BLAXPLOITATION IN PETER BERG’S HANCOCK (2008):
AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CRITICISM
A THESIS

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2014
DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any universities or other institutions and to be the best of candidate’s knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by other person except where due the reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Surabaya, June 26th 2014

Moh. Arief Raditya Putra
This thesis is dedicated to my parents

and

To people who don’t “see color”
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SURABAYA
2014
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillahirabbi ‘aalamiin. First of all, my very special thank to Allah SWT, because without His blessing and His mercy this thesis will not be finished on time. I would like to express an infinite gratitude to Him for all the ease and miracle happened to me while conducting this thesis.

Next, I also would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor Mr. Puguh Budi Susetyo, who always guided and supported me to conduct this research, for his time, his patience, motivation, kindness and his trust to me. Thank you for spending your time to guide me, teaching me, believing me, and finally giving me a chance to finish this thesis on time. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank to Arum Budiastuti and Diah Arimbi for their contribution in this thesis writing, and also all lecturers in English Department of Universitas Airlangga for their contribution toward my study in this college.

My infinite thanks expressed to my parents and family, for my mom, my dad in heaven, my brothers for supporting and loving me. Especially my mom for her endless love, her infinite prays, her supports for me to completing my study. Thank you for being the main motivation and inspiration of my life.

I thank to my fellow colleagues: Mukhammad Abdi, Seto Indrajit, Mirza Setiawan, Tsaniyatul Haliyah, Ramzi Mutlik, for the discussions and any knowledge sharing. Thank you for all the fun we have had in the last four years. Thank you for accompanied me and spending your time with me while I am
finishing this Sarjana study. Thank you for all your help and your presence when I need you. Thank you for being my best friends I’ve ever met.

Also my special thanks to my love, Loren Damayanti, the one who always be there for me, always motivates and helps me in any difficulties I faced, the one who always gives me her pure loves, caring, and happiness. Thanks for completing my life, for being the best. Without you by my side, I may not be this happy in my life.
“You can’t delete racism. It’s like a cigarette. You can’t stop smoking if you don’t want to, and you can’t stop racism if people don’t want to. But I’ll do everything I can to help.”

-Mario Balotelli
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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to examine some racial discourses through the representation of Blaxploitation in *Hancock* movie. *Hancock* is directed by Peter Berg, tells the story about the life of an ‘unusual hero’ starred by a Black character. This research aims to explore how the director’s point of view, who is a white man, packages the story of black hero which actually contains implicit racial discourses. Using qualitative approach by focusing on the main black character, this study indentified the racial discourses inserted through the black stereotyping, the influence of white characters, and the construction of hero identity which led this movie to be categorized as one of the Hollywood blaxploitation movie. The analysis of this study uses the concept of *Third Cinema Blaxploitation* by Tommy L.Lott. Since the main theory cannot stand by iself, Stuart Hall’s *Grammar of Race* is used as the supporting theory. The combination between narrative and non-narrative aspects in the movie strengthen the analysis of this study. This study found that Hancock character portrays the negative stereotypes of African-American people in USA, his dependency to the white people, filmmakers’ point of view toward white and black people relationship, and the construction of Black Hero identity. The finding of this study emphasize that the concept of racism in any form should be revealed in order to support the world’s effort to reduce racism in the worldwide.

**Keywords:** African American, Black Stereotypes, Blaxploitation, Racism
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The issues of racism are the problems faced by many countries around the world. From time to time, race becomes the most controversial topics to be discussed. ‘Race’ is a cultural and historical category, a way of making difference signifies between people of a variety of skin tones (Storey 167). However, the nature of the race is always being questioned. At first race was thought as a natural phenomenon, but lately race was considered as the social and political phenomenon. According to John Storey, race has to be socially and politically constructed, and elaborating ideological work is done to secure and maintain the different forms of “racialization” which have characterized capitalist development (ibid).

Race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies (Winant 3). Winant through his journal entitled ‘Race and Racism: Toward Global Future’ argues that although the racism is based on human beings’ biologically characteristic, actually there is no biological basis that distinguishes human beings, but it is necessarily a social and historical process (ibid). Racism is a term that usually defined as views or practices which reflect the beliefs that human beings are distinguished by a biological distinct called race which makes some groups became superior and the other become inferior.
Racism, also known as racial discrimination, is often used to describe the discrimination towards particular group or ethnic; it happened from long time ago and still exists in this modern era. Racism process is actually started by one’s prejudice and stereotyping toward the others (Utama 5). Prejudice is a stance of making decision before knowing the actual facts about something. While stereotype is the verbal expression of a certain conviction or belief directed toward a social group or an individual as a member of that social group (Reisigl and Wodak 378). If we started to stereotype people negatively, then it would be followed by a negative prejudice. After that, we would do a negative act toward that people. This kind of attitude is actually considered as one of the racism.

Racial identities seem to be less solid and ineffable than they did in previous ages (Winant 3). In the past, racism deals with slavery. At first, racism developed in England as a defense of slavery and the slave trade. In other words, racism firstly emerges as a defensive ideology, promulgated in order to defend the economic profits of slavery and the slave trade (Storey 168). In the present day, slavery is prohibited around the world. If the racism issues are no longer used for the intention of slavery, so how the concept of racism occurred in this present day? This point makes the writer of the study interests in analyzing the racism issue. Racism is an important issue to be discussed because its ideology is still spread out freely to the people in the worldwide.

The United States of America (USA) is one of the multicultural countries in the world. The people who live in the USA are from many countries around the world. With the fact that there are so many people with different background and
origin live in USA, the racism issues must be very common or probably become big issues in its society. Since the differences of the biological term in USA become the important determining factor of human abilities and capabilities, they make the racism issues become hot topics to discuss. The American believes that the ‘white race’ is more superior than other races in many aspects in society (Anggreny 13). The issue of racism in the U.S. heated up when in 2008; Barack Obama has declared victory in the presidential election. Considering that Barack Obama is the first black U.S. president who successfully beat his competitors who is white people; it is believed as the turning point of the status of African American people in the U.S. This occurrence seemed to be a major blow to those who are still considered more dominant than African American people, so that they try to look for more subtle way to spread out their racial ideology.

In the past, the racism issue was applied in the term of slavery. Slavery is a system which people are treated as property to be bought and sold or being forced to do some works (Storey 168). This phenomenon happened for long time but then in this modern time there is no longer slavery around the world. Extreme forms of violence against African Americans, such as slavery, the assassination of black leaders, the bombing of black churches, and the brutal treatment of civil rights protestors, seem to be a thing of the past in the United States (Tyson 367). Although those attitudes toward black people in USA and all around world has been prohibited by United Nation and also all races obtained the same rights for life, but still the western (Europeans and Americans) consider themselves more superior than others. In other words, the racism issue in USA has not
disappeared, it’s just gone ‘underground’ which means it’s simply become more dangerous and less visible than it used to be (ibid). This racism ideology becomes the fundamental belief of ‘the white’ that tried to be spread out to all people in the world.

In what ways the Americans try to distribute their racism ideology to other people in this modern era? Actually, there are many ways to spread out the issue of racism in this modern era. Media is the best way to do such purpose to spread their ideology of racism. One of them is trough the film. In this modern era, film is the best way to infix the issues of racism in such soft ways. Films play crucial role in delivering some racial ideology trough its representation of race. It makes the concept of delivering the issues of racism becomes more and more difficult to be detected. Required a very sharp observation to detect or reveal that colonial discourse that slips in the movie. But the concept of delivering the issues of racism often missed from the lens of many researchers. In this chance, through this study the writer tries to show us the concept of delivering the issues of racism through the movies that we can enjoy anytime.

The term racism in film mostly associated to the representation of non white (mostly black) characters in the movie. There was a time when the Hollywood film industry is dominated by films that used black culture, directed by blacks and even played by black people, that familiar with the term *Blaxploitation* film. *Blaxploitation or Blacksploitation* is the morphing of the words ‘Black’ and ‘Exploitation’. It refers to a film genre in 1970s which used the culture of urban Black life and mainly used black casts that repackaged by white
artist to be sold to audience (Terry 83). Many experts have analyzed this film genre, some of them considered Blaxploitation films as a form of anti-racism of blacks. But some others consider that these films even more degrading black’s position through their representation in the film which are actually unconsciously showing the bad side that refers to the negative stereotypes of black.

According to Manthia Diawarra in his book entitled Black Cinema, the Early Black Cinema is a term that refers to the films which made by black filmmakers, directed and starred by black men, showed the aesthetic culture of black, and targetted to the black spectators (8). But by the time, because of economical and social condition, since the white had also took role in the film making, this concept had changed into an attempt to degrade the blacks status in society. The whites played the role of showing the negative stereotypes of black people to build social perspectives about them. In line with Diawarra, Tommy L. Lott in his concept of A No-Theory of Contemporary Black Cinema argued that there was a major shift that made a contemporary black cinema showed more negative stereotypes of blacks rather than the aesthetic culture as in the early period (92). Even actually he still could not define what was the meaning of Black Cinema itself. There was confusion whether it depended on biological criteria (which meant it all made by black people) or based on cultural criteria (told about black culture, but involve some whites in the film making) (Lott 92). It led him to formulate the new kind of Blaxploitation genre, which called Third Cinema, that refers to the film that not only contained both black aesthetic culture and also the well-packaged black negative stereotypes to satisfy both side (blacks and whites),
but also contained such political orientation within hegemonic structures of postcolonialism (ibid).

