



THE REPRESENTATION OF SKINHEAD STYLE DEPICTED IN “*THIS IS ENGLAND*” FILM BY SHANE MEADOWS (2006)

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
FACULTY OF CULTURAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA**

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UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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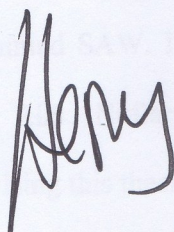
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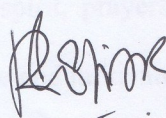
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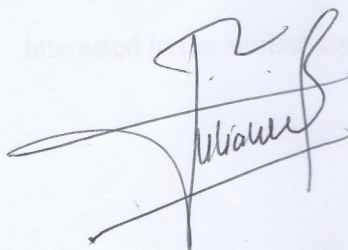


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Malang, 11th May 2018

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ABSTRACT

Fahmi, Fatih. 2018. **The Representation of Skinhead Style Depicted in *This Is England* Film by Shane Meadows (2006)**. Study Program of English, Universitas Brawijaya. Supervisor: Rizki Nufiarni, S.S., M.A.

Keywords: representation, subculture, skinhead, style, *This Is England* Film.

Subculture is a group that emerge from particular situations, particular interests, or some problems in the society such as ages, races, social classes, ethnicity, and training that separated themselves from society circle. Members of subculture in common, usually live in different lifestyles or use different symbols in daily life. Any subculture always tries to show their differences and attracts the society including Skinhead as one of subculture examples.

This research is using the subculture core concepts by J. Patrick Williams focusing in style aspect to analyze the object. There are four core concepts of subcultures. There are style, resistance, space and media, and societal reactions. The writer explains briefly about subculture and Skinhead, the style concept, analyzing the data consists of dialogues and scenes found which represents the style of Skinhead in *This Is England* film.

The purpose of this undergraduate thesis is to identify the representation of the Skinhead style in *This Is England* film year 2006. The study shows that only three aspects are represented in the film which are dress, ritual, and music. The writer analyzes it into two parts – material and ideological. The material part consists of dress and ritual as visible components and the ideological part of Skinhead style are music and argot. Only the argot itself is not displayed in *This Is England* film year 2006.



ABSTRAK

Fahmi, Fatih. 2018. **Representasi Gaya Skinhead yang Tergambar pada film *This Is England* oleh Shane Meadows (2006)**. Program Studi Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Brawijaya. Pembimbing: Rizki Nufiarni, S.S., M.A.

Keywords: representasi, subkultur, skinhead, gaya, film *This Is England*.

Subkultur adalah sebuah kelompok yang terbentuk karena situasi tertentu, kepentingan tertentu, atau terbentuk karena adanya suatu problematika dalam masyarakat seperti usia, ras, kelas sosial, etnisitas, dan kegiatan yang memisahkan mereka dari lingkaran sosial. Anggota subkultur pada umumnya memiliki gaya hidup yang berbeda atau menggunakan simbol-simbol tertentu pada kesehariannya. Subkultur akan selalu berusaha untuk menunjukkan perbedaan mereka dan menarik perhatian masyarakat termasuk Skinhead sebagai salah satu contoh subkultur.

Penelitian ini menggunakan konsep inti subkultur oleh J. Patrick Williams yang berfokus pada aspek gaya untuk menganalisis objek penelitian. Terdapat empat konsep utama dalam menganalisis subkultur. Konsep-konsep tersebut adalah gaya, perlawanan, jarak dan media, serta reaksi sosial. Penulis menjelaskan secara singkat tentang subkultur dan Skinhead, konsep gaya, menganalisis data yang terdiri dari dialog dan layar yang menunjukkan gaya dari Skinhead dalam film *This Is England*.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi representasi gaya dari subkultur Skinhead dalam *This Is England* film tahun 2006. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa hanya tiga aspek dari gaya Skinhead yang muncul dalam film tersebut yakni pakaian, ritual, dan musik. Penulis menganalisis hal tersebut menjadi dua bagian – material and ideologis. Bagian material adalah pakaian dan ritual sebagai komponen yang terlihat dan bagian ideologis dari gaya Skinhead adalah musik and argot. Hanya argot yang tidak dimunculkan dalam film *This Is England* tahun 2006.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Sidlova (2014, p.8) explained the definition of subculture as “a culture shared and actively participated in by a minority of people within a greater culture.

Subculture has their own values, practices, and belief which separates them from the majority and provides youth a distraction from their daily routine.” Members of subculture usually live in different lifestyles because of their special values and practices or use different symbols in their daily life. Subculture could also be seen as a distraction for youth because their values and practices are different from daily life because it is usually more fun and relieving their stress. Subculture tries to show their differences to attract the society. The difference of values, practices, and beliefs of subculture with the majority of people could create social separation. Sidlova (2014, p.5) also stated another definition of subculture is that it could also be seen as “a group that comes from particular situations, particular interests, or some problems inside people such as ages, races, social classes, ethnicity, and training that separated themselves from society circle.” It means that the origin of subculture could be caused by problems inside the society which related with economic, culture, or social issues.

Subculture itself has five main functions to its member as stated by Barker (2000, Pg. 407): “First, subculture seems to provide solutions to social-



economic and structural problems. Second, subculture offers a collective identity which is different with school and working environment. Third, the member of subculture could get place for experiences and alternative views about social reality. Fourth, subculture provides meaningful entertainment activities which are contradictive with school and working activities. Fifth, subculture complete the problem of existential identity dilemma.” Related to those functions, members of subculture feel meaningful in becoming part of subculture and they feel special after they follow the rules inside it rather than being part of majority of people. They get an acceptance inside the group and new environment which give them new identity. Subculture also tries to respond social or economic problems by their own values and practices.

