CHAPTER I

1.1 Background of the Study

World consists of many countries, cities, and people who live in it. In fact, people have many differences that distinguish them with other people. The differences may due to where they are born and live. The differences can be seen from physical appearances like body shape, weight, height, and skin color. Since they live in different countries and cities, they employ different languages and belong to different races. According to Du Bois, race is an enormous family of human beings related each other not only on the sameness in blood and language, but also past, backgrounds and desires which then both are willingly and unwillingly motivated for the success of certain conceived ideals of live (cited in Utama 2011, 1). It can be said then that race genealogically is decended from the parents to their children. Children can not choose the type of race for themselves. They will have same past and background like their parents. What have been through by the parents will also bring an influences to their children in future life.

In post-industrial societies, such as the United States, the news and entertainment media such as newspapers, magazines television and cinema provide narratives for specific discourses about race (Kareithi 2001, p.1). It means that during industrial societies, media provides narrative more complex with using the concept of state and government. While in post-industrial

societies, there are many media provide narrative of white supremacy and promote discrimination and violence againts people of color. For instance, there are many news in United States often depict black American as not well behaved so that people would be uncomfortable to be near them. In this case, blacks are represented in terms of certain characteristics, such as laziness, simple fidelity, mindless "cooning," trickery, and childishness, that can reduce their essence (7).

What most people see and think others is called as stereotype. A *stereotype* is a social construct, a textually based assertion of what a given type of individual should be. A stereotype is also a representation. Whenever something is represented, something is always left out of the account, and this discontinuity is central to the meanings we derive; however, a stereotype leaves so much out of the account it operates more as a fiction than a reliable portrayal of an identity (Rolling 2010, p.788-789). Black Americans are stereotyped by white Americans based on the social construct. What have been represented in society and in media of black Americans, it makes the stereotype still operate continually as the portrayal of an identity.

According to McRobbie, the media is seen as being biased or reproducing stereotypes, or being organised around formats that construct a particular view of the world. Their role is the 'manufactured production of ideology' (Watson 1998, p.132). Most media theorists see the content of the media as not being neutral or natural, it is manufactured or constructed as

opposed to practitioners who often argue that media content simply reflects what is happening in the world.

Some theorists argue about how the media reproduce ideology and in whose interest. For some, media are the 'tools' of powerful interest, simply reproducing the messages of their masters and maintaining an ideology that serves to protect their power. Others have argued that the consent of the population has to be won and media play a role in ensuring this by presenting the ideas and views of the powerful as natural and legitimate while others also argue the dominant values and beliefs represented in media reflect the values and beliefs shared by most people in society (135). For some people who have economy and social power, they can use media as the tools to introduce them as the powerful and the majority in order to protect their existences.

This issue can be found in film by John Lee Hancock, *The Blind Side*in 2009. John Lee Hancock is white American who was born in 1957 Longview, Texas, USA. This film won Oscar awardand other 6 awards like Golden Globe award, MTV Movie award, Critics Choice awards in 2010, and many more. There are Quinton Aaron played as a male main character, and Sandra Bullock played as a female main character.

The Blind Side itself is a film about a homeless teenage African-American and traumatized boy, named Michael Oher. In the beginning, Michael is favoured by his African-American neighbor so that he can stay at

his neighbor home temporarily and get an education in a Christian Public school. However, it does not last for long as Michael decides to leave.

Until one day, Leigh Anne, a strong-minded interior designer and the wife of a wealthy businessman, Sean Tuohy, see Michael walks in the middle of the night. She offers him to stay in her house just for a night and as time passes he becomes the member of Leigh Anne's family. She gives him a tutor to improve his education and provides him the best coach so that he can develop his abilities and become a good athlete. But, not all people support what Leigh Anne do to Michael, especially her sister. They think that Michael will probably do something bad to Leigh Anne's teenage daughter. In the end, she proves that she can help Michael become a successful person regardless seeing his differences.

This film is actually based on the book *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*in 2006 written by Michael Lewis. The writer of this study is more interested to analyze the film than the novel because film has more interesting aspects to analyze deeper. The elements, such as wardrobe, dialogs, setting, face expressions, and camera technique, are perfectly formulated the theme of the film. As Sohat and Stam argued in Unthinking Eurocentrism, "Films, which represent marginalized cultures in a realistic mode, even when they do not claim to represent specific historical incidents, still implicitly make factual claims."(Hooks 1996, p.12). For example, Films,such as the Indiana Jones series, The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, TheConquest of Paradise, and

The Discovery of Brazil, show white "heroes,"adventurers, and explorers passing through exotic backdrops and admiringdirectly or indirectly the innocence and virtuosity of nature (Kareithi 2001, p.9-10).

Similarly, fictional media forms, like in *The Blind Side* Film, are not bound by any obligations to fairness and impartiality, and there is doubt as to whether the concept of bias should be applied to them as they are built on the imagination and subjectivity of the writer and others involved in the production process. Fictional media forms are more commonly subjected to the charge of stereotyping. Stereotype itself is used to indicate representations that are misleading, incomplete or negative of a group of people in society. Through stereotypical representation the media have been criticised for portraying women, young and old people, gays and lesbians, drug users and a range of other 'minority' groups in a simplistic and derogatory manner. The result is the potential to marginalise such groups and give rise to social prejudices. Thus, in the process the notions of bias and the stereotype have been increasingly challenged as inadequate formulations for assessing media content (Andjordin 1982, p.142). Black people as the minority group often stereotype as dangerous, strange, weak or anything in contradictions with the people of majority group. They have been replaced by concepts such as genre and narrative, which examine the role the media play in constructing rather than reflecting the world around them. Consequently, the writer uses narrative

and non narrative analysis method to analyze the stereotype of black American in *The Blind Side* film.

The reason why the writer analyzes this film is because this film seems to affirm the stereotype of black American that still exist. The elements of this film such as wardrobe, setting, and performance are perfectly depicted black American as the opposite of white American. It makes many white American still hold the stereotype of black American.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the statement of the problem that will be analyzed in this study is:

1. How is the stereotype of black American portrayed in *The Blind Side* film?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives will be intended to answer the question that is proposed in the statement of the problem, that is:

1. To explain the stereotype of black American portrayed in *The Blind Side* film.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study attempts to give contribution to the study of cultural studies, especially culture and media studies in English Department of the Faculty of Humanities of Airlangga University. By analyzing this film, hopefully the readers will get some information about the stereotype of black people occurs in media. Besides, this study can also tell how the stereotype of black people can always cause a certain group or race to be less than another. Thus, by concerning stereotype issue, finally, this study can show how media play important role in creating stereotyped image or representation.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Stereotype : a formation which can be understood as a process of constraining what we know about categories, perceptions of similarity and difference, and the explisit use of some category labels (McGarty 198)

Representation : a complex business, especially when dealing with 'difference', it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer (Hall 1997, p.226)

Black American	: an American ethnic group descended from African peoples having dark skin, African-American (web)
White American	: people of the United States who are considered or consider themselves white (web)
Narrative elements	: an account of a string of events occurring in space and time. Not merely a cluster of random elements, a narrative presents an ordered series of events connected by the logic of cause and effect (Pramaggiore & Wallis 2008, p.64)
Non-narrative elements	: a significant part of the meaning produced by a film comes from the visual content. This is to a large extent how the story is told. What a shot consists of is therefore crucially important (Abrams 2001, p.93)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW