A BALL FOR ‘B’ JUVENILES: THE SOCIAL-MOBILITY AND CONSTRAINT TOWARD AFRICAN-AMERICAN THROUGH REPRESENTATIONIN GRIDIRON GANG, A SPORT MOVIE

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ABSTRACT: Today, African-Americans have more social-mobility in sport, though essentialized. The essentialized mobility indicates that there is still constraint, thus racial inequality in most aspect of their lives. As an example, ‘Black’ and ‘Bad’ juveniles are specifically given ball or sport, not book or other alternatives. In Gridiron Gang (2006), the racial inequality works through the fluid identity caused by the social-mobility and constraint by means of Others’ binary representation in the form of the paradox of identity ‘between’ Afro-Americans and Caucasians or manichean allegory, and the paradox of identity ‘within’ Afro-Americans.

Keywords: African-Americans, social-mobility, social-constraint, representation, sport, Gridiron Gang

Nowadays, even though African-Americans, or Afro-Americans, have more social-mobility than the past, they are still constrained by the dominant society. It is because Afro-Americans embody a central notion of ‘blackness’, always deviant and Other, for the maintenance of the discourse of difference in order not to be equal with the dominant society.

In understanding this identity construction, the socio-cultural representation of particular bodies needs to be explored (Hall, 1997: 3). The representation of Others is reached through the assemblage of all non-European representation to the minority by the majority groups (Saïd, 1994), in which the latter assume the former as unable to represent themselves. This dependency and inferiority toward the majority group emphasize the need of social-constraint toward the minority group.

The process of social-mobility and constraint by means of representation is imposed through paradoxical discursive of both elevating and degenerating (Bhabha, 1994: 70). Yet, the ambivalent constructions of identities are hardly seen by the society, including Afro-Americans themselves. It particularly happens in the subject of this analysis, sport movie. The ambivalent act is done by the entertaining mode of movies (Barthes, 1975: 13). Thus, movies like other media are often forgotten as the extension of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) which has shaping force of hailing and mystifying. ISAs are “derived from various sources as part of the private sector and, as such,” thus they are more difficult to resist (Althusser, 1989: 181). Undoubtedly, the mystification occurs in the subject of this analysis, Gridiron Gang (2006), a box-office movie made by Columbia Pictures, a famous house of production.

In general review, the movie is similar to other sport movies with cliché plots: the victory of the underdog through sport discourse. The movie tells the inspiring and emotional story of a majority Afro-American and Latino’s inhibiting juvenile detention Camp Kilpatrick probation’s officer, Sean Porter, who turns a
group of delinquents into a football team in four weeks, in order for them to be accepted by the society. However, *Gridiron Gang*, which is adapted from an Emmy-winning 1993 television documentary with the same title, is structurally different with other sport movies invoking Afro-American characters, which mostly tell racism as the main plot, and some controversial movies about the harsh life in juvenile correctional. As *Gridiron Gang* seemingly does not contain much racism and violence, it inspires in a different way. Yet, the movie still maintains the representation of Afro-Americans, as other movies do.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**The Representation of African-Americans in Hollywood**

The representation of Afro-Americans has circulated in European culture throughout the eras of Western imperialism, slavery and colonialism (Pieterse, 1992: 174). Even until today, ‘blackness’ has been pathologised as a deviant identity, and Afro-Americans are majorly represented as “the slave figure, the native figure, the clown or entertainer” (Hall, 1997).

In the history of Afro-American cinema in Hollywood, this stereotyping attempt is an important political interest. As acknowledged by John Monaco (2009: 298-300) that Black Power Movement of the 1960s has analyzed this construction toward Afro-Americans in the history of film and television in United States. Before the late sixties Afro-Americans only played servile roles in most movies. In the late sixties, Afro-Americans were trusted to play more significant roles, such as lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and even heroes. A lot of Afro-American famous filmmakers have also popped out.