Blaxploitation era films slowly began to fade, the 1970s were the culminated point of the era and it starts to disappear over time. This film genre is believed to be lost at the end of the 1990s. But the film contained racism issues and black stereotypes still exist. It’s no longer uses black people as main characters and black culture, but it played by white casts. As reported in the Michael Danes list of Hollywood racist film, there are a lot of films that still contain racism issues, such as; The Matrix Trilogy, The Last Samurai, The Toy, 300, Breakfast at Tiffany’s, etc (Danes). But there is one well-known Hollywood movie that missed from the list of racist film because this movie delivered the issue of racism in a very good way, tidy, soft and vague. Re-raising the black cast as its main character and the central idea of the story, a film entitled Hancock launched.

Lott’s Third Cinema concept of Blaxploitation is well represented in “Hancock” movie which later will be discussed in this study. Hancock is a Peter Berg’s film produced by Columbia Picture. This movie was presented and widely released on July 2, 2008 (IMDb). According to IMDb, this movie is one of successful movie which received 9 nominations and won 4 awards, and gained average rating about 6.5 for user ratings (ibid). The movie talks about a black vigilante superhero, named John Hancock, starred by Will Smith, from Los Angeles whose reckless actions routinely cost the city millions of dollars. Eventually, one person he saved, Ray Embrey wanted to change Hancock’s image
better. This movie showed the audience how African American people in USA were represented. Hancock was represented as a ‘superhero’ not accepted by the people around him because of his attitude. He was a criminal, alcoholic, rude, lazy, anti-social, who was living alone far from society in a broken trailer home. Almost everybody hates him, including the people he saved. However, there was one man who had faith that Hancock could be a good hero for the people. In this case, the one who cared and tried to make Hancock accepted by the society was an idealistic white man. Ray Embrey, starred by Jason Bateman, proceeded to ‘civilize’ the ‘uncivilized Hancock’ by persuading him to be more kind to people, behave and socialize in a good way, help people kindly, make him look good, etc. This point leads this movie into the racism issues provided in this movie.

This film becomes more interesting to be discussed because the racism discourse in this film is well organized. The whole package of this movie had succeeded to spread the idea of racism to the audience unconsciously. But for those who have a sharp critical contemplation, they might be categorized this film as one of the racist film and could considered this film as a blaxploitation genre film. Another interesting thing that leads this movie important to discuss is how the director, Peter Berg, who is a white man, represents the black man as a superhero, and uses his ‘blackness’ to be sold to the viewers that lead this movie gains high income from it. As noted, *Hancock* movie gained approximately $625 million dollars at the box-office, while it was ‘only’ cost about $150 million dollars for its production budget (Julian). Considering the time when this movie released, 2nd of July 2008, close to US independence day and presidential
election, the possibility of political view inserted in the movie was also interested to be discussed. The director itself, Peter Berg, is famous for his involvement in some films that featuring black figures in it, both as an actor or as director. Some other famous films that he produced such as *Collateral* (2004), *Battleship* (2012), and *Lone Survivor* (2014) were also successfully gained high income and many awards.

Actually, many studies that discussed the racism issues in the movie had been conducted by some researchers. One of them conducted by Dianita Rachmawati, a former student of Faculty of Humanities, in her thesis entitled “*The Representation of Blackness in Megamind Character of Tom Mcgrath’s Megamind*”. She examined the main animated character, Megamind, who represented as a ‘purple’ creature from the other planet and revealed the blackness on him. Rachmawati determined that Megamind character referred to black man through its stereotypical, social, and psychological representation of him. She argued that a racial issues could be found in any media especially film, even in the animated movie that actually targeted to build children’s unconscious social perspectives toward blacks. Another study discussed the racism issues in movie conducted by Desy Anggreny entitled “*The Construction of Whiteness Through The Representation of White and Black Americans in The Dark Blue Movie*”. She emphasized on the construction of whiteness through the representation of black and white. She focused on how the character was represented in the movie by their behaviour, misconduct that led this movie constructed the whiteness.
The studies mentioned above have similarities with this study since the main topic is the racial issues inserted in the movie and mostly discussed the negative stereotypes of blacks. The difference from this study is the previous researchers did not relate their discussion to the blaxploitation concept. This study shows not only the racial stereotypes but also discussed the constructing identity of black by white which then related it to the most probable context around the time the movie released. Therefore, the main focus of this study is on analysing the representation of Third Cinema concept of Blaxploitation in Hancock character. The representation of Blaxploitation in Berg’s *Hancock* is identified from black stereotyping, the influence of white characters, and the construction of hero identity.

1.2 **Statement of the Problem**

In regard to the background of the study above, the writer proposes the statement of problem:

1. How is the representation of Blaxploitation in Peter Berg’s *Hancock* movie?

1.3 **Objective of the Study**

Based on the research question above, the writer determines the objective of the study is:

1. To discuss how the blaxploitation represented in Peter Berg’s movie entitled *Hancock*. 
1.4 Significance of the Study

This research becomes important to be discussed because the concept of racist discourse inserted through the movie should be revealed in order to support the world’s effort to reduce racism in the worldwide. By analyzing this movie, hopefully this research could give the readers more understanding about what actually racism is, what racism issue is, and shows the readers how the racist ideology spread out to the mankind. Therefore, the people can prevent the spread of racism issues in this world and becomes more critical or no longer easily absorbed with the racist ideology in whatever ways, especially through the movie.

This study is also important to give contribution toward the study of cultural studies in the English Department of Universitas Airlangga (UA). Besides, this study can be one of the sources and also an attempt to stimulate more people to be interested in analyzing this similar study.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

There are some terms in this study that may not be familiar in everyday life vocabulary. So, these are the definitions of those unfamiliar terms:

*African American*: The term African American refers to the approximately thirty-five million Americans of African descent living in the United States in the 1990s (Cashmore 13).
(Black) Stereotypes: An act of over simply generalization about someone’s attitudes that refers to some groups’ attitudes (Reisigl and Wodak 378).

Blaxploitation: A film genre in 1970s which used the culture of urban Black life and mainly used black casts that repackaged by white artist to be sold to audience (Terry 83).

Racism: Views or practices which reflects the beliefs that human is distinguished by a biological distinct called race, which make some groups became superior and the other become inferior. (Storey 167)
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter contains concepts and theories used in the analysis, and also presents some related studies that similar to this study. This study focuses on the representation of African American character in the movie. The term African American refers to the approximately thirty-five million Americans of African descent living in the United States in the 1990s (Cashmore 13). If we talk about African American, it mostly associated to the racial problems or racial discriminations happened to them. If in the past, it was applied in the term of slavery, but nowadays it becomes less visible than it used to be. The racial issues in this modern era mostly delivered in such subtle ways that infixed through the media, one of them through the movie. Race has been a feature in American film since the beginning of the film industry and African Americans have been involved in filmmaking since the early days of movies (Sheridan 179). However, the involvement of them in films and television is not necessarily good news because they tend to fit into certain negative stereotypes, showing them as subservient, hypersexualized, dangerous, or incomplete (Larson 26). In other words, media (especially movie) mostly represents blacks as inferior to whites. Many experts argue that these kinds of representations of blacks in the movie can be categorized as a new kind of racism issue.
After the Second World War, America began to confront racism, so did Hollywood and many big studios began to make movies depicting racism (Sheridan 179). This situation leads Hollywood movie enters an era called Blaxploitation movie era around 1960s, when many filmmakers produced movies that used the African Americans as the casts and mostly represented the negative stereotypes of them. This kind of movie still exists until nowadays, but the way the filmmakers packaged the racism issue in the movie are getting more and more subtle so that required a sharp and critical contemplation to reveal it. Therefore, this study mainly discussed about the representation of Blaxploitation concept delivered through the *Hancock* movie. The main topic of the movie will be discussed using the concept of Third Cinema Blaxploitation by Tommy L. Lott. Since this concept cannot stand by itself, the supporting theory is needed to strengthen the analysis. The concept of Grammar of Race by Stuart Hall is used to break down the issues of stereotypes in the movie.

*Hancock* movie represents black exploitation through the main character, John Hancock. Hancock character in the movie represents the exploitation of black people by showing the negative stereotypes of them. The stereotypes appeared in the movie will be analyzed using Hall’s concept Grammar of Race. In Grammar of Race, Hall defined the usual stereotypes of Black people in Hollywood movie into three divisions; *native, slave, and clown* figure. Hancock character represents all of those characteristics of stereotypes such as barbaric, savage and humorous person.
The interesting point is *Hancock* movie not only shows the negative representation of Black people, but it represents the positive role of blacks as well. This contrary position of Blacks representation is well packaged through the narrative and non-narrative aspects of the movie and tries to deliver some ideological and hegemonic issues to the audience. Therefore, it is important to find the suitable framework that can be used to analyze this concept. For that reason, the most suitable concept to analyze this phenomenon is using the concept of Lott’s *Third Blaxploitation Cinema* as the main theory used.