According to J. Patrick Williams (2007), there are four core concepts that can be used in analyzing subculture: they are style, resistance, space and media, and societal reactions. The researchers of subculture could use one or more of those concepts to analyze an example of subculture. In this research the writer will analyze the related part of the first core concept of subculture which is style. This research will be focused on using style as one of the core concepts of subculture to analyze the representation of Skinhead style in *This Is England* film.

There are many famous subcultures in history and one of them is Skinhead. It was a famous and massive subculture because it came in two waves, the late 1960s and 1980s. The emergence of 1980s Skinhead was related to the functions of subculture stated before which is trying to solve problems in society.

Castles (2009, p.24) stated that “at 1950s-1960s in UK there were many

immigrants come to England from Indian and Africa.” The 1980s Skinhead tries to respond that social-economic and structural problems. The immigrants worked in manufacturing, services, and other. The arrival of immigrants in UK cause the dead of job vacancies for the real UK citizens itself. The 1980s Skinhead tried to respond to this problem as they came from working class. The first wave of Skinhead came in the 1960s among working class youth in London, England and soon it spreaded to other regions of United Kingdom. The 1960s Skinhead existed in British and identified themselves as Trojan Skinhead which was taken from a name of record label. The record label released some of the music genres which were usually listened by 1960s Skinhead. This Skinhead appreciates music played by black people and they tend to be non-racist. The second wave of Skinhead came in 1980s as stated by Arbuckle (2016, para. 3) was “more threatening and support the fascist parties.” It was because they made some conflicts with the immigrants in UK.

This Is England is a film directed by Shane Meadow in 2006 that focuses in describing about Skinhead. This film has got many awards such as BAFTA Awards 2008, Bangkok International Film Festival 2007, British Independent Film Awards, CinEuphoria Awards 2010, Dublin Film Critics Circle Award 2007, Empire Awards UK 2008, Ghent International Film Awards 2007, Gijon International Film Festival 2007, Golden Trailer Awards 2008, Paris Cinema 2007, Rome Film Fest 2007, Writers Guild of Great Britain 2007 (IMDB, 2007).

This Is England represents both the character of 1960s as the first wave of Skinhead group which is not racist because the presence of Milky, a character



whose his parents are Jamaican and the group has no problem about it. The representation of 1980s Skinhead is shown with a scene that shows the learning process of political view and perspectives because it contains the explanation about how right wing political party views and values get inside the British Skinheads and turns them into racists and negative group.

There are some reasons in choosing the film as the object of the study.

First, *This Is England* film has been recognized internationally and considered as one of the best film in displaying subculture, history, and youth. The writer presents a short storyline of this film that is focused on Shaun a 12 year old boy who struggles because of losing his father to Falklands War. An important moment in this film is the introduction of Woody and Combo who bring the change and as a starting point of Shaun's journey to become a Skinhead member.

The film describes the process in joining youth subcultures because inside the film, Shaun has to get through some actions in purpose of getting acceptance from all of the Skinhead members.

Further consideration in choosing this film to be object of analysis is the statement of the director of this film, Shane Meadows in BBC News Magazine, 2007.

It is unfortunate that the racists elements have become such a by-word for Skinhead. The media has played its part in this but by the same token it's clear that the the fascist element has always been fairly vocal in Skinhead culture. The sad bit is that the more enlightened, anti fascist aspects have not better promoted themselves.



The statement of the director explains that majority of people consider Skinhead as a negative group that could disturb the unity by their racist and fascist view. I conclude that this film is very interesting because it is one of the effort to reintroduce and give an alternative view of subculture, primarily Skinhead. As one of the best film in explaining subculture especially Skinhead, the writer hopes that this research would present good explanation about Skinhead style. The writer will try to examine and analyze *This Is England* film as a representation of Skinhead subculture.

The writer has some reasons in writing this research. First, *This Is England* film offers a new perspective about Skinhead subculture which some people consider it againsts the society. Second, *This Is England* offers almost a whole explanations of first wave Skinhead in England. Third, hopefully the writer would give contribution in the analysis of literary works of film about subculture especially Skinhead in Study Program of English in Faculty of Cultural Studies University of Brawijaya in the future. Fourth, the writer will use one of subculture core concepts from J.Patrick Williams which is style to analyze the representation of style depicted in *This Is England* film.

1.2 Problem of Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem of study of this research can be formulated into: How does “*This Is England*” film represent the Skinhead style as a subculture?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on problem of study above, the objective of the study is to analyze how *This Is England* as a literary work represents the style of Skinhead as a subculture by using the subculture core concepts of J. Patrick Williams and takes focus in style as the main concept and analyze how the film represent the style of Skinhead.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This second chapter presents three parts: theoretical frameworks, previous studies and research method. The writer will explain the review of related literature used in writing the research. In analyzing the subject, the writer uses the subculture core concepts by J. Patrick Williams which has focus in subculture analysis and analyzes historical background in contemporary literature works. In addition, previous studies and research method are discussed as the guidelines to this study.

2.1.1 Subculture and Subculture Studies

Hebdige (2002, p.73) stated that “a subculture is an independent group outside the larger society.” It means that most of subculture is really different and has really different practices, views, or daily life from the majority of society.

Subculture is also a result of gap in different classes and act as an opposition to society because in their perspectives, they are treated unfairly by the society. In

The Subcultures Reader, Sarah Thornton (1997) claims that subculture came from a group of people that have something in common with each other such as problems, interests, practices, which differs them from the society. Related to those definitions, I conclude that subcultures appear and try to differ themselves from the society because they observe and define things as problems in their



environment or in a society and has purpose to deliver critics or solutions for those problems.

The study of subculture itself is divided into two big studies. The Chicago school and the Birmingham school. The first school believes that subculture appears as a result of urbanization. Chicago school also concludes that subculture is related to bad behavior and adds psychological pressures to claim that subcultures represented sets of values and norms that participants learned. William (2007, p.574) stated that “a new subculture brought psychological and emotional influences to its members.” It means that a subculture could be viewed as a group that caused some of the criminal cases because they influence the members to do things that opposes the society. The Birmingham school offers a different approach to understand about subculture that appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s particularly at the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Birmingham school has three main focuses in analyzing about subculture. The first is that subculture is not the same with violation, the second is that youth culture is different with subculture and that society have a habit to generalize youth culture as a subculture, and the third one is that subculture does not always have purpose to achieve economic success although they came from class struggles.

