



**THE CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST
CAPITALISM IN CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S
*FIGHT CLUB***

A FINAL PROJECT

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Sarjana Degree Majoring Literature in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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SEMARANG**

2018

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly states that she compiles this final project entitled **The Struggle Class Against Capitalism in Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*** by herself without taking any result from other researchers in S-1, S2, S-3, as well as in diploma degree of any university. The writer also confirm that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, May 2018

Rizaniar Itaq Khalida

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Thinking is difficult, that's way most people judge.

- **Carl Jung**

Mistakes are a part of life. If you don't make them, you never learn.

If you never learn, you never improve.

- **Unknown**

Wa ma taufiqi illa billahi,

My success in only by Allah SWT

- **Qur'an 11: 88**

This final project is dedicated to my beloved parents, my sister, friends and everyone who helped me accomplish this project.

Thank you very much.

APPROVAL

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PALAHNIUK'S *FIGHT CLUB*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thanks to Allah SWT, who has given spirit, health, strenght and blessing on completing this final project entitled “**The Class Struggle Against Capitalism In Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club***”. In this occasion, I would like to thank all those people who have supported and contributed to the completion of this final project.

The deepest gratitude and appreciation to my project advisor Hadiyanto, S.S, M.Hum, who has given continues guidance, helpful correction, moral support, advice and suggestion, so that this project comes into completion.

The writer also all thank to the following persons:

1. Dr. Redyanto M. Noor, M. Hum., as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A., as the Head of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. All of the lecturers in English Department, especially in Literature major, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, who have given their knowledge and experiences.
4. My beloved parents, Mrs. Rini Hartatik and Mr. Tjatur Budiono, also my lovely sister Ardhanare Swari Wardanik, Ridha Annisa Kharima, and my little sister Amalia Rumaisha Hanifa. Thank you so much for the endless support, motivation, and love that you give in my life. So, I can complete this final project on time.

5. The man who always accompanied me, Irfa Ulwan. Thank you for always in by my side even in the worst of circumstances. You always reach out your hand when I need you. I know you never tired to support me in any condition and you always remind me to keep the spirit in completing this project from the begining to the end. Thank you for everything Ir.
6. The best roommate that I ever have , Astrida Ulfa Aninda. Thank you for a very memorable moment of almost 4 years, where we spent our life together in Tembalang. I hope after this we will still be a bestfriends. I'll miss you so much your laugh when you watching Kpop.
7. My lovely friends who always there by my side from the beginning of my college life until now, Windah Nora Avelina Pasaribu. Thank you for always be with me and support me with all my weakness and weirdness as your friend. I will miss every moment that I spent with you.
8. My *ciwi ciwi*, my classmate from maba to the old semester, Melani, Vany, Shella, and Windah. Honestly, without you guys, my life in campus will not be fun and memorable. Thank you for every laughter, stories, and moment we have spent together for almsot four years.
9. My “Pejuang Project” who irreplaceable. I am very lucky to have my “Pejuang Project” being part of my life. I know from the same fate, we become one. Thank you for making my life more colorful. Love you my twin from different mother Yolanda Ayu Belia and my friend who the most calm Karina Wahyu Rahmawati. I will always pray for the best for you.
10. My friend KKN Bulu Bulu Manis Lor, Tazri Mintiea, Anggia Pangestika, M. Risky Dwi Sabana, Miftah Faridl, A. Zaenal Arifin, Mukjizat Brilianto,

Gandhy Laksana and other friends who can not mention one by one. I did not suppose my KKN life to be an unforgettable. Thanks to all of you who made my KKN life become the most precious moment in my life.

11. Thank you my julidtersque Elvera Yuniarsih, who always listen all my complaint about graduation and finally we did it.

12. All of my friends English Department Diponegoro University 2014 especially in major literature who have struggled together with me during college days and of course my class A mates

The writer realizes that this final project is still far from perfect. Therefore, she will be glad to receive any constructive criticism, suggestions and recommendation to make this paper better. Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the readers.

Semarang, 3th May 2018

Rizaniar Itaq Khalida

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ABSTRACT

In this project, the writer analyzes the class struggle against capitalism in Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*. *Fight Club* tells about the men workers who want to be free and more alive from their job because of the bad treatment that they have experienced in the working place. The men workers also become the capitalist slaves to gain a perfect life. The purposes of this writing are to describe the upper class treatment to the working class and the resistance of the working class male against the upper class that are represented by the main characters and to explain the impact of capitalism on social life in *Fight Club*. The writer uses the theory of Marxism by Karl Marx and Engels, theory of the class struggle by Walker and Gray, and the theory of Capitalism by Fulcer and Lukacs to support the analysis. Besides that, the writer uses sociological approach to help explain the issues of society in *Fight Club*. In obtaining analytical data, the writer uses method of library research and uses other sources, such as Internet to find information to support data analysis. The result of this analysis indicates that in *Fight Club*, there is a class conflict between the upper class and the working class. The upper class often abuses their authority and position to control the working class to gain their benefit. The bad treatment of the upper class makes the narrator and Tyler do a revolution by establishing a *Fight Club*. Then, to take control of the world and to make a better society, Tyler changes *Fight Club* into more dangerous revolution groups. On the other hand, capitalism also gives some impacts on the society, such as influencing the human social life and triggering the emergence of reification in social life. As the effect of capitalism, society tends to be more individual and a culture of mutual tolerance among human beings have been lost. The upper class also tends to treat people as commodities which make people lose their values as humans.