### 2.1.1 Third Blaxploitation Cinema

*Blaxploitation* or *Blacksploration* concept firstly introduced by Manthia Diawarra. Manthia Diawarra, in his book entitled *Black American Cinema*, formulated that there were two eras of blaxploitation movies. The first was the earlier blaxploitation movie in early 1970s which purely made by black filmmakers, directed and starred by black men, targeted black audiences, showed the aesthetics of black culture. The aesthetics of black, in this case, means everything good about black people and society, such as showing their discipline on spirituality (Black Churches), showing their efforts to gain the liberation and equality in society (Diawarra 8).

The film mostly told about anything that usually acted by whites but they packaged it by using the black casts (ibid). For example, black people starred as the main character as a hero who fought any kind of crimes, they also showed their courage to act the love scenes in frontal nude condition, etc. In this case, it received many possitive reactions from black people since it seemed as an attempt
of black people to get an equal position in society. Unfortunately, this kind of blaxploitation movie could not last a long time. The films that only targeted the black people made the filmmakers experienced economical problems. They slowly stopped the production of these films and tried to find way to overcome this conditions. The whites filmmakers then looked this condition as a chance to gain profit, considering the possessive enthusiasm from the spectators, then they took over the production of the films. The existence of the white filmmakers and white director in the movies led the new era of blaxploitation was born.

The second generation of blaxploitation film called by Diawarra as ‘New Black Films’. The touches of white people in black films made the earlier characteristic of the film slowly began to fade. There was a major shift in Blaxploitation movie. The film that firstly targeted only for the black people then turned into more flexible for white audiences. Although the film still used the black man and black culture as the topic, but it was repackaged in order to be accepted by white audiences (Diawarra 9). The senses of whites were given in a bigger portion by appointing the white filmmakers to make the film. Automatically, it makes the films more likely to show the negative stereotypes of the black and also shows the humorous side of black people rather than showing the positive role of black. This kind of film genre began to develop in Hollywood around mid 1980s in the term of Comedy film. It was more likely an attempt to build the new social perspective of Blacks by playing the role of black cast mostly as the obstacles, meanwhile it seemed tried to empower white cast as the hero of
the story. Of course this condition could not be accepted by the black people because they thought that it more degrading the black position in society.

Completing Diawarra’s concept about black cinema, another black cinema expert, Tommy L. Lott argued in his book *A-No Theory of Contemporary Black Cinema* that both black cinema eras were failed to satisfy the spectators. This condition reduced the black audience that seemed not happy of the film, so it makes the filmmakers had to give something for black satisfaction, not specifically concerned about white point of view. He argued that by the time, the black cinema influenced by political purposes to change the film packaging so that it could be accepted by both side; blacks would find psychological satisfaction as do whites who find pleasures in white heroes (Lott 92).

This dualism of black cinema version made the confusion about what is the real definition of Black Cinema itself. Does it depend on the biological criteria? It means that the film that categorized as black cinema is film that made purely by black people; using black cast, black filmmakers, and black culture just like Diawarra’s concept of Early Blaxploitation cinema. Or, does it depend on cultural criteria? It means that no matter who were the filmmakers whether white or black, but as long as the film talked about black culture can be categorized as Black Cinema as well.

This situation led Lott formulized the new kind of blaxploitation cinema which he called as *Third Cinema Blaxploitation*. This genre seemed as the merger of both earlier concept defined by Diawarra. This genre contains both positive and negative portrayal of black people and also contains hidden ideological and
hegemonic issues that try to be spread out to the audience. So it could grab both black and white audiences. The interesting point is this genre unconsciously still contains such racial and political issues that attempted to degrade black position in society. This concept is fully suitable to be discussed in Hancock movie.

2.1.2 Grammar of Race

The application of Third Cinema concept in Hancock movie cannot stand by itself because it needed another concept to breakdown the representation of negative stereotypes in the movie. In this case the writer uses the concept of Grammar of (Black) Race by Stuart Hall.

Stuart Hall is an expert who also concerned about the existence of racism issues in media. Media plays crucial role to construct people point of view toward race in society. Hall stated that, “Media are not only a powerful source of ideas about race. They are also one place where these ideas are articulated, worked on, transformed, and elaborated” (Hall 90). Hall defined two types of racism into two; overt racism and interferential racism. Overt racism is a visible racism acts such as some open racist arguments, positions, or any racist policy made specifically for particular race (ibid). Interferential racism is a term of invisible racism but more dangerous. Hall argued that this kind of racism appeared in media both in factual or fictional term that represented some events related to race which had racist premises infused in them (ibid). This kind of racism can only being identified by using his concept of Grammar of Race.
Grammar of Race is a concept that defines the common stereotypes that used in Hollywood movie. Stuart Hall divided this concept into three variants; *slave* figure, *native* figure, and *clown* figure. The writer uses all figures to identify the representation of negative stereotypes that appeared through the main black character in the movie, Hancock.

### 2.1.2.1 Slave Figure

Stuart Hall divided this figure of stereotypes in two binary oppositions, a good slave and bad slave. A good slave depicted as dependable, devoted, faithfull, attached and obedient to ‘his’ Master (Hall 92). Hall portrayed this kind of slave as the same as a child who is always understand what his mother wants even only using the rolling eyes or any other simple signs. In contrast, Hall depicted a bad slave usually waits for a good chance to betray the Masters and stab them in the back. Hall also portrayed the bad slave figure as unreliable, undependable, the one who always looked for the way to escape from his master at the slightest opportunity (ibid).

### 2.1.2.2 Native Figure

According to Stuart Hall (92), the representation of Race in the media usually portrayed into dual nature of native; the good and bad side. The good side will show the character as kind, noble, and in simple dignity. Otherwise, the bad side will portrayed in terms of savage and barbaric. The bad native figure portrayed as cunning, cheating, cannibals, rude, and uncivilized figure. The
barbaric behavior applied in term of physical (appearance) and verbal action of the character.

2.1.2.3 Clown Figure

Stuart Hall defined this point by arguing that mostly black people represented similar to clown’s character. Black people usually represented as a humorous person because of his unique behavior often make the audiences laugh. Hall stated in his book:

“It is never quite clear whether we are laughing with or at this figure: admiring the physical and rhythmic grace, the open expresivity and emotionality of the “entertainer,” or put off by the “clown’s” stupidity.” (Hall 92)

What Hall means is that black people usually stereotyped in the movie by representing the humour sense of clown whether in the term of verbal, behavior, expression, and stupidity.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

There are some related studies that has been done before this study is written, both in terms of the object of analysis or theories used. One of them is a thesis entitled Systemic Racism in Crash the Movie by Nanda Sanjaya Utama. Although it discusses about racism concept inserted in the movie, this research is different from Utama’s work because this study not only show the racism issues inserted in the movie through representation of negative stereotypes of black character, but also relates the issues into the concept of blaxploitation cinema and
the context happened around when the movie released. Meanwhile, Utama’s study discusses about the systemic racist attitude toward several people from some countries. The theory used is also different since this study used the Third Cinema Blaxploitation concept by Tommy L. Lott as the main theory used, while Utama’s study uses Feagin’s theory of systemic racism.

Another study which has similar topic discussed in the study is done by Dianita Rachmawati; a former student of Faculty of Humanities, in her thesis entitled “The Representation of Blackness in Megamind Character of Tom McGrath’s Megamind”. She examines the main animated character, Megamind, who is represented as a ‘purple’ creature from the other planet and revealed the blackness on him. Rachmawati determines that Megamind character referred to black man through its stereotypical, social, and psychological representation of him. She argued that racial issues can be found in any media especially film, even in the animated movie that actually targeted to build children’s unconscious social perspectives toward blacks. While Rachmawati’s study concerns about the blackness representation in the non human character in the movie, this study focuses on the representation of black man character that seems exactly refers to the real human in the real world. Both studies use the same theoretical framework to analyze the negative portrayal of black, which is Grammar of Race by Stuart Hall. Rachmawati’s study does not discuss the ideology and political views infixed in the movie, while this study does relate the issues to the context around the movie released and try to find out the hidden hegemonic racial issues inserted through the movie as well.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF THE STUDY

3.1 Research Approach

There are two types of research approach; Quantitative approach and Qualitative approach. It depends on the research object that wants to be analyzed. Since this study use a film as the research object, which is categorized as a text, and the research question is about the social and cultural human problem, the qualitative approach is more suitable to be used as the research object of the study. John W. Creswell defined the definition of qualitative approach as stated in his book:

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants’ setting; analyzing the data inductively building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible writing structure.

(Creswell 232)

A qualitative approach aims to identify the hidden racial discourse in this movie, and discuss how the Third Cinema Blaxploitation is represented in the film and also what purposes aimed behind those representations. The writer will deeply
analyzing the representation of black character in the movie and relate it to the most probable context happened around the movie released. This approach will answer the research question mentioned earlier and eased to break down the social and cultural human problem such as the issues of racism toward black people.