Yet, though Afro-American actors seems to have more social-mobility than the past, in Hollywood it is called ‘Blaxploitation’ (Monaco, 2009: 408), they are still constrained from presenting their character beyond Hollywood myths: Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks (Bogle, 1992).

Toms are good Negro character who submissively do everything expected of them, however degrading, and never turn on white people. Coons are a source of amusement because they are completely buffoons and lazy. Mulattoes are usually tragic fair-skinned women who live as a white person, but have the secret of black blood in their veins. Mammies are similar to the coons, but she is fiercely independent in her domestic domain. The last, Bucks constitutes the brutal black man out to cause havoc, he is also depicted as over-sexed and eager to get more than his hands on white women.

The representation even occurs on the movies made by Afro-American filmmakers, from the sixties Peebles’ comedy *The Watermelon Man* until the 2004 Wayans Brothers’ comedy, *White Chicks*.

On the other hand, there have already Afro-American filmmakers’ movies which portray contemporary racial relations, and are praised by critics for the allusive imagery; one of them is Lee’s 1989 movie, *Do the Right Thing* (Monaco, 2009: 410). However, they still serve as the establishment of society’s constraint toward Afro-Americans. In other words, they serve as ‘cultivation’, or “the internalization and practice of a code of manners” (Greenblatt, 1995). In other words, however seemingly the dominant political interests are rejected in some movies; they still establish and maintain those interests in society.
The Power Relation in Representation

Today, in maintaining racial hierarchy, social-mobility is concerned with a process of delimiting the minority ethnic group, unwittingly, through given ‘freedom’. It is because every culture always sets up standards that “function as a pervasive technology of control” to structure and constraint the behavior of the members of a society”, and discourages people from going outside what is ‘appropriate’ for that society (Greenblatt, 1997). If people do something which counters these ideas, they suffer the consequences: from moral sanctions like stares, sarcasm, contempt, or laughter, to legal sanctions like imprisonment (Greenblatt, 1997: 478). At the same time, people are rewarded for conforming to the constraints: from formal awards and prizes, to simple words of gratitude (Greenblatt, 1997).

In the social-mobility and constraint toward Afro-Americans, the notion of sport fits the role. It is because sport is able to delimit Afro-American movement beyond it, in which the limiting notion is hardly realized by Afro-Americans themselves. Thus, they will believe sport as their exclusive access of social-mobility.

The maintenance of social-mobility and constraint toward Afro-Americans is done through the binary representation in opposing values, which is by asserting positive and negatives values. In particular, on manichean allegory between the majority and the minority ethnic groups, the positive values are asserted on the former, while the negative ones on the latter (JanMohammed, 1986: 86; Bhabha, 1994: 66). Yet, on the paradox of identity ‘within’ the minority ethnic groups, positive values are asserted on them at first, as the social-mobility, then the negative ones, as the social-constraint (Hall, 1997). Through the paradox of identity, the notion of ambivalence in Afro-Americans is established, while through the manichean allegory, the ambivalent notion is strengthened.

In Gridiron Gang, the paradox of identity ‘within’ Afro-Americans are athletic but not intelligent, athletic but violent, and masculine but also childish; while the manichean allegory are not intelligent vs. intelligent, deviant masculine vs. masculine, and violent vs. not violent. Both of the paradoxes of identity fill the notion of social-mobility and constraint. In the paradox of identity ‘within’ Afro-Americans, the first asserted notions, athletic and masculine enable Afro-Americans to have greater role in the society through the phenomenon pinpointed in this thesis, Black athletes. Whereas, the second notions, not intelligent, violent and childish are the limitation, as they mystify Afro-Americans to move beyond their exclusive access of social-mobility into other area, in which they will likely be challenged by the dominant society.

On the other hand, the construction of Afro-American identity through manichean allegory such as not intelligent, deviant masculine and violent, can strengthen the constraint in Afro-Americans. By contrasting their notion with Caucasian standard, Afro-Americans will be drawn back from chasing for equality, as the society have established and emphasized the difference between them a solid constraint.