Keywords: Marxism, Capitalism, Social Clas

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In this era, the social life of society cannot be separated from the social aspects that exist in their lives. The most influential aspect of society is the economy because it is an important thing in the society and it cannot be separated from the life of society. Economic principles are used by society to fulfill their needs or increase their wealth. This phenomenon has strong links with capitalism, where people may use capabilities and potential available to increase their wealth without limitation. Capitalism has great influence for human's life because capitalism gives opportunity for people who has the capital to do economic activities in order to get profit. In the working life, capitalism leads to class division between the capitalist class and working class.

Classification of classes arises based on the economic condition and the power of each person. People with higher positions often abuse their authority and position to control the working class to gain their benefit. Class disagreement is inherent in capitalism because the upper class oppresses the lower class. They become dissatisfied with the status and revolt against the upper class to bring back equality between the workers and the owners of the company, so it makes the workers do a revolution to make a change.

Capitalism phenomenon above is also reflected in *Fight Club* published in 1996 by Chuck Palahniuk. This novel gets big popularity and controversy because in this novel Palahniuk reflected fact that American takes a consumerist culture

portrays the economic condition of America after post world war II, where America became the world's wealthiest and most powerful country. In 1999, *Fight Club* was adapted into a movie by David Fincher, who was starred by Brad Pitt and Edward Norton. Both the novel and the film are so successful in taking human emotions.

Fight Club tells about the unnamed narrator who is frustrated with his work and feels alienated in his working place, where nobody cares and respects him. One day he meets with Tyler Durden. Tyler is the only person who wants to help resolve his problem. Then, Tyler and the narrator decide to establish *Fight Club* to make a revolution for the working class who have the same fate with him. The purpose of *Fight Club* is to give working class men the feeling of freedom and more alive, which they can not feel at working place. They want a fight to reach their happiness, success, and they do not want to be treated like slaves. Then, Tyler changes *Fight Club* into Project Mayhem to destroy the capitalist society and to tears down the American social culture, but it is with the wrong way.

To support the analysis, the writer used a previous study in writing this paper. Omar Lizardo (2007) writes "*Fight Club*, or the Cultural Contradictions of Late Capitalism". In his journal he wants to highlight the reactionary aspects of *Fight Club* movie, which are seen as response to structural sources of feminization experienced by men as they are embedded in the consumerist machine of the service-oriented economy. Although using the same subject to analyze, but this paper will discuss a different topic from Omar Lizardo research. This paper will discuss the class struggle in opposing capitalist class that are represented through character in the *Fight Club*. Also, the writer will analyze the impact of capitalism on social life in *Fight Club*.

This novel will be analyzed from a perspective on the social strata, the upper class and working class, and the representations of capitalism affecting social life in the novel. Considering the background explained above, the writer is interested in researching the novel as the object of the final project entitled “The Class Struggle Against Capitalism In Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*”.

1.2 Research Problem

Related to the background of the study, the writer has identified some research problems below:

1. How does the upper class treat the working class in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*?
2. How is the resistance of the working class men against the upper class in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*?
3. How is the effect of capitalism on social life in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*?

1.3 Objectives of Study

Based on the research problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the upper class treatment to the working class in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*.
2. To describe the resistance of the working class male against the upper class that are represented by the main characters in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*.
3. To explain the effect of capitalism on social life in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Intrinsic Theories

2.1.1 Character

Character is the important part in the story because character is player or people who involved in the story. Character can be divided into two categories. They are protagonist and antagonist. Perrine states that the protagonist is a central character in the conflict who has sympathetic or an unsympathetic. Meanwhile, person who is against other characters, things, and convention of the society is the traits of antagonist (Perrine, 1988: 42). So, it can be concluded that the protagonist struggles to resist the action of the antagonist.

2.1.2 Conflict

Conflict is part of plot in the novel to make the story more interesting. There are two types of conflicts those are, internal conflict and external conflict. Meyer defines that internal conflict is a conflict faced by the protagonist caused by psychological problems to be solved within themselves and external conflict as the protagonist's physical struggles in opposition to another individual, nature, or society (1990: 46). External conflicts arise because of an enmity between characters and something around them, such as conflicts with other characters as well as with nature.

2.1.3 Setting

Setting is one of the important elements to create an atmosphere in the story more interesting. Setting depicts where, when, and in what circumstances action of the

story occurs, such as place, time, and social environment. In the story setting is classified into 3 types those are, settings of place, setting of time, setting of social environment. This paper only focusses on the analysis setting of place. According to Kennedy and Gioia, setting of place tells about the physical environment or geographic condition which became the scene of the events in the story (2007: 112). Examples of place settings can be a building, a road, a region, and natural conditions.