3.2 Data Sources

There are 2 types of data used in this study: primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the object of research, in this case is the movie Hancock itself. The writer chose Hancock because it well represented the blaxploitation concept in contemporary Hollywood movie trough its representation of black stereotypes and black identity construction. Besides, this movie is can be categorized as one of successful movie which received 9 nominations and won 4 awards, and gained average rating about 6.5 for user ratings (IMDb). This film also received tremendous income for approximately $625 million dollars at the box-office, while it was ‘only’ cost about $150 million dollars for its production budget (Julian).

The primary source used in this study is the Third Cinema Blaxploitation concept by Tommy L. Lott. While secondary sources are any other sources that taken outside the object. In this study, secondary data used are taken from the textbooks, internet, articles and journals which contain the related topic that will be discussed.
3.3 Scope and Limitation

In analyzing the Hancock movie, many issues and conflicts can be analyzed. If the whole problems and conflicts analyzed in this study, the study will probably become unfocused. Therefore, the writer decides to limit the study on the representation of Hancock character as a black superhero in this movie and his relation to the other white characters around him. The main focus is to reveal how this movie can be categorized as a Blaxploitation film which implicitly discusses racial issues on it.

The study uses the Third Blaxploitation Cinema by Tommy L.Lott as the grand theory. It divided into three sub divisions; the first is the positive portrayal of Black character. The second is the negative representation of Black; this part will be analyzed using the stereotypes concept by Stuart Hall, Grammar of Race. And the last part is the black identity construction and its context which will determine the most probable hidden ideological issues that tried to be introduced by the filmmakers. The limitation on the analysis aims to get a deeper understanding and specific analysis of the issues. Focusing on the Hancock character and some events that happened on him is enough to answer the research question formulized above.

3.4 Technique of Data Collection

- Text Media Analysis

The analysis in this study will focus on the observations in the Hancock movie itself. This data collection is done by directly studying the object of
the study to obtain data about the object analyzed. Considering that the object of the study is a film, the writer watches the movie intensively and chooses some scenes which contained the object of the study as the primary data source. The writer captures the chosen scenes and dialogues needed for the discussion.

- Library Studies

This technique is a technique of secondary data collection on the object and research fields which obtained from written sources, such as books, internet, articles and journals. The internet websites browsing aims to acquire the movie reviews, comments, critics, analysis and any other important information about the issues discussed in the movie. However, various books which contain the theories used in this topic are also very important in gaining the information and theories applied in this movie. The evidences in the movie combined with the theories application from the sources will lead the reader gain a deep understanding of the analysis from the problem that appears as the writer has mentioned earlier.

3.5 **Technique of Data Analysis**

The first step is by watching the chosen scenes of the movie intensively to gain the deep understanding of those materials. Then the writer will examine each research object and its parts combined with supporting data obtained in order to reveal and discuss the intent delivered through the film. The narrative and non-
narrative aspect cannot be separated from the study. By watching the movie intensively, the narrative aspects will be discussed and the non-narrative aspects such as shot and color will also be analyzed as well. In this case, the non-narrative aspect will be adjusted depend on the chosen scenes. The analysis of both aspects will support and strengthen the analysis of the problem. By choosing the method and analysis of the narrative and non-narrative aspects, it will help the reader to understand about the racism problem in the movie.

3.5.1 Narrative Aspects

The first aspect analyzed is narrative aspects. According to Rachmah Ida, the major elements of narrative aspect in film are story and Plot (Ida 97). This study analyzed the story and plot of the movie which combined directly with the non narrative aspects depend n the scenes discussed. The story observation has resulted in the discussion of how black character exploited in this movie trough the negative stereotypes representation on the main black character. The writer will break down the characteristic of Third Cinema Blaxploitation, including the positive and negative portrayal of black and also the context of the black character identity construction. There are several strategies to answer the problem above, such as:

3.5.1.1 Analyzing the main character’s appearance and behavior

Louis Tyson, trough his book Critical Theory Today, suggests to deeply analyzing the black character in the story, and how the white filmmakers constructed its portrayal (Tyson 394). The main character in the movie, Hancock,
is the focus of the study. His appearance, behavior, verbal dialogue, gestures and his role in the movie will be classified into two; positive and negative representation. The positive portrayal of Hancock showed the characteristic of black aesthetics in the movie. Otherwise, the negative representation of Hancock determined using Hall’s concept of stereotypes *Grammar of Race*. Both representation of good and bad figure of black is one of the *Third Cinema*  *Blaxploitation* characteristic.

3.5.1.2 Analyzing the relation of the black and white character

The relation between black and white characters determines the common hierarchal position in societal environment. The relation between Hancock and the man, who he saved, Ray Embrey, showed the implicit slave-master relationship. Hancock’s relation with his wife (Embrey’s wife as well) showed how filmmakers build spectators perspectives against black man position in society.

3.5.1.3 Looking at the context

The black identity construction in the movie should be related to the most probable real events happened around the movie released. It aims to identify what ideology and intent that filmmakers wanted to introduce to the audiences. As justified by Tyson that the context is important to identify the ideological construction that tried to be build in society about their point of view toward particular race (Tyson 395)
3.5.2 Non-narrative Aspects

The second aspect discussed is non-narrative aspects. The non-narrative aspect cannot be separated in the discussion because it determines whether the visual image support the issues as well or not. It means that the narrative and non-narrative aspects should be support each other in order to give better and deeper analysis toward certain issues discussed. Rachma Ida in her book mentioned some aspects that categorized as non-narrative part such as; camera works and movements, costumes, setting, color compositions, sounds, characters, and environment (Ida 97). In identifying the racial issues in Hancock movie, some aspect such as costumes and make-up, music or sound, lighting, and environment also being discussed to show that both aspects supports the whole story discussion. Louis Giannetti’s book entitled Understanding Movies is used to discuss such non-narrative aspects.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the data collected and the findings discovered by the writer of this research. The writer divides this chapter into two sub-chapters, Dual Representation of Hancock and Black Identity and Its Context, which in each sub-chapter contains more detailed analysis of the issues discussed.

4.1 Dual Representation of Hancock

The interesting point in Hancock movie is the ability of the filmmaker in showing the contrast representation of black character in the same time. Hancock character was represented in dual nature, both in positive and negative portrayals. In this case, the negative representation appeared in the term of black stereotypes.

Tommy L. Lott argued that one of the characteristic of Third Cinema Blaxploitation is the movie contains both positive and negative portrayal of black, to satisfy all the spectators (Lott 92). The negative representation of Hancock seems to be covered by the positive side. The negative portrayal of Hancock contains some point that led it can be categorized as one of racist action. The negative side represented in such subtle ways, so that needed a sharp observation to identify this issue. The more detailed discussion about the representation of black character will be explained in each discussion below.
4.1.1 Possitive portrayal of Black Aesthetics

According to Manthia Diawarra in his book entitled *Black American Cinema*, the aesthetics of black, in this case, meant everything good about black people and society, such as showing their discipline on spirituality (Black Churches), showing their efforts to gain the liberation and equality in society (8). The film should tell about anything that usually acted by whites but they package it by using the black casts. For example, black people starred the main character as a hero that fight any kind of crimes, they also show their courage to act the love scenes in frontal nude condition, etc (ibid). This characteristic can be found in around 1970s, which categorized as Early Black Cinema era. Let us took an example for one of the most successful black movies entitled *Shaft*.

*Shaft* is a film by Metro Goldwyn Mayer in 1971. It was directed by an idealistic black director named Gordon Parks. *Shaft* talks about a black private detective of New York city named John Shaft, starred by Richard Roundtree (black actor), who paid to find the missing daughter of the black-mob leader named Bumpy Jonas, starred by Moses Gun. He traveled trough the Italian and Harlem mob to find out his target, using his own way to be a hero, with his real character of black man such as rough, rude, etc. Because this film is directed by a black man, the representation of the black hero in this film appeared as they are and their real character. The Black Aesthetics in this movie are very thickly defined from the role of black character as a hero.
The same situation happened in Hancock movie. In Hancock, the black aesthetics is also shown in this movie since Hancock, starred by Will Smith (a famous black actor), plays a role as the main character and a hero. Hancock has a superhero power, he is immortal, he can fly, he is invincible, can not be harmed by any weapon, etc. He is a black hero vigilante that helps police to overcome the crime around Los Angeles city.

There is a scene (00:53:00) where justified the aesthetics of black in this movie. In the story, Hancock was called by the police department to help them to overcome the bank robbery. The situation was getting more dangerous and uncontrollable when the robbers hostage some people and put bombs in each hostage's body. At that time, Hancock came to help them and finally succeeded to overcome the bank robbery. In that scene, Hancock is walking in his way back to the crowded. The scene uses a close up shoot in low angle. The camera focuses on Hancock's face, which shows certain cruel expression. Differs to his appearance in the beginning of the movie, this time Hancock shows the clean handsome face and using certain superhero costume. The background is some high building, trees and street lamp with the clear blue sky. This scene indicates that Hancock is an...
important character of the story that represented very strong and powerful person. This scene is depicting the heroism sense of Hancock as the main black character.