This ambivalent construction undoubtedly allows the identity of Afro-Americans to keep its fluidity in order to not ever reach its stability. Some theorists have seen this phenomenon as subversively destructive as it can lead to worsen mental instability, such as inferiority and violence (Fanon, 2004: 44).
Further, this dilemmatic process toward Afro-Americans is assumed as contributing in many acts of social diseases, such as delinquency and criminality, which have already been labeled to them (Fanon, 2004: 44). In the long run, the mental instability can worsen their representation, in which the majority groups ethnic are going to be more benefited of it.

Not less deteriorating, social-mobility which is able to mystify racial hierarchy, it has been assumed as logical and acceptable by the dominant of society, and even by Afro-Americans themselves. This profound unconsciousness in Afro-Americans leads them to distribute their social-mobility and constraint among themselves.

**The Semiotics of Movie**

According to Umberto Eco (1976: 7), semiotics or semiology is “an instrument concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else.” Thus, semiotics can be used to analyze movies, due to the difference between movies from written or spoken texts, as movies are ‘synthesis of all the arts’, which consist of five tracks of channels: moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, and writing (Monaco, 2009).

Moreover, Barthes (1975) explains that there are three levels of reading signs: denotative, connotative and myth. In fact, political and ideological values often found in the connotative meaning, in which myth is usually generated (Barthes, 1975: 10,13). Myth is a mean which helps reader to express, serve and organize shared ways of conceptualizing something within a culture (Barthes, 1975). In revealing the myth, semiotics can be used for the society to realize the ideological conspiracy by one social class against the rest.

According to (http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis), in understanding the mythical level of movie and the dominant political interests on it, several particular camera codes can be analyzed, such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing and sound. The mise-en-scene consists of decor, lighting, space included frontality, costume, and acting.

Whereas, the cinematography consists of quality (color, contrast, focus, depth of field, exposure, rate and shot), framing (angle of framing, level of framing and reframing), shot, scale (ELS, LS, MLS, MCU, CU and ECU), movement (crane shot, handheld camera, pan, tilt and tracking shot). In particular through a selection of a certain color, a certain pattern of character or emotion can be established, and becomes a signifier of a certain idea. Deep or shallow focus can also connote certain idea, such as the more complex instrument used for deep focus can indicate the deep intention of the director to regard the entire subject in the mise-en-scene as important, and vice versa. Moreover, through the angle of framing in low or high angle, the reframing, and the scale of camera, the significance of the subject can be measured (Gianetti, 2002). Whereas, through the level of framing in low or high level the sympathy for certain characters or a focus toward subject who or which occupy particular levels in the image can be constructed, thus an understanding on the position of the subject toward the mise-en-scene can also be emphasized.

Next, the editing consists of transitions (cut and shot), matches and duration. In understanding the technique of cutting in constructing a certain notion, the
viewers can understand how cut-in or cut-away collaborates on the creation of an instant intimate zone for the viewers, as well as eliminates it.

At last, the sound consists of sound editing, source (diegetic or non-diegetic sound, off-screen sound, and others), and quality. In fact, every sound in the movie can collaborate in the creation of a certain atmosphere, and the sound of certain characters can indicate them as the focus of the shot or scene, for example in narration, thus there is possibility of them as the source of information of the particular shot or scene. In other words, the sound along with the other camera codes of movie is constructing the viewers’ diegesis in understanding the movie.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**The Representation of African-Americans in Gridiron Gang**

By virtue of Hall (1997) and Bogle (1992)’s classification of African-American representation in media, the representation of Afro-Americans through sport in Gridiron Gang is drawn.

**Not Intelligent**

Though Afro-Americans have greater mobility in sports, they are still facing some limitations on them. They have been over-represented in sports mostly engaging violence and body contact such as American football, basketball, boxing, track, and so forth; while under-represented in sports engaging less violence and body contact such as swimming, baseball, tennis, golf, hockey, football, and so forth (Coakley, 2009). Yet, the limitation is still continued.

