

**BLACK VICTIM, WHITE SAVIOR: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MYTH  
OF WHITENESS IN *THE BLIND SIDE* MOVIE**



**TESIS**

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of Requirement  
for the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree of the English Department  
Faculty of Cultural Studies  
Sebelas Maret University

**By:**

**Nurma Hardiyanti**

**C0313044**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES  
SEBELAS MARET UNIVERSITY**

*commit to user*  
**2018**

BLACK VICTIM, WHITE SAVIOR: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MYTH OF  
WHITENESS IN *THE BLIND SIDE* MOVIE

THESIS

by

Nurma Hardiyanti


C0313044

Approved to be examined before the Board of Examiners

Faculty of Cultural Studies

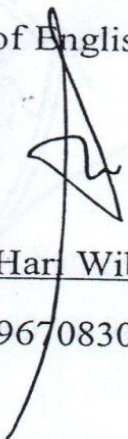
Sebelas Maret University

Thesis Consultant

  
Dra. Susilorini, M.A.

NIP 196506011992032002

Head of English Department

  
Drs. Agus Har Wibowo, M.A., Ph.D

NIP 196708301993021001

Black Victim, White Savior: The Construction Of Myth of Whiteness in *The Blind*

Side Movie


By:

**NURMA HARDIYANTI**

**C0313044**

Accepted and Approved by the Board of Examiners

On April 26th, 2018

Chairman : Dra. Sri Kusumo Habsari, M.Hum., Ph.D. (  )

NIP 1967903231995122001

Secretary : Karunia Purna Kusciati, S.S., M.Si (  )

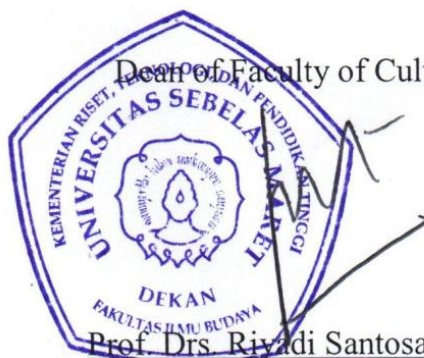
NIP 198211242009122002

First Examiner : Dra. Susilorini, M.A. (  )

NIP 196506011992032002

Second Examiner : M.Taufiq. Al-Makmun S.S., M.A (  )

NIP 197806272005011003



Dean of Faculty of Cultural Studies

Prof. Drs. Riyadi Santosa, M.Ed., Ph. D

NIP 196003281986011001

**PRONOUNCEMENT**

**Name : Nurma Hardiyanti**

**Number : C0313044**

The thesis entitled **Black Victim, White Savior: The Construction OWhiteness in *The Blind Side* Movie** is not a work of plagiarism. It is a work I sincerely do by myself. All theories and materials taken to do this research are from other sources that are put as direct quotations and paraphrased citations. I am taking a full responsibility for the pronouncement and if this is proven to be incorrect, I am willing to be responsible for any action given by the Faculty of Cultural Studies, Sebelas Maret University, including the withdrawal of the degree.

Surakarta, April 5th, 2018

The Researcher,

Nurma Hardiyanti



## BLACK VICTIM, WHITE SAVIOR: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MYTH OF WHITENESS IN *THE BLIND SIDE* MOVIE

Nurma Hardiyanti<sup>1</sup>

Dra. Susilorini, M.A<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

**2018. Thesis. Faculty of Cultural Studies. Sebelas Maret University.**

This research specifically focuses on examining the construction of myth of whiteness in John Lee Hancock's *The Blind Side* (2009) through the portrayal of Michael Oher, American football player as a black victim and the Tuohy's family, the one who adopted Oher, as his white savior. This research has two major objectives: (1) to find out how both African-American and white people are represented in *The Blind Side* and (2) to find out how myth of whiteness as an important issue is constructed in the movie.

This research is a descriptive qualitative research which uses *The Blind Side* movie as the primary source of data and the secondary data are taken from related film reviews, online documents, journal articles and websites that provide the data needed.

