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## **ANALYZING THE CONCEPT OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN *FREEDOM WRITER'S* MOVIE**

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<b>ARTICLE INFO</b>	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<p>Article history: Received: 30 Dec 2021 Accepted: 9 May 2022 Published: 24 June 2022</p> <p>Keywords: Humanity approach, Self-Actualization, Freedom Writers Movie</p>	<p>This research analyzes the concept of self-actualization in “The Freedom Writers” movie based on the humanistic approach perceived by Carl Rogers. This study aims to determine the process of developing the self-actualization of one character in the film “The Freedom Writers” named Eva and how it impacts her social life as a student. The writer used psychological literature for the approach of research. The data used in this paper is a movie entitled “The Freedom Writers” by Richard LaGravenese. This film is adapted from a novel entitled “The Freedom Writers Diary” by Erin Gruwell which is written based on a true story. The result of this paper is showing the self-actualization of Eva Benitez’s character and its provide from the uneducated girl to become one of the diary writers.</p>

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A literary work represents life with all of its complicated issues. It is an illustration of many elements of life, including social, political, cultural, economic, educational, and religious dimensions. A film is one of the components of a literary work whose presentation is determined by a certain public context. This is also true of the film *Freedom Writers*. This video is an excerpt from Erin Gruwell's book entitled “The Freedom Writers Diary” (Astuti, 2009). A film from the United States entitled *The Freedom Writers* has inspired people all over the world.

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The film tells the story of the journey of low-ranking students in an area called Long Beach, with the guidance of a new teacher they can change the fate of a bad student into an educated student. The diverse backgrounds of the students initially made it difficult for the teacher, Erin Gruwell. It's not easy to organize students who are in gangs and groups according to race, some of them are even used to going in and out of prison. The film is set in a time when conditions in America are full of shootings and violence in the name of the skin race. Such a chaotic situation, coupled with the transfer of schools for special students, presented challenges for Erin Gruwell. By the school, the students were collected in room 203 and when learning English and Literature the changes in the character of the children slowly began to be seen. Erin's learning and motivation greatly influenced the change, one of which was a student named Eva. From this film, it can be seen that Eva's traumatized childhood and adolescence with the loss of friends became a free and uneducated person until she finally joined Mrs. Gruwell's class and met a new family at school.

Talking about humanity and psychology, in the theory of humanity there are two well-known experts, namely Maslow and Rogers, each of whom has a different opinion. Carl Rogers has based his theory on a vitality life called a self-actualizing tendency. The central concept of Rogers' personality theory is self. Rogers' approach emphasizes that one must rely on his own experience of the world. (Hutubessy et al., 2018). According to Rogers, how people change and attention to the process of personality change is much more important than personality characteristics themselves. And if it is supported by appreciation and recognition from others, a human being can find confidence in himself so that he can develop both personally and socially. (Harahap, 2020). He notes that humans have an inner compass that guides their activities dan it refutes a theory from Skinner that humans are more like robots that have no feeling and are shaped by outside reinforces (Charnofsky & Sayani, 2020).

Self-actualization, according to Maslow, is a state of fulfillment in which a person achieves his or her utmost degree of competence. But, according to Carl Rogers, a fully-functional person is in touch with his or her deepest and purest impulses and wants. These people are aware of their feelings and have a strong faith in their intuition and desires. Unconditional positive respect is critical to being a fully functional individual. (Wimaladhamma, 2021)

Du (2014) in the previous research also mentions about self-actualization of black women in Maya's Angelou Poetry. As a result, Maya Angelou is a cultural poet who carries out the duty of cultural transmission. Angelou takes tremendous attempts to redefine blackness to reclaim her people's self-consciousness and restore their identity. They can refresh themselves and genuinely

know themselves by integrating with their ancestor's culture. She does it by preserving ethnic culture and guiding African Americans away from the margins.

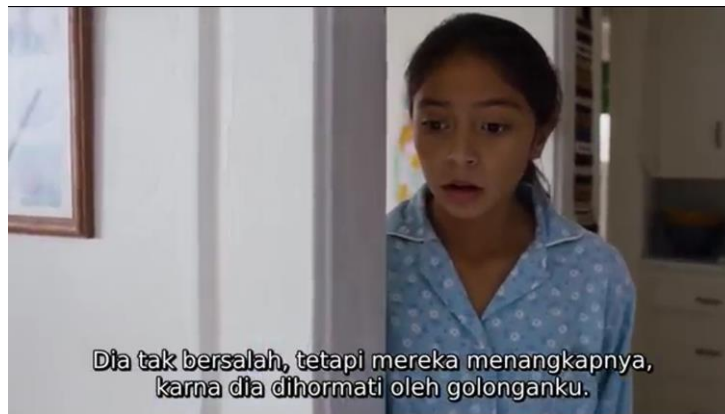
Another research from Sudarmanto et al. (2020) also discusses self-actualization in a story and uses Maslow's theory. The results of the study stated this excluded group's self-actualization is demonstrated by their capacity to manage all of the bare necessities. Nothing compels them to reveal their presence. They achieve peak performance when they are happy, satisfied, and liberated. This is where they show signs of self-actualization.