In American football, the limitation is represented through the positioning of players. Even though currently the minority group ethnic account for over 60% of all professional football players, there are still few of them positioned in charge of the game’s pattern, such as quarterbacks, offensive center, and middle linebacker (Kooistra, Mahoney and Bridges, 1993). This stereotype comes from the belief that Afro-Americans do not have the intelligence to play those positions in the field (Kooistra, Mahoney and Bridges, 1993).

In Gridiron Gang, the representation is strengthened as several delinquents have never played football before, and almost all the delinquents cannot spell the team’s name properly. Porter is surprised and mad with the condition: “You’ve got to be shittin’ me. You don’t know how to spell “Mustangs”? This is gonna be a long-ass day.” In particular, one of Afro-American players, Madlock, does not understand any football rules. Though he has been taught about it by Porter and another Afro-American player, Madlock still has difficulty in understanding it. His reluctance in learning the football rules, in which the other inmates show adequate interest, establishes his notion as ignorance and incapable of learning regulation. In seeing Madlock paradoxical notion, athletic but not intelligent, Porter thinks a way in utilizing Madlock’s athletic built, as a potential guard.

During the game, Madlock always plays as a guard and/or an offense, and never puts his hands on the ball. It is because he is not very good in strategy systematization. In one of the strategy making scenes on the game among Leon, Willie, Perez and other teammates, there is a cut zoomed on Madlock who is excluded from the discussion, while he is looking to some directions, looked tense and confused. The intrusion shot of Madlock with fast zoom indicates his confused state and his position as not as the brain of the team. In fact, in every Mustang’s game, Madlock is never included in the strategy making. It is because
according to NCAA, his uniform numbering (72) establishes the fact that he will mostly be an ineligible receiver, the player who only deals with defending and tackling, and rarely makes goal (2009–10 NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations Rule 1, Section 4, Article 1).

Porter’s stereotypical decision in trusting player positions toward Madlock and other Afro-American juveniles like Evans and Bug, as well as the particular camera codes, undoubtedly strengthen the representation of Afro-Americans as not intelligent. Yet, toward Caucasians, Porter gives different treatment. Porter has privately taught Bates, a Caucasian juvenile, about strategy systematization to console him. Porter even gives Bates a position of receiver. Though Porter does that due to pity, the belief to trust Bates the position is based on an optimistic that he may be able to do it. In other words, there is a tendency that due to his ‘whiteness’, he is smart. This manichean allegory of not intelligent vs. intelligent between Afro-Americans and Caucasians, is in line with the idea of Mead (1985: 158) that “the average of white intelligence is above the average of Black intelligence, probably because the white race, is several thousand years farther away from jungle savagery. But, for the same reason, the average of white physical equipment, is lower”. In other words, it emphasizes Caucasians as more intelligent than Afro-Americans, while Afro-Americans are more violent than Caucasian.

Deviant Masculine

In general, masculinity is defined broadly as “the set of images, values, interests, and activities held important to a successful achievement of male adulthood” (Ashcraft and Flores, 2000: 3). Yet, ‘masculinities’ are not the same as ‘male’. Masculinity is about gender relations which concern the position of male in a gender order. In male masculinity, it is established through the subordination of other gender like female (Connell, 1995).

Moreover, in the accomplishment of the traditionally idealized masculinity qualities, such as bravery, competencies, strength and dominance, sport is generally believed as the medium (Cooper and McGinley, 2011). Thus, the delinquents in Gridiron Gang are willingly to participate in sports, and showing their determination. Moreover, a great determinant to be masculine is depicted in some scenes of the ‘pussy’ labeling toward certain thing and person which or who are assumed as challenging the player’s masculinity.