It quite clears that the filmmaker tried to give something that can make black audiences satisfied to watch the film. This condition is important to grab all side of spectators. As Lott argued that the changes of the concept of Blaxploitation needed in order to be make it can be accepted by both, blacks would find psychological satisfaction as do whites who find pleasure in white heroes (Lott 92).

4.1.2 Negative Black Stereotypes

Black stereotypes in Hancock movie is represented through the main character, John Hancock. Although in this movie the black character played as a hero, but some scenes showed that the whites’s negative perspectives toward black people are still portrayed. The discussion used the concept of Stuart Hall’s Grammar of Race. According to Hall, the black characters in media usually represent the characteristics as Native Figure, Slave Figure, and Clown Figure (92). In this section, the analysis will be divided into each part of discussion that provide more detail analysis of the black stereotypes in the movie.

4.1.2.1 Native Figure

According to Stuart Hall, the representation of Race in the media usually portrayed into dual nature of native; the good and bad side (ibid). The good side will show the character as kind, noble, and in simple dignity. Otherwise, the bad side will be portrayed in terms of savage and barbaric. In the movie, Hancock
At first, Hancock portrayed as an uncivilized people who has savage personal identity both in term of body and mind, and he also has a barbarian behavior. The bad Native Figure in Hancock not only seen in the narrative aspect, but the non-narrative aspect such as make up, costume which also strengthen the representation of Hancock as barbaric and savage man.

The native figure in Hancock can be found in the beginning of the movie. The appearance of Hancock clearly shows the savage and barbaric figure of Black. The costume and the make-up of Hancock definitely support the bad representation of him. Hancock uses rumpled clothes and dirty hat, his make up is messy with his unshaved and irregular shape of beard and his red eyes. His attitude also shows the bad images and make him look so savage with his sleeping habit in a public area near the crowd and snore loudly. And after he wakes up, the first thing that he searches is his liquor bottle.
Another Hancock’s Native representation can be found after the scene in figure 2. The story told that after he was woken up by a child, he looked for his liquor bottle and sat in the chair. Then, while a beautiful sexy woman walked passes in front of him, he did a sexual thing by touching her sensual part of body. This behavior also shows that Hancock represents the savage mind. Martin Luther Patrick defined that the main characteristic of savage mind is unintelligent or even amoral (Patrick 3).

Figure 3: Hancock’s amoral behavior

The scene in figure 3 above uses full shot in low angle. The angle of the camera which uses low angle emphasizes the ‘male gaze’ sense that focuses on the woman’s lower part of the body. The scene focuses on the Hancock’s hand that tries to touch the white woman’s bottom. This scene emphasizes that Hancock only thinks such sexual things. From this scene, it is proven that Hancock portrays such behavior that can be categorized as amoral behavior. The amoral behavior caused by prodigious sexual appetite and finally this situation justified that black person possessing white sophistication (ibid). This concept well applied in this scene where we can see that Hancock sleeps alone in the public place which
indicates his loneliness. It led his prodigious sexual appetite becomes uncontrolled. And when he saw a woman, moreover it was a white woman, and then such amoral act happened. It justifies that the black male possessed to white female and black mostly shows native mind and behavior when they saw their object of desire.

All of these savage, barbaric, and brutal attitudes are shown in the very beginning part of the movie. The director tries to give us a bad first impression toward Hancock. The first impression is very important to build our perspectives toward something. These appearences of Hancock portrayed before he met Ray Embrey, a white man who later becomes his 'savior'. The bad native representations are getting better and better by the time he gets closer to white character in the movie. These representations of Hancock seem aimed to build our perspective towards black people who is savage and barbaric person. This perspective then grows well in society and becomes some kind of social believes. People have become accustomed that black men commonly have such savage body; big, tall, muscled but dirty, rumpled and uncivilized. Black men also believed have such savage mind in term of unintelligent and mostly amoral (Patrick 4). Those representations above justified the social stereotypes toward black men that exist until nowadays.

4.1.2.2 Slave Figure

Stuart Hall also divided this figure of stereotypes in two binary oppositions, a good slave and bad slave. A good slave depicted as deapandable, devoted, faithfull, attached and obedient to ‘his’ Master (Hall 92). In contrast,
Hall depicted a bad slave usually waits for a good chance to betray the Masters and stab them in the back (92).

In this movie, the slave-master relationship happens between Hancock and Ray Embrey. In this case, Hancock is the slave while the master is Embrey. The fact that Hancock always obeys what Embrey suggested to him, makes Hancock can be identified that he plays role as the ‘slave’ whereas Embrey plays role as the ‘master’. It starts when at the moment, Ray Embrey being trapped in the middle of railroad in a very bad traffic jam. He could not move his car from the railway when in the same time; there was a train going to pass that way and getting closer to him. Suddenly Hancock came and saved Embrey’s life. Embrey thanked to Hancock a lot and offered a favor to make him accepted by the society. In the movie, the fact that Embrey is an advertiser consultant whose job is building a good image of such product will ease his work to build a better image of Hancock in society. At first Hancock denied that favor. Hancock spent his night to think about Embrey’s offering and finally decided to accept that favor because he appreciated Embrey’s belief that Hancock is actually worth to be accepted by society. This situation emphasizes that the whites always believe that they are the only one that can change the blacks because whites always think that it is their natural burden given by God to ‘civilize’ the ‘uncivilized’ blacks. Therefore, in this regard, surely Embrey the one who took control and gave ‘command’ to Hancock to do some actions, and Hancock should obey the instruction given in order to reach their goal.
The master-slave relation in this movie portrayed in the movie is categorized as good slave. It is told that Hancock seems to has much faith to Embrey and just obey what Embrey instructed to him. It is proven when Hancock asked to apologize to Los Angeles people and willing to be imprisoned in California jail.

There is a scene that takes place inside the jail, Embrey gave some advices for Hancock to become a ‘good’ super hero such as landing slowly so that no longer cost millions dollar of State budget for the damage he has caused. Using a superhero costumes he made, he also taught Hancock how to behave and socialize in a good way by appreciating police’s job, etc. As appear in some dialogues when they are in jail:

Embrey :  *Your landing is your first impression. It’s your superhero handshake. Don’t come in too hot, okay? Don’t come in to boozy. And don’t land on a $100,000 Mercedes. All right? People have to be happy that you’ve arrived. So you’ve used the door and the buildings still intact. People are happy that you’ve arrived. They feel save. There’s an officer and he’s done a good job, so tell him he’s done a good job.* (00:38:00)

Embrey :  *I see you don’t wear a bulletproof vest, security officer. I respect your courage because bullets don’t bounce off you, they bounce off me. Let me hear you say it. Let me hear you say, “Good Job.”* (00:38:57)

Embrey :  *For when they call. [Showing the superhero costume]... Hancock, this is a uniform. Uniform represents purpose. Doctors, policemen, firemen, right? It represents a calling.* (00:42:50)
The scene (00:38:30) uses medium shot and low angle, focuses on Embrey who talked to Hancock. Embrey is standing and covering the black police man outside the jail, while Hancock is backing the camera, sitting and listening to Embrey's explanation. There is a spotlight behind Embrey, which is the only lighting in that scene. The lamp is exactly highlighting Hancock while he pays attention to Embrey's talks. The low angle camera which focuses on Embrey makes him look as the highest person of all in that scene.

Figure 4: Hancock listens to Embrey's suggestion in jail. The camera angle, casts positioning indicates that Ray Embrey being the most powerful person in that scene, and the lighting position justifies that Embrey was the man who gives Hancock enlightenment. Ray Embrey who teaches Hancock about how to be a good superhero here has a role as the master whose natural burden is civilizing the uncivilized Hancock. All of those instructions are obeyed by Hancock, that is why in this case, Hancock is well represented the concept of good slave stereotypes in Hollywood movie. It becomes more interesting when we realize that in this movie, Ray Embrey is an ordinary man.
who has no super power at all but he can conquer and finally controls the great black superhero. This scene shows the hidden master–slave relation in this movie.

Another scene that proves the slave–master relationship between them happens when Embrey has succeeded building Hancock’s good image in society. After Hancock helped to arrest the bank robber, the Los Angeles people started loving him. People started to admire Hancock and appreciated Hancock’s work. Embrey was the happiest man in this case, because he thought that he finally succeeded to change people’s perspective toward Hancock. They planned to celebrate that moment by inviting Hancock to have a dinner with him and his wife. The three of them shared each story of their life. Embrey then drank and then Hancock brought him home. Hancock brought Embrey to his bed, and even took off Embrey’s shoes.

Figure 5: Hancock takes off Embrey’s shoes

The scene in figure 5 (00:59:27), shows that Hancock represents a good slave, when he becomes very loyal to his masters and willing to give the best serve to his master. The scene uses medium shot and eye-level angle, with
minimum lighting. The lighting set that only comes from two dull sleeping lamps cause the setting seemed dark and full of shadows. It gives more dramatic sense to the scene when the costumes of both character in the movie is the same, using full formal costume. It becomes more ironic when we realize that even they use the same kind of costumes, but they still have to remember each others’ role; where Hancock has to serve Embrey by preparing his sleeping needs. This scene also justifies that Hancock represents the good slave figure in this movie.