This research was conducted under the framework of American Studies as it employed interdisciplinary study. This research applied theories and approaches to earn the answer of the research questions; Wahneema Lubiano's theory about African-American studies to analyze the history of African-American in western's cultural production and interpretation, film studies by Amy Villarejo to analyze the film and understand the meaning that the film tries to convey with the help of Roland Barthes' semiotics, especially in finding the myth of whiteness in the film. Steve Garner' theory of whiteness is also applied to find out how whiteness itself is constructed in the film.

The analysis shows that the way blacks are constructed in the movie is through the figurization of Michael Oher as a victim in which he is weak and needing a helping hand to make him strong and Tuohy, as a white rich family is there to be the savior who give exactly what Oher needs in order to achieve his dream. They construct Tuohy family as an ideal and perfect family which emphasize how much of a white savior film *The Blind Side* is.

**Keywords: Black Victim, The Blind Side, White Savior Film, Myth of Whiteness**

i

---

<sup>i1</sup> English Department Student. Student Number C0313044

<sup>2</sup> Thesis Consultant

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Alhamdulillah.* I thank *Allah Azza wa Jalla* for always guiding me in every step I take so that I finally could finish this thesis project. I would also like to thank my family for their patience, supports, and affection they give to me all this time, especially my beloved mother and father.

I would like to express my gratitude for the Dean of Faculty of Cultural Studies, Prof. Drs. Riyadi Santosa, M.Ed,Ph. D who gives the opportunity to study in the faculty and also for the Head of English Department, Drs. Agus Hari Wibowo, M.A, Ph.D who has been very helpful in every way and always cheering me up to finish the thesis. My special gratitude also goes to Dra. Susilorini, M.A, my academic advisor and also thesis consultant for her guidance, patience, and supports that she gives to keep me on the right track in the process of making this thesis project. My gratitude also goes to all the lecturers in English Department for their teaching that eventually leads me to be able to do this thesis, especially to Dra. Sri Kusumo Habsari, M. Hum, Ph.D; Karunia Purna Kusciati, S.S, M.Si; and M.Taufiq Al-Makmun S.S, M.A who have wholeheartedly taught me American Studies.

As a person with a young spirit, my understanding and my view are affected by people around me. I give my credits to my all fellow 2013's English Department students and special mention to my beloved friends Nur Hanifah, Monica Aprilliana and Kholifatul Sauci who have been my best friends who fight together with me, cheering me up whenever I feel down all these times, and

treating me like I am part of their family. I am so thankful towards all of these people I mention because without them, I cannot be who I am today. These people that I mention is contributing a lot in my life and I am so grateful to be able to meet, know and learn important lesson in life from them.



Surakarta, April 5th, 2018

The Researcher

Nurma Hardiyanti

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>TITLE</b> .....	i
<b>APPROVAL BY THESIS CONSULTANT</b> .....	ii
<b>APPROVAL BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS</b> .....	iii
<b>PRONOUNCEMENT</b> .....	iv
<b>MOTTO</b> .....	v
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	vi
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	vii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b> .....	ix
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	xi
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	13
A. Research Background.....	13
B. Scope of Research.....	18
C. Research Question.....	18
D. Research Objective.....	18
E. Research Benefit.....	18
F. Research Methodology.....	19
G. Theoretical Approach.....	22
<b>CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
A. Semiotics of Film.....	26
B. Critical Whiteness Studies.....	27
C. White Savior.....	31

*commit to user*



<b>D. Black Victim.....</b>	<b>32</b>
1. Colorism.....	32
2. African-Americans' Social, Economic and Culture.....	34
3. Whites and Blacks' Social Differences.....	37
<b>CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>A. Michael Oher as the Black Victim.....</b>	<b>42</b>
1. The Weak-Unfortunate Oher.....	45
2. The Member of Low Inferior Social Class.....	49
3. The Victim of Stereotype.....	50
4. The Victim of Education Standard.....	51
5. The Outcasted Nonwhite.....	51
<b>B. Tuohy's Family as White Savior.....</b>	<b>53</b>
1. Kindness and Sympathy.....	53
2. Power to Help the Unfortunate.....	57
3. Moral Uprightness and Justice Advocate.....	59
4. Self-sacrificing Hero.....	62
<b>C. Myth of Whiteness Constructed in The Blind Side.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>75</b>