Nevertheless, the masculinity of Afro-Americans is not positively seen by Caucasians. It is because the Caucasian masculinity, as the dominant ethnic group in society, is established through the subordinated masculinity of Others, Afro-Americans. Thus, Caucasians have the privilege of their masculinity as the standard, while Afro-American masculinity as the deviant.

Yet, however negatively seen by the dominant society, the deviant masculinity of Afro-Americans still can be lessened by the notion of sport. It is because the masculinity in sport is regulated. Thus, the Enlightenment project which once was simply thought to be impossible to apply to the ‘savage’ Afro-Americans who, as thinkers as diverse as Kant and Hume argued, were deemed incapable of attaining European standards of moral and intellectual development, now is assumed as possible after the appearance of sport (Hegel 1822-1828, quoted in Eze, 1997: 28).
Childish

As previously explained, Caucasians have contradicted the Afro-American masculinity as deviant. In addition, paradoxical identity ‘within’ Afro-Americans also contradicts their masculinity, which is infantilization. According to Gubar (1997: 66), infantilization is an attempt by the majority ethnic group to infantilize or to treat the Afro-American slaves as infants, for example giving them absolutely no responsibilities in order to ‘castrate’ and deprive them from their masculinity. Moreover according to the dominant society, childishness needs strict discipline and ruthless, authoritarian control. It is because the notion of childish collaborates with the notion of Afro-Americans as savage or not yet human, and creates an idea of them as at the early stage of human development, in which they are ‘the white man’s burden’, and they need ‘enlightenment’. Thus, the ethnic majorities assume that Afro-Americans need close supervision and re-socialization by the dominant society. At last, Afro-American constraint is assumed as obligation.

This explains why Caucasian used to call Afro-Americans ‘boy’, as in the case of Willie addressed as ‘boy’ and several racist names by his opponent player in the middle of a game. Having the masculinity being challenged, this infantilization creates a counter reaction in Afro-Americans. The fluid identity of being masculine but childish at the same time has resorted Afro-Americans to ‘toughness’ as a defensive response. It is reflected when Willie challenges his opponent player to fight after the offense. Nevertheless, this act of defending masculinity through violence can highlight the representation of Afro-Americans as deviant. In other words, they are trapped by the binary structure of representation given to them. Afro-Americans are stereotyped as either childish or masculine, thus they are both childlike and oversexed and have to struggle between the binary representation.

For the juveniles, to be called ‘boy’ conveys that they are still not yet adults. The use of the word ‘boy’ and the ‘caring’ gesture by Porter denotatively means to channelize his sympathy feeling and motivation toward the delinquents. Yet, it also connotatively means to infantilize and feminize the masculinity of the players, for it is done to remind them that they are still not yet adults, and need a father figure to give them motivation about sport which can save their masculinity. To highlight the delinquents in the camp as merely youths, Porter has also highlighted the image of them as delinquents, and not as criminals, in the early narration of the movie.

The idea is also strengthened by a deconstruction attempt toward the delinquents as not dangerous. Through camera codes, their criminal acts are de-emphasized into tolerable levels. Intolerable criminality such as drugs and murder are seldom mentioned in the camp. The deconstruction attempt is also represented through the frequent use of humor, and the color white surrounding the delinquents. Through humor, criminal act can be degenerated into a light topic. Moreover, the color white can connote goodness, purity, innocence and cleanliness. The color white can be seen in the delinquents’ surrounding like

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1 The infantilization was also defined in the historical images of the shuffling Uncle Tom, the animalistic and stupid savage, and the childlike Sambo” (Patterson, 1982). They worked together to signify all Afro-American men as desperate, child-like, and depended on the majority ethnic groups as their masters.
clothes, pillows and bed clothing, blankets, football costumes which combined with the color yellow, the camp properties, and so forth. Thus, the deconstruction attempt toward the delinquents implicitly states that they are just youths who happen in the wrong place and wrong time which results of their placement in the correctional.