4.1.2.3 Clown Figure

Stuart Hall defined this point by arguing that mostly black people represented similar to clown’s character. Black people usually represented as a humorous person because of his unique behavior often make the audiences laugh. Hall stated in his book:

It is never quite clear whether we are laughing with or at this figure: admiring the physical and rhythmic grace, the open expressivity and emotionality of the “entertainer,” or put off by the “clown’s” stupidity. (Hall 92)

We can see what Hall means is that black people usually stereotyped in the movie by representing the humour sense of clown whether in the term of verbal, behavior, expression, and stupidity. In this movie, this kind of stereotype appears in the form of Hancock’s stupidity in behave, dialogues, and some childish funny expression that cause spectators’ laugh.
The first silly behavior can be seen from the beginning of the movie when Hancock flew through the building. At the moment there were a group of birds in front of him. Not avoiding those birds, he even shouted the birds to get away from his way. As appear in his dialogue (00:03:11), he warned the birds; “Watch out!” but finally still stroked them anyway and says; “Damn! Damn it!” His behavior shows that Hancock portrays such silly, stupid and selfish action that triggers spectators to laugh.

Second act that shows his silly behavior happens in the way Hancock saved Embrey’s life which is very weird. In the scene (00:10:25), Ray Embrey trapped in the middle of railroad while the traffic was so busy and he could not move his car and the train was getting closer and closer. The condition worsened when he tried to get out from his car but he was trapped by its broken safety belt. Suddenly, Hancock came to him and knocked the car’s glasses and expressed such silly annoying flat expression which seemed asking about what happened with him. Hancock did not immediately save Embrey by lifting the car away from the train, but rather he chose to upside down the car and kept standing in the railroad to stop the train. Finally, a mess happened there when Embrey’s car upside down and hit other cars surrounding and the train was also broken because of the forcing stop by Hancock..

Next silly behavior can be found when Ray Embrey invited Hancock to his house and showed him some videos in YouTube that recorded his action when solving some problems. Embrey showed the first video when Hancock with his rumpled and burned clothes came to the Ice Cream shop which full of children. In
that video, Hancock seemed to get heated after extinguishing fire, then he cut in the children’s queue for ice cream. He showed such silly expression and gesture that actually not proper to his age. In this case, he showed his childishness in front of the people.

Figure 6: Hancock silly behavior

The scene in figure 6 (00:28:26) uses medium shot in eye-level angle. The color composition which is very colorful shows that this scene attempts to give the funny, fresh nuance. The camera focuses on Hancock appearance in front of the children. The broken, rumpled, dirty, burned clothes that shows some parts of his body that not proper to show in the public places even in front of the children, justifies the clown figure characteristic as a crazy and silly person. What makes funnier is with those burned and broken clothes; he still uses his sunglasses and eats the ice cream childishly. The appearance and behavior should make the spectators laugh.

Next video in YouTube showed the moment when there was an ashore whale found in the beach. People were trying to save that whale, and suddenly
Hancock came. Then Hancock lifted that whale and threw it away to the sea. It was seen that the whale also hit a boat there. When Embrey asked for Hancock’s comment after they saw the videos, Hancock just answered with his plain expression that he did not remember that moment. Some moments above show that Hancock mostly does stupid and silly things when faces some problems. His immature even childish behavior toward some situation should lead spectators’ laughter and it justifies that Hancock well represents the figure of stupid and silly clown or entertainer.

Another ridiculous things comes from Hancock’s dialogue. It can be seen when Hancock just freed from the jail because the police department asked him to handle a bank robbery. In the earlier scenes while inside the jail, Hancock has given a lesson by Embrey about how to behave in a good way. Embrey taught him to say ‘good job’ phrase in order to appreciate his partner’s job. He actually applied what he learn from Embrey but he did not say that words properly. He kept saying ‘good job’ to almost everyone he met. This silly action worsened when he tried to save one of police woman from the danger. He did not directly save her but he firstly asked for permission as appear in Hancock’s dialogue (00:43:18):

Hancock : *Good Job! Do I have permission to touch your body?*

Policewoman : *Yes!*

Hancock : *It’s not sexual. Not that you’re not an attractive woman. You’re a very attractive woman.*

Policewoman : *Get me the fuck out of here!*
Actually nothing is wrong with his statement, he actually wanted to be polite, but the silly thing was why he chose to talk that thing in the middle of danger rather than saved her first, finished his job and later talked and said sorry to the police woman after the condition became more secure. This silly thing clearly will cause the spectators to laugh. Not only makes spectators laugh, but his scene also shows the stupidity of Hancock. This scene shows that although Hancock has such superpower, but he still represents that he does not clever enough to absorb and apply what Embrey means as politeness. It indicates the meaning that black cannot perfectly applies what white had taught. It seems indicates that whites have better position above the blacks in society in term of understanding and applying the better social living.

Besides stupid behaviors and silly dialogues, the clown figure characteristic in Hancock can be seen in his funny expressions. There is a scene that shows such funny actions. It begins when Hancock realized that he was not the only one who has such superhero power. Embrey’s wife, named Marry, was actually has the same power as his. He came to Embrey’s house in the morning to ensure Marry’s power. While Marry was cooking, Hancock was trying to harm Marry by any kitchen set around him. He stabbed her with big fork, hit her by a dough-roll, and tried to hit her by two big pans. Hancock showed such funny expression and gesture while doing those actions.
The scene in figure 7 (01:06:32) is using medium shot and eye-level camera angle. The lighting is bright. The composition of the scene is very colorful. The clear blue sky and green plants as the background, the blue Hancock’s t-shirt, white-yellow combination of Marry’s clothes, yellow and brown kitchen set, red mug which held by Marry, and shining pans. Hancock’s funny expression and all of these compositions of the scene show that the filmmakers want to give a fresh, colorful, happy and funny scene that intend to amuse the spectators.

Figure 7: Hancock is testing Marry’s power

All of the incidents above show the audiences about how silly and ridiculous Hancock is. It is emphasizing that the humorous sense of black people comes from their stupidity, foolishness, silly dialogues, and funny actions. It also clarifies that the clown figure stereotype of black is still exist no matter how powerful and great he is. Although Hancock plays role as superhero in this movie, but he still represents the certain actions that refers to the clown figure.
4.2 Black Identity and Its Context

Besides the representations of black character appears in binary opposition, another point that also important to be discussed is the black character identity construction and the context behind them. The characteristics that define a movie can be categorized as Third Cinema Blaxploitation is not only the representation of black character itself, but also there must be some political and hegemonic ideology toward certain issue that infixed in the movie (Lott 93). Therefore, in this section, the writer discusses some part in the movie that identifies filmmakers’ ideological point of view toward certain issues happened. The writer divides the construction of black identity into two; Hancock’s identity as a superhero and Hancock’s identity as a black man.

4.2.1 Hancock’s Identity as Superhero

The movie presents about a black superhero who at first was not accepted by the society, but by the time he met an idealistic white man, everything has changed. It was Ray Embrey who gave a great influence toward the acceptance of Hancock to the society in Los Angeles. There was a process of the changing situation in society together with the changes of Hancock attitude and personal identity that he had shown. At first, Hancock is represented as a rude, alcoholic, and showed some other barbaric behavior in physical and verbal actions. But then he changed into a good superhero who acted a good way in appearance by using good clothes and uniform, applied the good socialization, and finally he became a hero who is fully accepted and loved by the society.
This changing process cannot be separated from the white character’s role that constructs the new identity for Hancock, of course based on white’s perspective. It means that the white character in the movie that tries to construct and change the ‘savage’ or ‘uncivilized’ black identity into the identity that considered good by white. As Martin Luther Patrick argued in his work:

This belief contributes to a ‘Clash of Wills’, where the Black male, who is perceived to be a savage, is subjugated by White men who imagine the threat ‘blacks’ pose to civilisation and therefore believe he must be tamed (330).

It means that Hancock should be tamed first in order to be ‘normal’ and then being accepted by society. Hancock is forced to act as any ‘previous white superhero’ that usually represented in Hollywood movie such as Superman, Flashman, Spiderman, etc. The previous superheroes in Hollywood commonly represented as a man who lives among the society and being a part of the society itself, being accepted and loved by the people, a man who has a good appearance with its costume, behavior, and attitude in the social life. These representations of the previous superheroes, later becomes the common representation of a ‘good superhero’ that believed by the society. It leads the social beliefs toward a ‘good superhero’ should refer and follow the representations of previous Hollywood ‘white superheroes’. Richard Dyer quoted in Anggreny’s study argues that the establishment of normalcy trough social and stereotypes is one aspect of the ruling groups’ habit who attempt to control the society by its own value and ideology (Anggreny 25). In other words, the white attempted to make their own social
value and perspective by forcing the black hero identity immitated the whites, in this case, ‘whiten’ Hancock’s identity as a hero.