2.1.2 Core Concepts of Subculture – J. Patrick Williams

James Patrick Williams is a professor and researcher in humanities studies and arts science. His works interests include youth cultures and subcultures. One



of his journal is dedicated to compose a set of concepts which is a core concepts in analyzing about subculture. Williams (2007, p.578) stated the core concepts in analyzing the subcultures inside one of his work which are “style, resistance, subcultural space and media, and societal reactions.” Those four concepts could be used as a complete set or separated as a single concept in analyzing and get a deeper understanding about subculture. As stated in the previous chapter, the writer will focus in analyzing Skinhead style in *This Is England* film so only the style concept will be used in this research.

2.1.2.1 Style

Style is a visible form of subculture expressions. People could tell if a person is a member of a subculture only by identifying their outfit or the way they talk. The explanations of style itself includes how meanings were created, distributed, and consumed by the member of subcultures. According to Williams (2007, p.578) style itself “has four aspects: dress, music, ritual, and argot.” These aspects could be categorized into some objects which refers to things they choose to wear and daily practices which refers to meanings they try to show to society. The British subcultures including Skinhead represents the working class through their actions to differentiate themselves from society. They try to differentiate themselves because they experience injustice in their lives and try to confront or make the society feel uncomfortable with their unusual appearance. In short their purpose of unusual appearance could be concluded as a resistance form and it was most shown through their style. As Hebdige (1996, as cited in Williams 2007, p.

576) stated that “subculture style is a symbolic and important resources for its member to reject the appropriateness according to dominant culture or society.”

The importance of style for subcultures is that the purpose of differentiation, delivering critics, and opposing the majority rules could easily be seen by showing different style for living daily life. The identification of style as one of the important concept in analyzing subculture is also stated by Clarke et.al. (1976, p.54 cited in William 2007, p.578) who found that:

The various youth subcultures have been identified by their possessions and objects. Yet, despite their visibility, things simply appropriated and worn (or listened to) do not make a style. What makes a style is the activity of stylization the active organization of objects with activities and outlooks, which produce an organized group-identity in the form and shape of a coherent and different way of ‘being-in-the-world’

Studying dress is very common in subcultural researches because the difference that they show is really visible in daily activities. People could tell if a person is a punk or a goth from a distance. Clarke (1976, p. 177 as cited in Williams 2007, p. 579) explained that “subcultural members do not have the same meanings about their clothing as common people do because they also want to show the collective identities and communicate the new meaning.” When punks draw a swastika on a jacket or jeans, they may not mean to show that they are fascism but they try to shock narrow minded parents, teachers, and common society. If a person wears a specific clothing without special reason, it becomes meaningless. One of the example of the meaningless reason is, “Today when I get up in the morning I am feeling pissed off so I want to wear black shirt today.” It is different with the reasons behind subcultural practices for example why Goth



wears black outfits. Subcultural practices become meaningful through stylization, from the usage of slang, special outfit, listening to certain music and special dance movement.

Music as one of the aspect in style is a very important aspect because it is a form of meaning making and distribution of a subculture ideology in subculture. The other importance of music is also stated by Bennett (2000, as cited in Williams 2007, p. 579) that music “acts as a identity-making resource for subcultures.” Music could deliver an idea of different identity because it could influence the way a person or group think. The other scholar Grossberg (1992, as cited in Williams 2007, p. 579) stated that “music has relations with policy critics or bad political situations caused by the government.” Subcultures try to deliver their critics or their expressions about injustice in society by creating or deciding what kind of music that could be listened by everyone and they also try to educate their members about their view and critics with distributing the music.

2.2 Previous Studies

The writer uses three previous studies in gaining more explanations about the object of the study. First, is a research entitled “A Critical Analysis of *This Is England: Class, Race, and Childhood* by” Andreas Culora, who is a researcher in Geographies of Children and Youth. In this research Culora is focusing on explaining how young people’s spesific cultures reproduce or transform dominant social relations in broader society. Culora uses critical analysis in childhood background or experience. Culora divided it into childhood as social construct and children as actors. The conclusion of this research is the young Skinhead group

reproduces and transforms social relations and childhood experience is an important factor that moves child as an actor joins the subculture. This research inspires the writer because Shaun as the main character in *This Is England* film shows the process in being a Skinhead member and his efforts to achieve his purpose could be analyzed further.

Second, a research entitled “*This is England: Class, Culture, and Ethnicity across Non-Metropolitan Spaces*” by Richard Courtney (2009). This research uses some concepts such as social capital, nationalism, and ethnicity. The conclusion reached by this research is community changes was theorised as governmental response to the impact of globalization on white working class community. This research inspires the writer to write this research because *This Is England* film also reflects that Skinhead is also part of working class shown through their dress as one of aspects in subculture style analysis.

Third, a research entitled *Representasi Rasisme dalam Film This Is England (Analisis Semiotik Roland Barthes Mengenai Rasisme dalam Film “This Is England”)* an undergraduate thesis by Eko Nugroho. This research focuses on semiotic analysis in racism practices and uses myths, conotation, and denotation concept by Roland Barthes. The conclusion of this research, there are racism practices shown in some scenes of this film by the main characters and violence verbally and physically to the immigrants. This research inspires the writer to write this research because Eko Nugroho only writes about the racism actions done by Skinhead but not reasons behind the change of Skinhead ideology which is also part of subculture core concepts.