Yet, however good the intention of infantialization is, it can castrate and deprive Afro-Americans, including the juveniles, from their masculinity. Further, the confused feeling of having no responsibility and a thought as being unimportant can lead to violence in order to prove their masculinity. Thus, it can be concluded that Porter has maintained the society’s stereotype toward the minority ethnic groups, in particular Afro-Americans, and he even distributes it among his own racial group.

Violent

As previously explained, the paradoxical identity of Afro-Americans can lead to emotional instability, which further maintains and strengthens their deviant representation (Fanon, 2004: 44). Moreover, the historical images of society toward Afro-Americans depict all Afro-American men as inherently angry, potentially violent, and sexually aggressive (Patterson, 1982). Into the bargain, through manichean allegory between Afro-Americans and Caucasians, violence is essentialized in such a way that “white violence is always defensive, chivalrous and a manifestation of true masculinity, while black violence is always already aggressive, insidious and the outcome of a degenerate, criminalized mind” (Chestnutt, 1901: 296).

Thus, in over-emphasizing Afro-American violence, discipline and punishment are considered as a necessity. In Gridiron Gang, there are blatant and obscure disciplines. The blatant disciplines are the use of military punishment, the boxes, and the dry swimming pool, while the obscure one is the use of a certain color, yellow. In term of color, the camp is mostly dominated by some neutral colors like black, grey and white. Besides functioning as disciplinary, they also limit the use of gang colors which can intrigue more feuds in the camp. The color of yellow is frequently found in the camp and along the movie. Connotatively, yellow is widely used as a sign of caution and warning. Mythically used in Gridiron Gang, the yellow color is likely depicted to warn the delinquents and the viewers about the delinquents’ potential violence.

Moreover, the setting of the movie is deteriorating. The movie is set in Camp Kilpatrick, a real detention facility in Malibu, Los Angeles. The major characters are also pivoted on the inmates and the officers there. In other words, the many Afro-American characters are based on the data that the majority delinquents detained in detention facilities are minorities, especially Afro-Americans. Thus, even though Afro-Americans are ‘positively’ depicted as athletes, they are also depicted as criminals.

Else, as emphasized in Gridiron Gang, there are several violent acts, both on and off the field, though there is nothing too graphic. Besides the depiction of violence among African-American when there are triggering factors, the movie also strengthens the idea of violence as their already life style, or an integral part of them. As one of the delinquents, Madlock, writes on his letter to his relative: “I love sackin’ the quarterback. Sometimes I can't even believe it’s legal.” In a letter, it probably sounds fun. However, the overall aesthetic of the movie seems always
remind the viewers that Afro-American athletes are still violent, even in their inner feeling, habit and characters. In other words, the depiction fills the notion of Bucks in Hollywood myth (Bogle, 1992).

Viewed from the perspective of manichean allegory in Gridiron Gang, the majority of Afro-American characters such as Porter, Willie and Madlock are depicted as violent and illogic; while the Caucasian characters such as Dexter, Paul and Bates are depicted as not violent and logic. Porter in his coaching and work is often depicted as furious, tends to say curse words especially in front of his players, and tends to oppose people who are against his will. He is sometimes too emotional, and is assumed by his Caucasian partners, Dexter and Paul, as illogic. It is different with the depiction of Caucasian camp officers and Caucasian coaches as logic people who always think about public safety first, and do not use harsh and curse words. Undoubtedly, all of them are the acts of social-constraint toward Afro-Americans. In avoiding the viewers from singularly seeing Afro-Americans in a positive way, the movie frequently reminds the viewers about the potential violent of them.

In Gridiron Gang, the main character of Afro-American delinquent, Willie Weathers, is mostly depicted as violent as he engages in several fights in the camp and in the field. The furious character of Willie is in contrast with his Caucasian teammate: Kenny Bates. He is the only main Caucasian protagonist. He is depicted as weak, as he doubted to accept the challenge of Porter to be a player at first; less dangerous than the minorities, as his criminal act is less dangerous than the others: hijacked a Nissan car; kind, as he loves his mother very much; and tends not to use violence, as he has never engages on a fight in the camp.

