to the reader, especially the literary study defense mechanism on *Freedom Writers* movie by Richard LaGravenese.

### **2. Practical Benefit**

To get better understanding of the movie, in literary field as references to other researchers in analyzing the movie especially based on the Freud theory psychoanalysis approach.

## **G. Research Method**

In analyzing the study, the writer will apply qualitative method:

### **1. Object of the Study**

The object of the study will be the major character Erin Gruwell in *Freedom Writers* movie.

## **2. Type of the Data and the Data Source**

The data will be classified into two categories, primary data and secondary data. The primary data will be taken from movie it self such as the movie and the script, while the secondary data are taken from the other data, which have relation with the underlying theory and other materials concern such as the hand book, and the internet.

## **3. Type of the Study**

This study will belong to qualitative research, which refers to research based on qualitative data taken from the *Freedom Writers* movie directed by Richard LaGravenese.

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

The method will be used by the researcher for collecting the data is library research, the techniques are as follows:

- a. Watching the movie several times, until the writer gets an adequate information or data to be analyzed then read the script to adjust it with the movie.
- b. Reading some other resources related to the movie.
- c. Taking notes for the important parts both in primary and secondary sources in data book or note book or by using computer, save the data on the disc.
- d. Classifying the data into categories and develop them into a good unit.

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

In this thesis the technique that will be used to analyze the data is descriptive analysis technique that is the method when analyze the status of human's group, object, and one set of condition in one think or one event at the present (Nazir, 1983: 63). The writer will describe the structural elements of the movie with psychoanalysis of literature. The collected data will be interpreted and analyzed in detail through psychoanalysis of literature in this case by showing the defense of Erin Gruwell and the influence if it in *Freedom Writers* movie: Psychoanalysis Perspective. Then drawing conclusion based on the analysis.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

The research paper will be divided into five chapters. Chapter I is Introduction, covering background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter II is underlying theory, covering nation of Psychoanalysis theory, basic principles of Psychoanalysis. Chapter III is structural analysis, which includes the character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, theme and cinematography. Chapter IV is Psychoanalysis analysis of the movie, it presents the application of underlying theory in analyzing the problem consists of structure of personality and defense mechanism. Chapter V is



presents conclusion and suggestion for this research paper also the synopsis of the story.