From the above phenomenon, the writer wants to analyze how the self-actualization process experienced by Eva Benitez starts from her childhood story when she was not used to the classroom atmosphere until she accepted it wholeheartedly and became a student who successfully suffers from this hard world. Some of the conflicts he encountered while outside of school and his relationship with his father will also be discussed. So, this study aims to describe the process of self-actualization of Eva's Characters in Freedom Writers movies.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study used the qualitative descriptive analysis method. The type of study is a literary study that focused on the relationship between literary and psychological approaches. Qualitative research, according to Bodgan and Bilken (1992), is a direct source of data, with the researcher as the most important instrument. Qualitative research seeks to discover how a theory operates in the various phenomenon, instead of numbers, data is collected in the form of words. The data source of this paper consists of two types: primary data is the movie texts related to the topic and secondary data is the literature review from journals, books, and documenters to support this paper. These are the following steps of the author to obtain the data needed in research: watch the full movie of Freedom Writers with Indonesian subtitles, download the movie while watching to catch the several plots related to the topic, take a note, download some literary journal, back to download the video to capture the scene, and make a result in the findings.

### **A. Self-Actualization of Eva Benitez in the Freedom Writers Negative Self-Concept**



At the beginning of the film, it was shown that Eva experienced a shock when she was going to school for the first time. Just across from her house she saw a white man killed and his father blamed for the incident so he was imprisoned. From that traumatic childhood, she joined a local gang to show that she was strong and still had a family. Eva's choice is a form of self-actualization.

*“In Long Beach, it all comes down to what you look like. If you're Latino or Asian or black, you could get blasted any time you walk out your door. **We fight each other for territory. We kill each other over race, pride, and respect. We fight for what is ours.** They think they're winning by jumping me now, but soon they're all going down. War has been declared.”* – Eva Benitez



Rogers thinks that all behavior is motivated by self-actualization inclinations, which urge a person to achieve their maximum level. An individual develops a self-structure or self-concept as a result of their interactions with the environment and other people. A self-structure or self-concept is a structured, flexible, and self-related pattern of thoughts and values (Jaya et al., 2021). As a teenager, Eva often fights with other gang members, especially the Cambodian gang, which is Eva's friend at Wilson School room 203, Sindy Ngor. In this phase, Eva experiences a negative self-concept because she is surrounded by

people who have bad habits and like to make noise, so she feels unhappy with herself even though she is not aware of it.

### **Positive Self-concept**

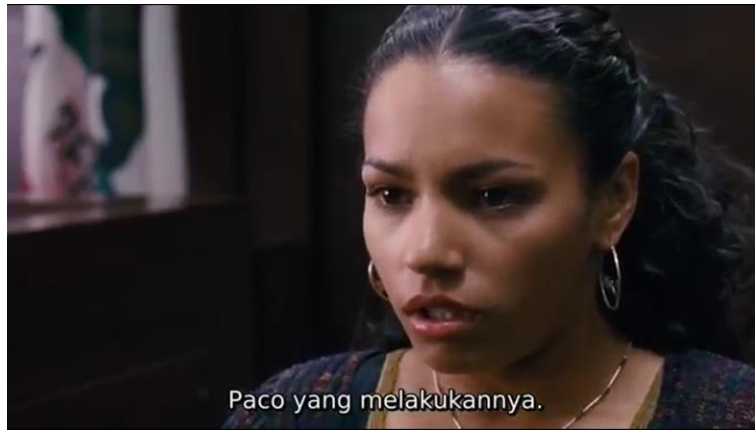
*"It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering, and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness. I feel the suffering of millions, and yet when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better."*



After Eva got a lesson from Mrs. Gruwell and was given the task of writing a diary every day about her feelings that day. Over time it became a good habit that helped her to be more sensitive to herself. Eva also started to like reading books where the story was very representative of her life and the character of the book inspired her. She continued to read the book curiously until the end. To the extent that she is the unwillingness and sad when turns out that her favorite character at the end of the story was declared dead.

### **B. Impact of the self-actualization as a student**

With good habituation and guidance from Mrs. Gruwell, Eva slowly builds her character to be better and open. Eva has also been touched by her heart to help a friend who became the scapegoat for the shooting at the minimarket who at that time was her gang member who was the suspect. Before the judge, Eva's parents, the defendant's parents, and Sindy Ngor, Eva testified that Paco was the real perpetrator. Eva's actions were very brave considering that she used to be very loyal to her gang, but in this case, she opened her heart and told the truth. Eva has become a model student who is brave and responsible.



After testifying, Eva and Sindy's relationship began to improve. They began to dare to approach and get to know each other. Even Sindy gave makeup for Eva. Eva happily accepted the gift from Sindy and they were comfortable talking to each other.



At the end of the story, Eva finds what she has been looking for, which is to tell the world about her existence and existence in the form of a work. Eva is not alone, together with their room 203 friends, they rewrite the diary stories that will be published in a book called *The Freedom Writers Diary*.

*“We weren't just kids in a class anymore. We were writers with our voices, our own stories. And even if nobody else read it, the book would be something to leave behind that said we were here, this is what happened, we mattered. Even if it was just to each other. And we won't forget. Ms. G didn't promise it would get published or anything, but we could get it out there ourselves.”*



## CONCLUSION

The change to becoming a person who has a positive self-concept is not short. In this story, there is motivation from within to continue to do good habits and support from the closest people such as teachers and friends in class. Through modifying learning and evaluation techniques, altering the approach to access resources, encouraging students to actively reflect on their motives, and emphasizing the educator's traits of authenticity, acceptance, and empathy. (Cyril et al., 2006) In addition, one thing that must be emphasized is that keeping our thoughts positive and emotional will create a happy atmosphere so that the process of self-actualization will lead to a positive self-concept.

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