2.3 Research Method

There are several steps applied in this study as follows:

1. Deciding the Object Material

A film entitled *This Is England* (2006) was chosen as the material object of the study because the highlight of this film was about subculture especially Skinhead. There were some situations to be described, especially how the film reflects the subculture. In this study, the writer analyzes it using subculture core concepts by J. Patrick Williams.

2. Collecting the Data

The data was collected from *This Is England* (2006). The data was collected through steps as follows: the data was captured from the scenes which include setting, dialogue, costumes and performance of the characters in the film. It will support in identifying the film plot and the main character. Then, data will be related with some references comprising from books, essay, articles, blogs or websites and journals that provide appropriate information about the subculture which is also performed by characters in the film background and the situation in British that time. Finally, this research will represent the Skinhead style in *This Is England* film.

3. Analyzing and Interpreting the Data

There are five steps used in analyzing and interpreting the data as follows:

- a. Making a transcription of the data from the film which are mostly dialogues and scenes modified into 'jpg image' acting style to analyze it.

- b. Connecting the representation of Skinhead style which is represented in *This Is England* film to the style concept in subculture core concepts by J. Patrick Williams.
- c. Applying references related with subculture style which is described in the film. It will be used to support information about Skinhead style in the film.
- d. Explaining the representation of Skinhead style as a subculture depicted in *This Is England* film using the style concept in subculture core concepts by J. Patrick Williams and identifying some issues presented in the film.

4. Drawing Conclusion

To complete this study, the role of conclusion is required. The writer draws a conclusion from how this film depicted whole component of style in Skinhead subculture after doing the film analysis which includes the capture of pictures and subtitles in the film.



CHAPTER 3

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This third chapter presents the research finding and the discussion based on the data collected. It is meant to present results of the research about style aspect in Skinhead subculture depicted in *This Is England* film. This chapter will analyze some scenes and the dialogues to support further explanations of this research.

3.1. The Importance of Style in Subcultures

Style is an important element for a subculture because people can tell if a person or a group is a member subculture and a group of subculture could recognize their members easily especially from what they wear. Style makes the member of subculture feels special and different from the society. Subculture tries to deliver meanings or critics through style. It is not only what they wear that defines a person or a group as a subculture.

Williams (2007, p.578) stated that "there are four aspects of styles which are dress, music, ritual, and argot." Dress and ritual shows more spesific about the Skinhead style because they are really visible in Skinhead members daily life while the music and argot shows indirectly the idea of the Skinhead. Members of Skinhead usually get the idea of Skinhead by listening and understand the lyrics from the songs of their special genres. *This Is England* represents the style of Skinhead subculture into some film scenes and dialogues.



3.1.1 Dress as Prestige Symbol of Skinhead Identity in *This Is England* Film

The first explanation, the writer will examine the dress of Skinhead subculture. The dress symbolizes the prestige of being a Skinhead member because it has special patterns and labels that differs them from the society style.

The Skinhead dress was a very narcissistic idea to show their pride and support over their strong British working class, British army, and their country. The idea of the dress is presented as one of the term to join Skinhead and show their group differences and exclusiveness. These were shown through a scene and dialogue where Woody gave Shaun a Ben Sherman shirt as a gift. The dialogue below represents the importance of shirt label in finishing the terms for being a Skinhead member.

Woody : Get your shirt on, Let's see your Ben Sherman.

Shaun : I... I ain't got a Ben Sherman.

Woody : You've telling me you've not got a shirt?

Shaun : No. You told me to get jeans and the boots.

Woody : You're gonna have to come back next week. I'll see you mate.

(Source: *This Is England*, 2006, minute 00:23:51)

The dialogue shows that Shaun would not be accepted as one of Skinhead member until he gets Ben Sherman shirt as one of the Skinhead outfit. Woody finally made a surprise for Shaun by giving him a Ben Sherman shirt to complete his attribute as a Skinhead member and welcomed Shaun as a member of the gang because he had completed the terms. There is a guideline of how to dress like a Skinhead as stated in (Marshall, 1994 p.167) entitled "*A-Z of Skinwear*." This book stated that "although Skinhead have several preferences for their outfit labels and try to deliver the meanings, although the labels they choose are not



always certain.” Ben Sherman was the most popular of Skinhead outfit because it is the easiest to get it and it also came with reasonable price.

They were the main reasons why Skinhead chose this shirt label as they come from the working class. Mods as other major subculture also wears this label as their outfit but the trademark of Skinhead is usually featured with a left breasts pocket so the member of each subculture could be recognized. Ben Sherman shirt is a great iconic British brand and became a ‘Skinhead package.’ A Skinhead package in my opinion is a set of suit or key items for showing or indicating that a person is a Skinhead member.

Ben Sherman label was founded in 1963 by a Brighton man Arthur Benjamin Sugarman and later called Ben Sherman. As Sicuro (2013, para. 4) stated that “the founder of this shirt wanted to produce better clothing by using higher quality material, finer styling, and superior construction.” This brand was really popular in 1960s-1970s. At that time, Skinhead members wore this label because when the shirt paired with Dr Martens and Levi’s it created the classic look for the Skinhead group because the look of the pair is a mixture of military, workwear, and preppy style related to the function and stylish matters so the Skinhead as also explained by Rusina (2004, p.2) are “trying to symbolized their subculture group as a form of support for tough patriotic working class.” The reasons why they called it patriotic from my analysis is because the shirt is produced originally in England so it is a form of support for local product.

The quality of Ben Sherman is very good and strong so this shirt is best for the working class. The pattern and color are also different from the usual white shirt



that people always wore in that time. It is stated previously that the founder of the shirt factory was a real Englishman. In my opinion the Skinhead group choose this label to show their nationality of their country related to the idea of their dress. In short, it can also be seen as a collective response of subculture groups especially Skinhead as Clarke (1971, p.1) stated that "subculture gives reactions to the structural problems in their environment." The writer has opinion that by choosing the label which is owned and produced by real Englishman the Skinhead think that they actually help and support the economy of their country and the real citizens of England.

