The Power Of Tolerance And Understanding In Freedom Writers

Freedom Writers is a movie based on the book The Freedom Writers Diary by teacher Erin Gruwell. The movie was directed by Richard LaGravenese and it was released in 2007. This movie discusses significant themes such as stereotyping and racial discrimination but most important the power of tolerance and understanding. The purpose of this movie is to promote the message that knowledge is power and in a world filled with disparities where hundreds of ethnic groups convey and interact humans are obliged to accept and tolerate the differences that define each person. This film is a perfect example of how these rhetorical components are used to create an effective argument. The director of the movie as well as the characters build their credibility by providing background information and personal facts and by referring to a specific setting where the conflict developed. Also, they successfully employ emotionally appeals by showing the target audience the disparities in education and the difficult situations associated with gangs that students face. In addition, a logic appeal is developed through the movie by stating historical facts and the character build logical appeals analyzing the distinct factors that are affecting the situation.

The movie Freedom Writers, targets an audience of school teenagers that have experienced difficult times but they've been able to overcome these problems thanks to their courage. Although I believe the movie is aimed to a specific audience, Freedom Writers undoubtedly shares a bigger message that encloses a more general and bigger audience. The movie develops two years after the Rodney King riots that rocked Los Angeles, where Erin Gruwell, an inexpert teacher, was assigned to a freshmen class of underprivileged students at Woodrow High Schools, where these teenagers come from different ethnic groups, are involved with gangs and follow strict moral codes. The different ethnic groups share hate to each other and have brought their social differences and racial intolerance inside the classroom. One day Gruwell intercepted a caricature that shared an ugly racial message, and she declared that this was precisely the kind of thing that led to the Holocaust. Even, when the students seem careless and do not tolerate the professor, Gruwell guided by her ideals and big heart refuses to allow her students to be incompetent and gave her students a chance to overcome the limitations imposed on them by society and themselves. She encouraged them to do something remarkable and memorable and assign them a journal where they could feel free to express their emotions and feeling and essentially tell the stories that define them. Gruwell draws students' attention by assigning them The Diary of Anne Frank, a book that promptly become a guide for the students and open their minds and eyes against intolerance and misunderstanding. Inspired by this book, the students raised funds to bring Miep Gies, the woman who sheltered the Frank family, to visit them in California where she declared that the students are the real heroes.

LaGravanese makes an excellent job with the characters, the soundtrack, and the scenery, making the message clear for the audience. Throughout the movie, the director uses many strong facts that strengthen his credibility and appeal to ethos, as well as build the movie's argument. The director establishes his credibility by showing the audience actual video footage of Los Angeles area from the early 1990s and a series of captions demonstrating the racial tension between different gangs. Also, LaGravanese uses an ethos appeal by starting to narrate

the story through the eyes of Eva, a Hispanic character, and show the audience what traumatic experiences the character is experiencing that could explain her moral beliefs and her blind loyalty to her gang.

For her part Ms. Gruwell builds their credibility with the students after she intercepted a racial caricature of one of her black students. Furious with the social discrimination and racial intolerance that her students demonstrate, Ms. Gruwell decides to tell their students that their gangs are nothing compared with the biggest gang of all time, the Nazis, responsible for causing the Holocaust, the systematically murdered of six million European Jews. she discovers that her students are not familiar with this term and time in history and she decides to go one step forward and take her students to the Museum of Tolerance, where the students realized by themselves that thousands of people suffered in concentration camps and that their teacher was telling them the truth. Also, Ms. Gurwell expands the knowledge and interest of their students in the holocaust by assigning them The Diary of Anne Frank, a book that without doubt presents reliable information about this time in history. The professor continues to build her credibility with reliable sources that engage students' attentions and progressively makes her win the students' respect.

Besides building his credibility by showing actual footage of Los Angeles during the Rodney King riots, the director achieves a logical appeal. Also, LaGravanese successfully arranged the scenes to demonstrate that the characters far from being lost causes are students to whom an education of quality has been neglected, and even when their personal lives seem hopeless, they're strong and they're willing to change the world.

Ms. G employed logos to move her ideas forward and to persuade her students. For Ms. G to create a strong bond with her students seemed impossible without understanding their situations and knowing how to face the barriers imposed by the school system. In one of the scenes, the professor is willing to understand what the students have been going through. She moves the students around out of their racial gangs and she attempts to show the students that they actually have a lot in common and that intolerance should be vanished from the classroom. She puts a line of thick red tape across the classroom and tells the students to move forward when a statement she makes applies to them. Motivated by her devotion to teaching and knowing that the school system doesn't support her or believe in integration, she decided to reach her students by providing them with a diary and different supplies, giving them an education they deserve and that has been neglected by society.

The director focus especially on a Hispanic student called Eva. He first portrays her as a strong woman but as the movie develops Eva is portrayed as a sensible character. LaGravanese applies an emotional appeal in the scenes where Eva is debating whether declare the truth in court to protect one of her friends or to inculpate someone else. Motivated and inspired by the different stories she had read, Eva decided to do the right thing and tell the truth on the day of the trial. This scene is touching and successfully employed emotional appeals because it shows that Eva's desire to do something remarkable and to be brave and tell the truth, she did the right thing even risking her own life. In the next scenes, Eva asks Mrs. G for her help to escape the gang world and Sindy, a Cambodian student, is proud of Eva for telling the truth and it is the beginning of a wonderful friendship. One of the most touching scenes is when one of Ms. G students that was always quiet has the courage to express his feelings and share what he wrote on his journal and expresses how this class has given his life hope and become a place of refuge. Touched with the student's words every one hug him and they understand that they

were no longer enemies and that their differences no longer exist.

Ms. G is a novice but she is extremely devoted to teaching. Throughout the movie she’s always portrayed as a supportive and understanding professor. She builds an emotional appeal by showing interest in her students not only about their school performance but also about their lives. When she asks their students to evaluate and grade themselves, Andre, a black student, graded himself with an F. This is one of the scenes where the audience can see the devotion of the professor because she challenged Andre and told him that he’s not failing, that she’s going to make every effort possible to not let him fail. Also, the professor’s devotion is visible when in one of the scenes the hate that all these ethnic groups share towards white people is noticeable. This scene is touching because the students share their bad experiences that involved white cops and dead. However, the professor bravely confronts the students that they're not going to win respect for being in a gang or protecting the wrong things but they could be remembered for doing something remarkable and humane.

A film is a series of messages aiming an audience, and the success of any movie is determined by the effectiveness of the messages to get to the public. Although we may not even be aware of it, but we are only informed because of the rhetorical appeals used to deliver these messages. We receive them through the character, the soundtrack, and the scenery.