The fact that the image of a good hero is a hero that usually acted by whites has been built in the society makes Embrey recommends Hancock to immitate the white heroes identity. It is interesting when the hero identity of black people in this movie is constructed and adjusted to the white’s perspectives, in contrast with the previous black hero movie. For instance Shaft (1971). Shaft is one of the most well-known and successful Blaxploitation genre film that ever exist. Using his own way to be a hero, with his real character of black man such as rough, rude, etc, this film which is directed by a black man, represents the black hero as they are, their real character and their own way to solve the problem. This contrary position of both movies might arisen question in our mind. Why is Hancock’s identity represented that ways rather than follow his former black hero? What purpose made him represented like that?

Firstly, we have to find out who is actually the target of this movie. First thing that we have to underline is the setting of the movie that takes place in Los Angeles, USA. The setting of the story actually is one of some signs that makes the writer assumes this movie is exactly refers and intends to the U.S. citizen. Besides the setting, some other proves that strengthen this assumption is the presence of the symbol appears in some scenes in the movie. The symbol appears in term of “Bald Eagle” presence in many scenes. The bald eagle was chosen June 20, 1782 as the national emblem of USA because of its long life, great strength, majestic looks, and believed only existed in America continent (Rutledge, 2014).
This point justifies that this movie exactly refers to US social condition at that time.

Figure 8: Some scenes that show the Bald Eagle symbols

The presence of the bald eagle symbols appears several times from the beginning to the end of the movie. The first bald eagle presence appears in the beginning of the movie when Hancock sleeps in the public place. We can see the background image of Hancock’s sleeping place is a picture of a big bald eagle. Another bald eagle symbol also can be seen in Hancock’s hat. There is a bald eagle image in Hancock’s hat which he always uses in every scene in the beginning of the movie before he meets Embrey. After he meets Embrey, this
symbol still often appears in some moment, for example in Hancock’s jail. Hancock draws some pictures in his room’s wall and the big eagle picture also can be seen clearly. The eagle symbol also can be found when Hancock tries help the police department to overcome the bank robbery. The setting of that scene clearly shows the big bald eagle sculpture in front of the robbed bank. It identifies that the filmmakers want the spectators to pay attention to the focused bald eagle and it emphasizes the filmmakers’ intention that actually refers to US citizen.

The fact that bald eagle is the national emblem of the United States of American and the bald eagle presence in several scenes, is strength enough to justify that this movie made as the filmmakers’ point of view toward such social situation in USA that happened at that moment. The presences of all bald eagle symbols in the movie simply emphasize the American nationalism sense in this movie. It seems that the filmmakers want to emphasize the standard to be a good superhero; a man should show his nationalism sense as a good U.S. citizen through the presence of certain symbol that refers to U.S.; for example through the costumes color (blue, white, red combination as the U.S. color flag), the symbol of bald eagle, or any other symbols. Therefore, from this point, we have agreed that this movie refers to American social situation. The next question is; what happens in USA related to this representation of Hancock character?

To formulate what purposes behind those representation of Hancock, consider the context happened when the movie released, on July 2nd 2008. In this range of time, an influential political situation occurred in USA. 2008 was the presidential election of USA. On February 2007, one of US parties, Democratic
Parties declared Barrack Husein Obama as its president candidate for the 44th election on November 2008 (Bio. A&E Television Networks). From this case, considering the date of the movie released exactly before the presidential election, the writer assumes that this movie, with all of its black representation, tries to influence the political views of the spectators, especially American citizen. The portrayal of Hancock in this movie seems refers to Barack Obama, who is represented as having a super power but also contains some negative stereotypes mentioned in the previous discussion.

If we have agreed that Hancock intends to represent Barrack Obama, then we can say that actually the filmmakers want to show his political view. It can be interfered from the movie that the filmmakers seem want to show the audiences the future situation that could happen if such super power is granted to the black people. In the film, Hancock (black figure) still needed Embrey (white figure) to give direction about what to do and not to do. The black needs to be ‘whiten’ first and always accompanied by white in order to control his super power. The filmmakers want to remind if black people have a superhero power, it will have a significant influence to the world. If we relate it to the context, it may refer to if Obama is elected as the president and takes command of the super power country, USA, the same things will happen in USA specifically and in the worldwide generally. The filmmaker seems argues that Obama cannot be a leader and control such super power. Or if it is already written that Obama granted that super power, and then he needs accompanied by white men around him to use his power in a good way.
This political view is strengthened by the fact that the filmmakers use the setting of the film is a real place, Los Angeles. This point is strengthening the assumption that this movie is actually made for certain political issues if we consider that Los Angeles city is one of the most influential city in California State in term of political mapping. As stated by Eric McGhee and Daniel Krimm:

California has a well-earned reputation as a strongly Democratic state. But it has important, sometimes unexpected, geographic variation in ideology and opinions on specific issues. There are many places where conservative and Republican candidates might win elections in California including places where they currently do not (McGhee and Krimm).

Therefore, by using the setting in Los Angeles, the filmmakers may expect that this movie, with those representations of Hancock as a superhero, can influence the political view for the voters in Los Angeles city specifically and California State generally. The filmmakers seem try to concuss the Democratic votes through the candidacy of Barrack Obama for Presidential election.

In this case, the filmmaker clearly determine his position toward such political views. It also justifies that media, including film, can play crucial role in delivering political and hegemonic propaganda toward certain issue (Hall 90-91). Through the representation of Black character identity as a superhero, the filmmakers make way to participate and deliver their perspective toward the political situation happened in USA at that moment.
4.2.2 Hancock’s Identity as a Black Man

Besides the filmmakers’ perspectives towards certain political view through Hancock’s identity construction as a superhero, another perspective also can be identified from the representation of Hancock’s identity as a black man. The writer identifies the filmmakers’ perspective through the relationship between Hancock with some other white characters around him. There are two main issues identified from white-black relation in this movie; the filmmakers’ point of view towards the issue of interracial marriage and the filmmakers’ perspective about black man position in society.

The fist issue is about interracial marriage. Interracial marriage is a marriage between members of different races (Stritof). This issue can be related to this movie from the relation between Hancock and Marry. It is told that Hancock and Marry were once in a relationship but they were separated by their enemy. Hancock and Marry was a couple of immortal creatures that had lived for a very long time ago. They do not aging, they have a super power, cannot be harmed by anything, but they have one weakness. The only weakness is their power slowly begins to lose if they get close each other. If they live together they will lose their power and their enemies become easy to beat them. In the movie, Marry told Hancock that in the past time they went to the cinema and their enemy suddenly attacked them. Hancock was harmed seriously at that time, and to save his life. Marry was forced to go away from Hancock in order to gain their power back. It was told that Hancock could survive from that attack but he experienced amnesia.
From that moment, they lived separately and lived their own life each other. Until one day, they meet again.

At first, Hancock does not remember anything about his life and he thinks that he is the only one who has such power. Marry also had married with another man who is a white widower named Ray Embrey. The situation becomes more unexpected when Embrey and Hancock get closer each other. Until finally Marry and Hancock realize that they do have feeling each other and love each other for the second time. At one moment, when Hancock tries to overcome a supermarket robbery, then finally he can be harmed by a gunshot and brought to a hospital. In the same time, Hancock’s enemy succeeded escapes from the jail and want to revenge Hancock. Marry and Embrey visits Hancock to the hospital but suddenly they are attacked by their enemy. This time, Marry is seriously bruised and Hancock also can be easily beaten. The same condition happens as in the past, Hancock then get away from Marry in order to return their power and saves each other’s life. The ending of the story becomes more ironic that Hancock must get away from Marry and let she lives with Ray Embrey.

From the storyline above, we can relate the story to the issue of interracial marriage in USA as the context since the relationship happened between Hancock as black and Marry as white. The filmmakers create the story that these people cannot be united as if the universe itself which separates them. This point shows the filmmakers’ perspective toward the interracial marriage in USA that seems to grow well from time to time. The study of Meredith Melnick about blacks and whites intermarrying stated that:
Between 1980 and 2008, the rate of interracial marriage between blacks and whites increased rapidly, even outpacing marriage between whites and other ethnic groups, including Asians, Hispanics, and American Indians. In 1980, only 5% of black men married white women; in 2008, 14% did (Melnick, 2011).

The filmmakers seem to show the perspective against the interracial blacks and white intermarrying. This movie seems as an attempt to reduce or disturb the development of this kind of marriage. Through the plot of the story, the filmmakers determine their position which against the black-white marriage or any other interracial marriage and enforcing the Caucasian women to only marrying or making relationship with the Caucasian men (as appear in the end of the movie).

The next issue that can be identified from the representation of Hancock identity construction as a black man determines the social caste or levels in the society. This movie contains some point that emphasizing the white supremacy. An experts’ workshop defines white supremacy as:

White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege (Martinas, 2014).
In other words, white supremacy can be defined as the belief that white race is superior to all other races, especially black race. Some parts of the movie show that white man is more superior to the black man, and the black man is even not in the higher position than a white woman. The movie presents that there are two persons that have such superhero power; Hancock and Marry. At one moment, after Hancock realizes that Marry has also such superhero power as his, then he invites Marry to his house and asks her some questions. But feels not satisfied by Marry answer, Hancock then wants to inform Ray Embrey about his wife's power. Marry does not permit Hancock to do that and chase after him. Hancock and Marry finally fight each other. They use their superpower to harm each other. Marry lifts a truck and then throw it to Hancock, Hancock also use his power to reply Marry's attack. In this fight, their strength seemed draw, Hancock cannot beat Marry.