In finishing the terms, Shaun had a long journey to seek what he needed. From that scene, the writer conclude that the Skinheads preference for certain labels does exist. They choose a button down shirts by Ben Sherman or usually called as 'Bennies.' The other reason is the special design or patterns which can differ themselves from the society. In writer's opinion, their special outfit symbolized their pride to exist in the society and they are easily recognized by the society by wearing that outfit because usually only a member of Skinhead would wear that outfit in their daily activities. The logical reason is the quality and durability of the product because they come from the working class and need a product like that. In my opinion, the durability of the product is the very important thing because they could wear this shirt in their working environment or factories. The other reason is, by choosing an affordable product they could make savings because the working class is not as wealthy as other classes. One of the Skinhead member is Lol and she is a factory worker. The Skinhead might be considered as



the first subculture with preferences for some brands or label but the other alternatives brand with the same design were never ignored as long as they look the same as the Skinhead in general. Membership is the most important thing for Skinhead. So when Shaun chooses another boots with different label than Doc Marten, his group has no problem with that as long as it is a pair of boots as a Skinhead member shoes.

Style as illustrated in dress has purpose as stated by Hebdige (2002, p. 101) that "style is a communication form to differ a subculture and a 'normal' style." It means that subcultures deliver their ideas and critics to the society through style. They try to show their existence to confront the society. Dress is also used to differ one subculture with another subculture as stated by Muggleton (2002, as cited in Williams, 2007 p.579) that style could "act as a form of distinctive individuality." So the preference for some outfit labels in subculture is for the differentiation purpose in society but Skinhead is not really strict in choosing the labels for their outfit as long as the product could deliver the message they are trying to deliver to the society related to their group or in short as an 'communicative object.' In Skinhead, the shirt is not the only outfit that the member should wear. The other part of outfit is also gets attention in case of making them different with daily wear or 'normal style.' One part of the outfit could not deliver the message to society as stated before in 'Skinhead Package' that it is a set of daily outfits in Skinhead subculture which have to be worn by its members. *This Is England* film also shows the other part of the Skinhead outfit which is shoes.



Figure 3.1.1 Shaun starts to search shoes
(Source: **This Is England**, 2006, minute 00:

Mom : Which ones? (looking through the window)

Shaun : The big red ones. (pointing through the window)

Mom : Oh you're not having them sweetheart. Look at the size of them. No Shaun, they look like thug boots. They're awful.

Shaun : I want them ones Mum. Come on, you've promised.

Shooperkeeper : Duck darling, these ones that you're looking at these boots, now they're adult sizes and you're size four. But these have just come in from London. Are you ready for these? These are fantastic. (Opening the box and handing over the shoes)

Mom : Oh, look at them Shaun. They're absolutely lovely.

Shaun : Where's the Doc Marten sign? It says Tompkins in it! I f*cking want them! (pointing at Doc Marten boots).

(Source: **This Is England**, 2006, minute 00:22:02)

In figure 3.1.2, Shaun saw the Doc Marten boots in the display happily because he had found what he needs. He entered the shop with his mother and started to seek the shopkeeper to ask for the Dr. Martens boots. The dialogue shows and confirms that Skinhead has their own preference for their outfit labels.

Dr. Martens is a very popular boots in Britain and also associated with British nationalism because as Muston (2010, para.4) claimed that "it is worn by almost all the working class although the founder Dr. Klaus Maertens. The first 'e' of his name was deleted to make the boots name sounds more English. He was a physician in the German Army during World War II." Although Dr. Martens



himself was a German, the boots itself is seen as a local product because of a special reason.

In his article Muston (2010, para.1) wrote that Dr. Martens “went into mass production on 1 April 1960 in Wollaston, Northamptonshire while at that time Skinhead groups appeared.” In the other side, although Dr. Martens had become a mass production worldwide, these boots have special factory in England which is a result from collaboration between a British shoe manufacturer Bill Griggs and Dr. Martens. This boots has a very good quality and very strong. It was massively worn by working class in factory, army and polices as a standard footwear in Britain in the late 1970s.

The Skinhead wears this boots for showing their nationalism and also as Rusina (2014, p.2) stated “as their support for working class and the army.” In my opinion, by wearing these boots the Skinheads show their support and symbolize their nationalism and pride for England because these boots are widely worn by soldiers and factory workers in England. The soldiers were protecting their country by going to war (Malyinas War) and they were protecting their country from immigrants and supporting working class symbolized with wearing Dr. Martens just like the soldier did because the 1980s Skinhead that represented in *This Is England* film tries to solve the dead end job vacancies in UK and tries to protect real citizens of England because they think Pakistanis and other immigrants take their jobs. These boots also symbolize their rebellion to the society because the Skinheads later as stated by Marshall (1994, p.86) “were involved in Hooligans and violence actions related to football.” This is the other



reason why Skinhead is associated with negative groups. The 3.1.2 figure also represents that certain brands could be very important in defining a person as a member of Skinhead subculture. Shaun wanted himself to be a proper member of Skinhead just like Woody by choosing the right labels for his costume as the leader because Shaun thinks that he would be easily accepted if he chooses the same label like the other members of Skinhead he knows.

3.1.2 Rituals as Legitimation of Skinhead Membership in *This Is England* Film.

As Williams (2007 p.578) stated in his work, ritual means “the specified behavior in a community and one of the important aspect of all human societies. It is important because a ritual has ability in identifying and legitimized a person in becoming a subculture member because of its special activities and results. The forms of ritual in the subculture are usually related with the practice of body modification or tattooing, branding, and piercing so it left special marks on the body.” The results of these ritual forms are visible and differ the member of subculture with the society. Some other forms of rituals that exist in almost all of subculture groups as stated by Williams (2007) are more like daily practices such as skateboarding, bike messengers, and graffiti artists have purpose to give other meaning to their environments or they can be seen as getting the focus of attention through their practices. The rituals which are shown in *This Is England* film consists of shaving head, tattooing, walking around or gathering with their special outfits as a form of getting the focus of attention, and displaying flag.