Moreover, most of his close up, zoomed-in, shallow focused, and slow motion shots are likely done in order to overemphasize his fear, doubt, melancholy and disappointed expression. In fact, he also has the most zoomed-in shots among the delinquent characters. Moreover, Porter in most scenes shows his sympathy and gentleness toward Bates. In the Mustang practices Porter treats Bates more warmly than other players. Even when Bates fails for some times in the Mustang games, Porter rarely blames him, instead he consoles and spirits Bates up. Bates also has an exclusive point-of-view shot of Porter and his teammates, in which most of the other characters do not have.

At last, overall in the movie, particular camera code like shallow focus is used in directing the viewers’ attention to certain characters. Through the use of zoom shots, mostly the area outside the focus becomes blurred. This camera code is a general code of majority documentary genre or movies. The use of shallow focus is to establish a distance between the camera as observer and the delinquents as the observed. It is done as prerequisite of documentaries genre as the observer shall not disturb the activity or the continuity of the observed, or else the observation activity and omniscient sense will be ruined. Yet, the use of shallow focus and the distanced sense of the camera can also establish the connotative attempt of camera in constructing a safe zone or eliminating the possibility of intimacy between the camera as the observer, and the delinquents as the observed. In other words, the representation of the delinquents as dangerous and unavailable of a close of approach worsens the representation of the delinquents who are dominated by Afro-Americans as violent.
In contrast, the use of deep focus in every football practice and play scenes emphasizing sport as the attempt to bring back or elevate the ‘monstrous’ or animalistic characteristic of Afro-Americans into more humane and civilized attitude. The deep focus eliminates the distance between the camera and the players, intimates them, and washes out the safe zone and the dangerous sense of the delinquents. Thus the Afro-American juveniles are not delinquents, low part of society, and sub-human anymore; sport has brilliantly ‘saved’ them.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

*Gridiron Gang* (2004), like other movies in the late twentieth century invoking many African-Americans, are trying to construct an idea that racial inequality have already dismissed from the society. Nevertheless, the mystification attempt is revealed when it comes to a semiotics analysis.

In the movie, social-mobility and constraints which work hand-in-hand are delivered in a deliberate way through representations in the form of binary paradoxical identity: the paradox of identity ‘between’ Afro-Americans and Caucasians or manichean allegory, and the paradox of identity ‘within’ Afro-Americans.

Nevertheless, *Gridiron Gang* which seemingly participates in the establishment of social-mobility through plots engage in negotiating the inequality, the movie also helps in the establishment and the maintenance of social boundaries for the audiences. The main coach character of the movie, Porter, who is an Afro-American, also depicted as maintaining the representation of Afro-Americans, and even distributing it among his racial group. Whether he is conscious about it or not, his act of classifying and limiting is similar with the act of the majority ethnic group in classifying and constraining Afro-Americans. According to Porter, his action is done for the sake of the delinquents and his team. Nevertheless, his initial act of rehabilitating the delinquents through sport only delivers the delinquents into another stage of racial inequality in the society. Even though their present identity as athletes is acknowledged by the society, the delinquents are not given broader chance to change their life outside the area of sport. In other words, Porter has imposed social-mobility and constraint toward his own racial group. Yet, his players do not understand the construction as they are mystified by the benefit and the hyper-reality of sport.

The last but not the least, the analysis is still limited to one aspect of sport movie as a culture, while there are still many aspects of dominant political interests in sport movie, sport, and other cultures which are not less mystifying, persuasive and suggestive. The analysis is also limited to the position of Afro-American and Caucasian male athletes in the society. Therefore, it is suggested that further and deeper analysis will be conducted not only on sport movies and sports, but also on other ISA media and culture, as well as other genders.

REFERENCES