Figure 9: Hancock fights Marry
There is a scene (01:12:32) which justified the equality between them. The scene uses medium shot in eye-level angle. It uses minimum lighting set which shows the cloudy sky, foggy, and messy set with the dark blue color in nuance. The framing above indicates that the filmmakers want to give such mysterious, frightening sense toward this fighting. The interesting point happens when we see that Marry is backing the camera. The camera point of view only can see Hancock’s expression as the main focus. Hancock shows certain serious and cruel expression while fighting Marry, but the spectators cannot see Mary’s. It means that the filmmakers give us ambiguity whether Marry shows the same expression or not. They only want to show that Hancock must fight Marry seriously but still he cannot win. The maximum result that black man gets against white woman is a draw. This point indicates the white supremacy and determines black levels in society that black men only equal to white women.

The movie also represents the superiority of white character when they fight the black character. The story tells that Hancock has beaten by his enemy who is a white man. His enemy succeeded to escape from the jail and knows that Hancock begins to lose his superhero power. When Hancock treated in a hospital, he attacks Hancock immediately. Hancock who is powerless and his enemy then do a fight, and his time Hancock has beaten. His enemy hits him many times and finally makes him helpless.
The writer captures a scene (01:29:42) that shows how Hancock has unequivocally defeated by his enemy and makes Hancock kneels to him. The scene uses medium low shot which focuses on Hancock who kneels to his enemy. This scene also uses minimum lighting set and dark pale blue color nuance to give the sense of mysterious and frightening to the spectators. The camera only shots the half lower part of the enemy's body and exactly shows his broken left hand. This point emphasizes the superiority of white character against black. It justifies that white character can easily defeat black man even if he only has one hand. It means that if white man and black man compared 'apple to apple', in this case Hancock and his enemy fight in the same condition (both of them has no any super power), therefore, the winner must be the white character. This scene strengthens the white supremacy ideology infixed in the movie. The next moment in the movie also clarifies such ideology of social levels in society. The enemy appoints a gun to the powerless beaten Hancock. He wants to shot and kill Hancock. But suddenly, Embrey comes and helps Hancock.
brings an axe and then cuts off the enemy’s right hand. This moment becomes the reciprocation moment of Embrey to Hancock who previously saved his life. This time, Embrey plays role as Hancock’s ‘savior’, in term of saving him of being declined by the society and also saving him for not to be killed by the enemy. This moment also shows that only white man that can defeat white man, only white man that equal to the white man, not any other races do.

In this movie, we can identify that the white supremacy ideology can be seen from the relation between Hancock and Embrey. Although Embrey is an ordinary white man who has no superpower at all, but he can ‘beat’ Hancock who has superhero power. Embrey is not only ‘beat’ Hancock, but he also can change, civilize, and ‘master’ Hancock. He is the most powerful man in the movie since he successfully makes Hancock accepted by the people, constructs Hancock’s identity to be a ‘good superhero’ (in white’s perspective), and in the end he also be the ‘winner’ for Marry’s love. This situation emphasizes that the filmmakers attempt to show the white supremacy ideology through Ray Embrey character in the movie.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Racism issues happen from long time ago and still exist in this modern era. If in the past, racism issues happened in the term of slavery but since slavery is forbidden, the racism issues have transformed into a more complex and less visible form in this modern era. The racism issues nowadays infixed through the media that plays a crucial role in building people’s perspective toward something. *Hancock* movie is one of the media that contains such racism issues through its unique story. It becomes unique since this movie casts a black character as a ‘superhero’, while any other previous superhero in Hollywood movie usually casted by white. Re-raising the black cast as the main character and the center of the story, this movie can be categorized as one of Blaxploitation movie since it contains certain racism issues in the representation of Hancock and his relation with the white characters in the movie.

Based on the analysis, *Hancock* movie represents the black character in dual nature; positive and negative. The positive portrayal of Hancock could be seen since he plays role as a superhero. The interesting point in this movie is that the black character is not only represented in good way but also represented in negative way as well. The negative representation of Hancock can be identified in three common stereotypes used in Hollywood movie; native figure, slave figure, and clown figure. Native figure is represented through Hancock’s appearance before he meets the influential white character in the movie named Ray Embrey.
Hancock is represented as savage, barbaric, rude, using rumpled clothes, dirty face, and also has savage mind in term of his amoral behavior. Hancock also shows a slave figure related to his relationship with Embrey. Hancock portrays a good slave behavior which is always obedient and faithful to what Embrey (the master) has suggested to him. The clown figure is represented through Hancock’s silly behavior, actions, expressions, and also dialogues shown the humorous sense of black people.

Besides all the representations above, this movie also contains certain ideological and hegemonic perspectives of the filmmakers delivered through the black character identity construction. Considering the time when movie was released and it was strengthened by some aspects in the movie, the writer deduces that this movie attempts to show the filmmakers’ point of view toward the political events in the USA. Hancock seems refers to Barrack Obama who was being candidate for presidential election at that time. This movie shows its side in such political issues through the construction of Hancock’s identity as a superhero. This movie also contains another ideological perspective of the filmmakers toward some social issues through the white-black character’s relationship in the movie. From the relationship between Hancock and Marry, the writer deduces that the filmmakers against the interracial marriage. While from the relation between Hancock and Embrey, it could be interfered that this movie also attempts to emphasize the white supremacy ideology.

In short, the writer deduces that Peter Berg’s Hancock movie (2008) is a good example of how the white filmmakers ‘exploit’ the black and uses their film
to spread out their hegemonic and ideological perspectives toward certain issues. In Hancock movie, the blacks are ‘exploited’ through the stereotyping representation of black character and the construction of the identity. The racism issues inserted in the movie are well-packaged and delivered in such subtle way. Considering the success of this movie, the writer predicts that this kind of movie will be still exists in the future. Some sides will continuously use the movie as an attempt to spread out their ideological and hegemonic perspectives toward certain issues. Therefore, the writer hopes that further sharp and critical study that is similar to this research will be conducted in order to help the world reduces the racism issues in any form.
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SYNOPSIS

_Hancock_ tells a story of a black vigilante superhero, named John Hancock, starred by Will Smith, from Los Angeles whose reckless actions routinely cost the city millions of dollars. Hancock is represented as a ‘superhero’ that not accepted by the people around him because of his attitude. He was a criminal, alcoholic, rude, lazy, anti-social, who was living alone far from society in a broken trailer home. The story begins by shooting Hancock who is sleeping in a public place while in the same time there is a criminal chasing by the police department. Hancock is woken up by a child and then asks him to help the police. Hancock then helps the police but his actions have inflicted a financial loss for the city. This situation leads people deny him although he has helped the police to overcome the criminals.

The story begins to change when Hancock meets Ray Embrey, starred by Jason Bateman. Embrey is an idealistic white man who has been saved by Hancock from the incident in the railroad. Then, Embrey (who is a advertiser consultant) wants to thank to Hancock and offers him a favor to help him changes peoples’ perspectives toward him. At first Hancock rejects Embrey’s offering, but by the time he changes his mind and accepts it. Then they make some plans to achieve their goals. Firstly, Embrey asks Hancock to apologize to Los Angeles people and willing to being imprisoned in the jail. It aims to make people miss Hancock’s presence. While in the jail, Embrey teaches Hancock to be a good superhero. He also gives Hancock a superhero costume to wear when people call him.
After about three weeks imprisoned in jail, the police department finally asks for his help to overcome a bank robbery and saves the hostages. Hancock easily succeeded to overcome that situation, and finally people starts to appreciate and accepts Hancock as their superhero. To celebrate this success, Hancock, Embrey, and his wife Marry arrange a dinner in a restaurant. They get drunk and something happened. Hancock kisses Marry, and she unexpectedly shows that she also has the same superhero power as Hancock has. Hancock feels anxious and asks her some questions about them. Hancock finally realizes that Marry and Hancock is a couple in the past time. They have to keep distance each others to maintain their immortality and superpower. Marry informs him that he gets amnesia when their enemy attacked them while they together. Hancock then informs Embrey the truth.

One day, when Hancock is trying to overcome the robbery in a store, Hancock finds himself harmed by a gunshot. He realizes the consequences that he will lose his power when he gets closer to Marry. He finally harmed seriously and being treated in a hospital. In the same time, his enemy has succeeded escape from the jail and suddenly attacks him in the hospital. Because Hancock has already lost his power, his enemy easily defeats him and also harms Marry. When Hancock is almost being killed by the burglar, Embrey comes to save him. Considering Marry’s life, Hancock uses the rest of his power to get away from Marry in order to return their power. Hancock finally accepts his destiny and keeps away from Marry. Marry and Embrey live together happily, while Hancock still ends up with his loneliness.