In *This Is England* film, there are several rituals which had been through by the main character, Shaun. The ritual is also considered as sacrifice or proof from the members whether they are really willing to be part of the group or not. The ritual also has low and high level to proof the member's willingness because it is a strong form of group togetherness. There are no real orders in Skinhead rituals to legitimize a person as a member but there are always 'a must' ritual to be done when a person wants to be a member of Skinhead so society and the Skinhead group would easily recognize them. Some of the rituals are displayed in *This Is England* film such as tattooing and shaving head into 'down to the wood' haircut which means a really clean or short haircut. It is a name of men hairdressing style in the lowest level of hair length (number one or zero – shaved head with a very light short hair). As Marshall (1994) stated in his book that this hairstyle is related to the working class men hairstyle who always cut their hair very short. The reason in choosing this kind of haircut is making their working movement easier while operating machine in factories.



Figure 3.2.1 Shaun gets a new haircut
(Source: *This Is England*, 2006, minute 00:22:42)

Lol : Your mum's not gonna come around is she, and whack my door down?

Shaun : No, just fricking do it.

Lol : Alright here we go (switches on razor). You're doing a good job mate.



Milky : Definitely. You're looking good.

Woody: And what about a hairline girls, eh?

Lol : Do not forget that bit. I can see it.

Woody: Mate, I'm well impressed.

Milky : What a transformation!

Lol : Pleased with that?

(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 00:22:42)

After being dressed properly, this scene and dialogue represent an important ritual that a member of Skinhead usually did. Shaun got his head shaved by Lol. At the first time he was nervous and did not sure about that. Lol also was not sure about shaving Shaun's head because she is afraid that Shaun's mother will get mad to her. Shaun tells her to just do it although maybe his mother would get mad. This dialogue and scene represent the ritual as a form of sacrifice to become a Skinhead member although the society would disagree and look at them strangely because of what the haircut is associated with. Lol finally started to turn on the razor and shave him. The other members look at Shaun and praise his haircut as he agrees to do the certain ritual in Skinhead. As stated before, the Skinhead haircut model represents the working class but somehow a very short haircut of Skinhead is seen as negative thing and associated with a prison cut. That is the reason why Shaun's Mom or the society around the Skinhead do not like the haircut. Lol is afraid that Shaun's mom would get angry because of the haircut.

After getting his head shaved, Shaun then asked Woody "So, am I in the gang now?" This statement is one of proof that finishing all of the terms in dress and ritual section is very important and differs a member of the Skinhead with society around him. The dialogue shows that to enter or being accepted as a



Skinhead member you have to show some sacrifices which is related to the willingness of the member. Shaved head actually came from original Skinhead that had to shave their head mainly because of their jobs in factory. They have to keep their hair cut short because it is very important in safety and hygiene matters. They do not want to get caught in factory machines.



Figure 3.2.2 The Chelsea Cut on Skinbyrds
(Source: *This Is England*, 2006, minute 00:22:42)

In Skinhead subculture, the women members or Skinbyrds also have a special haircut called 'Chelsea cut.' As Metareligion (2014, para. 6) stated that a Chelsea cut is "short on the crown with fringes at the front, back, and sides.

Sometimes it is almost clear shaved and only left fringes and bangs in the front."

In *This Is England* film, it is not only the haircut that looks unusual but also the color of the hair. One of the characters from the film, Smell has purple color on some parts of her hair. It is not clear why the Chelsea cut is made and chosen and why it is important for women members of Skinhead. Some of the Skinhead member said that the haircut looks unusual and really different with usual women hairstyle at that time. In my opinion, the Chelsea cut was related to the purpose of getting focus of attention and difference or the existence of the Skinhead women in their society.



Figure 3.2.3 The Skinbyrds are walking together with their gang in the street.
(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 00:25:02)

This 3.2.3 scene represents women Skinhead members with their daily outfit. This scene is also related with ritual because as stated before that ritual also includes some of the leisure activities to show their existence to the environment.

They are usually walking in the street to meet another Skinhead groups and to show their togetherness. The Skinbyrds and Skinheads will also do some usual activities in their routine gathering. Some of the activities are doing sports together with members like football and swimming as pictured or displayed in the film. Sometimes they just wander around by car until night comes. In the my conclusion, they do those activities to show their group existence to the society.



Figure 3.2.4 Shaun gets his finger tattooed.
(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 01:00:56)

In this scene, Shaun got one of his finger tattooed by Combo. The tattoo on his finger was a little St. George cross which is recognized around the world as the flag of England. This tattoo symbolizes the love and respect for their country.

This also can be seen as their big nationalism and promises to make the prosperity



of England as their priority and purpose in their life. As Crouch (2014, para.3) stated in his article many believed this cross was used by English soldiers in the middle ages and in crusades. This tattoo was also worn by Combo and Woody on their forehead to express their proud and loyalty to England. As a new member, Shaun wanted himself to be a complete Skinhead so he let Combo tattooed this cross on one of his finger as a form of sacrifice and legitimize himself as a member of Skinhead.



Figure 3.2.5 Shaun gets the flag of England.
(Source: *This Is England*, 2006, minute 01:01:33)

There are some explanations related to figure 3.2.5, the scene describes that Combo asks Shaun to display the big flag of England after getting his finger tattooed, which is also a practice of ritual. The purpose of ritual is also to get attention from the environment as explained before. Shaun had a conversation with Combo inside a car. Combo promised to Shaun that he really understood the way Shaun feels in losing a father. In my analysis, by setting the flag on a window of his bedroom, Shaun shows the meaning that he should be a good Skinhead with big nationalism. It is also a form of legitimization as part of extremist Skinhead or new wave of Skinhead which has the right-wing political party perspectives, racist, and really rude to immigrants although displaying a flag for some Skinhead

groups is not a really must thing to do but in Combo and Shaun case, displaying a flag is a must because they are a member of extremist Skinhead and to show that they are the real citizens of England. The good Skinhead member according to Combo group are the ones with patriotism or love and have goodwill to protect their country. The flag display in each member of Skinhead symbolizes their proud to be Skinhead member. This scene is a form of prescribed behavior in Skinhead subculture and as a form of getting attention from new wave Skinhead which tends to be extremist or ultra-nationalist so they really need to show their existence to the society and as a form of legitimization in Skinhead membership by doing so. The new wave of Skinhead has main purpose is to protect England and send back the immigrants to their country. From the film can be concluded that they consider the immigrants take their job opportunities and as a trouble for England. In their perspective the immigrants wave needs to be stopped and the rest of the immigrants have to leave their country until the real citizen of England which is white people. The flag is also a symbol which shows that the resident of the house is a real citizen of England.

3.1.3 Music as a Manifestation of Skinhead Ideology in *This Is England* Film

Music is also an important aspect of meaning-making in subculture groups. Bennett (2000, cited in Williams 2007, p. 579) stated in his work that “music could also seen as an identity-making resource for subcultures.” The lyrics or concept of music could influence or shape the perspective of subculture members. I will analyze some of the musical activities scenes in *This Is England* film from the scenes which displays the music listened by the Skinhead group and



analyze the meaning that they try to deliver to the society. The main idea or ideology that the original or 1960s Skinhead which is represented in *This Is England* film is anti-racist and unity.



Figure 3.3.1 *The Dark End of the Streets* – Percy Sledge
(Source: *This Is England*, 2006, minute 01:18:24)

The 3.3.1 figure describes about Combo, Shaun, Milky, and another member of Skinhead were gathering in an apartment. They were smoking Marijuana which Milky brought for them and listening to a music. They also had a good conversation and laughed together. This song also has a line *Living in darkness to hide our wrong* which has deep meaning. In my opinion, Skinhead subculture is always associated with bad impacts to society and they always do bad and harmful things such as smoking Marijuana and having drunk in group.

It is a real example to the writings of Cohen, (2002, cited in William 2007 p.584) who stated that “mainstream or dominant culture sees subcultures as devils or bad groups. Society are usually categorizing, labeling, and seeing the subculture groups actions as a low or negative groups.” This negative perspective of the subculture groups is related to the second core concepts of subculture by J. Patrick Williams which is *societal reactions*. It can also be concluded that this scene also represents how society sees people who join Skinhead are lost people.



The song also fits in explaining about the music genre which Skinhead listens to which is the Jamaican music at 1960s.

Milky : Seriously I mean, this.... this music. This sort of music is the sort of stuff that I listen to, my uncles listen to. Yeah to me this is good music.

Combo: "What you've gotta remember Milks, right is,... is I am an original Skinhead. But it was people like your uncle, your uncle that introduced that stuff to me. The soul of that music just f^cking resonated with us."

Milky : And it's people... it's Skinheads like you, true Skinheads like you.. keeping that flame alive.

Combo: Yeah it was f^cking unity. It was black and white together, know what I mean?

Milky: It should not be forgotten. It shouldn't die.

(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 01:18:24)

The music of original Skinhead was associated with black popular music genres such as rocksteady, soul, ska, and early reggae which were brought by colored immigrants. Those music genres created the new identity in Skinhead which is more than a national identity. It means that they hopea unity between the white and black people. Hebdige (2002, p.53) stated that "the idea of subculture identity was formed into style by listening to those genres of music and understand the ideas from the lyrics inside it." It means that music is a media of deciding and delivering the identity of subculture. As for Skinhead in Britain they listened to genres stated before to understand the ideas of their group. Those genres of music are a mediator between white working class and the second generation immigrant youths so they could unite. It is important in subculture to practice their style through creating or consuming special music genre in particular subculture groups because it will show a true member of subculture. As stated by Winge (2003, as cited in Williams 2007, p.579) in subculture, "music



has purpose in spreading the ideology of the groups because it is one of the tool to spread the ideology through the messages inside the lyrics.” The ideology that Skinhead is trying to spread, is stated clearly in the dialogue that the original Skinhead is not racist and tries to build the unity.

There is no official Skinhead music genre because Skinheads at different period is listening to different music genre. *This Is England* film tries to present the original Skinhead music in 1960s by using the band from those early genres in their soundtracks such as Toots and the Maytals with rocksteady genre in the opening scene of the film. As Marshall (1994, p.41) noted in his work that “the original Skinhead listened to these genres especially reggae because they loved the rebel beats and unusual lyrics which were different from the popular music and also banned from the clubs.” Music also makes a Skinhead member feel special because it is different from popular music and makes them feel brave because of their choice, they are banned from usual club. The previous scene represents the group of Skinhead sing Percy Sledge song. His career started from 1960s and he came from Alabama. He was once a worker in chemical factory. Sweeting (2015, para.7) stated that Sledge was “trying to prove that black people also has talents by creating good music and performing it everywhere even at that time apartheid politics was still in South Africa. His genres are including soul, R&B, and pop.” It means that the music genres or songs which were brought by the singer have the idea of Skinhead related to the anti-racism and unity. The background of the singer is the same with the background of Skinhead members which is factory worker or working class.

The dialogues from figure 3.3.1 describes that the original Skinhead does not have issue in racialism to any nation. The original Skinhead builds unity between the working class no matter what their backgrounds are. The music listened by original Skinhead was brought by the Jamaican. This kind of music is always associated with early or first British Skinhead. The Jamaican music had their first international audience because the first generation of Skinhead and Mods listened to this music. This music got attention in Skinhead because their influences are brought by immigrants in British. In this film the immigrant was presented by Milky who originally came from Jamaica with all of his family. All Jamaican Reggae which were in 1960s and 1970 classified as Skinhead Reggae. They finally alligned with London based famous labels like Trojan and Pama. By the end of the 1972 the Reggae had less audience.

3.1.4 Argot as a Form of Skinhead Communication in *This Is England* Film

Pollock (2005 p.103) stated that “argot has been used as an aspects of joining or getting inside the subculture. Argot means words and expression that are used by small groups of people that are not easily understood by common people.” Subcultures have used as a special language in showing off their unique subcultural identity, describing their activities and showing their opposition to ‘straight’ life. People see argot as unusual language from subcultural groups. Inreal life, Skinhead has some form of argot and uses it to communicate each other such as *boot party* which means beating a victim to the ground and kicking him/her with their boots. *Five words* means “I have nothing to say” as their usual response to all media and law matters. In *This Is England* film, the argot is not depicted



because just some of unusual linguistic or slangs appeared in this film as shown in dialogue below.

Shopkeeper : He's been calling me a **Paki** bastard. Open the door!

Combo : Get your fucking hands off him now! Take what you want kid, take the fucking whisky and the **ciggies**.

Shaun : You bastard!

Combo : Come on, hurry up! Get the stuff mate. For fuck sake we need **booze** and **fags** for tonight, lads. Come on!

(Source: **This Is England, 2006, minute 01:02:50**)

In England at that time, Paki is a really strong word because it is a rude abbreviation of the word 'Pakistani'. It is a racist term that is often used to call people from South Asian family and live in Britain. This term was not only used by Skinhead but also used by racist people and it was a very forbidden word because as stated by Hebdige (2002, p.91) the slang also "has power to provoke and disturb." It is related to the 'Paki' word that offends the Pakistani or South Asia immigrants. 'Ciggies' is a slang term for cigarettes. Booze is also an informal term for alcohol especially hard liquors in large amount.

As a further explanation for Skinhead in This Is England film, the original or the first wave of Skinhead or the 1960s Skinhead is displayed by Woody and his gang because they are not racist and support the unity no matter what the members background are. It is shown by one of their member, Milky who is a Jamaican. They respect him as an equal member in their gang. The new wave of Skinhead or 1980s Skinhead which is racist or extremist is represented by the Combo's gang. They are influenced and moved by politics delegation in a gathering because they mostly come from working class so they could easily

agree with the idea which is delivered by Lenny as a delegation of a *National Front*, a right-wing party.



Figure 3.4.1 Lenny gives speech to some of Skinhead members

(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 00:53:30)

Lenny : They fear us because we are the true voice of this country. People who work hard, pay their way, it does not matter what their ethnic background is, I welcome with open arms in this country. It's the people who think we owe them a living. These are the people that need to go back.

All : Send them back!

Lenny : Gentlemen it is time to stand up and be counted. It is the time for action. Our country has been stolen from under our noses. Well gentlemen it's time to take it back! Are you ready to return to the fight? Are you ready to shed blood? Are you ready to fight for this country with your last life of breath?

All : Yes!

(Source: This Is England, 2006, minute 00:53:30)

The figure and dialogue show that some Skinhead members agree to the idea that they should send all the immigrants back because they think the immigrants are stealing jobs and flats for the real Englishman. Woody disagrees with this idea when Combo tries to make all of them to join the party movement and do harmful things towards the immigrants. Woody leaves while Combo is giving the speech and in the end only a few of Woody gang members including Shaun goes to the gathering. After they go to the gathering, Pukes as one of the Woodys gang member tells his disagreement about Lenny speech to Combo and



CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The last chapter of this undergraduate thesis presents the conclusion of “The Representation of Skinhead Style Depicted in *This Is England* Film by Shane Meadows (2006).” This chapter also gives suggestion for further researchers who want to write a similar research with this study.

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data, the writer divided the conclusion into two points. The focus of the study is the representation of Skinhead style depicted in *This Is England* which is divided into four parts dress, ritual, music, and argot.

The writer analyzes it into two parts – material and ideological. The material part consists of dress and ritual as visible components. *This Is England* shows the Skinhead dress in Ben Sherman shirt and Doc Marten boots. These two labels are very iconic because in Skinhead subculture views, the labels deliver messages to the society. The rituals of Skinhead in *This Is England* film are shown in shaving heads or usually called the ‘down to the woods’ haircut. The haircut also represents the working class life because of their workplace condition. It can also be seen as a form of nationalism because the haircut style was also chosen by the militaries at that time. The other ritual involves tattooing a St. George cross as another form of the Skinhead origin and as a form of nationalism.



The ideological part of Skinhead style are music and argot. In Skinhead they listen to black popular music genres such as rocksteady, soul, ska, and early reggae. These genres of music have their own message and role in Skinhead subculture. The message is to bring and build equality in society. In *This Is England* the idea is delivered by the dialogues and a song from Percy Sledge which is unity and not racist. Argot shows unique subcultural identity and their opposition to 'straight' life. In *This Is England* film the argot of Skinhead is not really depicted because only use some of the unusual words or slangs appear. *This Is England* film represents the Skinhead style according to the style concept of J. Patrick Williams. It represents Skinhead style with what they wear, special things or rituals that they have to do to get inside the Skinhead group, and music they listen to which represent the ideology of 1960s Skinhead that was not racist. *This Is England* film also represents the 1980s Skinhead which has the racist idea in a scene where a member of right wing political party gives a speech for some members of Skinhead to solve the problems caused by the immigrants in England.

4.2 Suggestion

The writer suggests the next researcher to analyze another subculture style found in other movies or another form of literature by using subculture concepts from J. Patrick Williams or other concept from other theorists about subculture to enrich researches in subculture. The researcher also hopes that the next researcher and the reader will understand about the main core concepts about subculture because the subculture core concepts from J. Patrick Williams is a very clear

concept in analyzing subculture. The writer hopes that the next researcher can find the other problem and object of study in subculture.



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