2.2 Extrinsic Theories

2.2.1 Marxism

Marxism is the theory first developed by Karl Marx as form of Marx's protest against capitalism system. Marxism is closely related to the class conflicts that exist in capitalist society. Marx sees there is a class gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat that creates a class conflict within society. Bourgeoisie is the class who has control over the means of production in the capitalist system. According to Marx and Eagles the bourgeoisie is a modern capitalist class, they are the owners of the means of production and the employer who gives the wages to the workers (1848: 15). In process production, the bourgeoisie always uses the power to oppress and exploit the man power to gain their benefit.

The condition of the proletariat is certainly different from the condition of the bourgeoisie. Proletariat is a class of modern wage-labourers that does not have its own means of production and they sell their labour power for life (Marx and Eagles, 1848: 15). The proletariat is the class that owns nothing but they have the human power in the process of production in order to earn their wages. This condition makes them become passive because they do not have the power to fight against all forms of domination and injustice of the bourgeoisie.

The exploitation and oppression of the proletariat make their life unfree because they have to work hard to earn their money, meanwhile the bourgeoisie keep controls the proletariat to work harder to make as much profit as possible. When the proletariat realizes that the bourgeoisie exploits them, they want to make a revolution to gain equality between social classes.

2.2.2 The Class Struggle

The class struggle arises because there is a class division in the society. Those class are the rulling class and the ruled class. These classes contradict each other and the conflicts between them occurs because there is class oppression of the proletariat. Walker and Gray states that the class struggle is an inevitable process of conflict that emerges the revolutionary of proletariat which is instilled with the developing class consciousness and ready to overthrow capitalism (2007: 57). It can conclude that the proletariat began to realize the oppression of the capitalists and to get justice and equality, they make a revolution to make changes.

The resistance of the working class has led to the emergence of class struggle. The working class is the only social force which has the power to oppose the rules of the capitalist class. They want to get the freedom of their lives. Then, the working class gathers the masses to fight against all forms of injustice and domination by the capitalists. Marx believed that the class consciousness is growing gradually and it will bring about revolutionary change which can eliminate the capitalist economic system (Walker and Grey, 2007: 251). It can be inferred, if the revolutionary movement of the working class can eliminates all capitalist economic systems in society, disputes between the working class and the capitalist class will be resolved.

2.2.3 Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system that seeks to gain as much profit as possible. According to Fulcher, capitalism is basically a money investment expected to generate profits that can be achieved with some considerable risk that will be gained by the trading business (2004: 2). In capitalism there is no limitation for individuals or groups to conduct production activities because every individual who has the capital free to do economic activities to gain as much profit. This has become the typical of capitalist society in which every economic activity they undertake is driven by the opportunity to gain profit from their investment.

Marx says that reification is a consequence of capitalist society, a process of turning people into commodities and this is something that Marxism wants to be destroyed. In Marxism, reification is form realization of social relations or people involved in it, where social relations are expressed as the relationship between traded objects. Reification is also related to the alienation of people from their work and their treatment as objects rather than as humans (Lukacs,1923: 84).

METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 Study Approach

Based on the background of the study, the writer uses sociological approach of literature. Sociological approach is used to reveal problems in the society through literary works (Wellek and Warren, 1942: 90). By the sociological approach of literature, literary works can be seen in relation to the reality and the extent to which literary works reflect reality in society. This sociological approach uses a theory of an expert of social philosophy, that is, Marxism to analyze the literary works. Sociological approach in this study focusses on the social aspect from society of the story in *Fight Club*. Therefore, in this paper, the writer will examine the social context base on marxism perspective in the novel *Fight Club* by using this approach.

3.2 Method of Collecting Data

In collecting some related data to the subject matter that is being analyzed, the writer uses library research. According to George, identifying and searching for sources that provide factual information or personal opinion / expert on research questions has become a characteristic of library research methods (2008: 6). The data that have been collected with this method is from all of the possible sources. The sources are taken from the library and the internet in the forms of books or journals. These data consist of the information, opinions and theories that support this paper.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

4.1 Intrinsic Analysis

4.1.1 Character

From many characters in the novel, there will be two characters which are going to be analyzed in this paper. They are the narrator and Tyler Durden. Both of them are the main characters in the novel.

4.1.1.1 The Narrator

The first character to be discussed is the unnamed narrator. The narrator is the protagonist character of the novel. The narrator works as a recall specialist for the automobile industry and he does not like the job. “ In the real world, I’m a recall campaign coordinator in a shirt and tie” (Palahniuk, 1996: 32). Because of the unhappiness in his life, the narrator is suffering from insomnia. He cannot sleep and he feels alienated from the world at large. This makes the narrator become so desperate to relate to others. Then, he decides to go to support cancer groups. “The doctor tells him that if I want to see real pain, I should attend these support group meetings” (Palahniuk, 1999: 6). The narrator tries to reconcile himself with cancer groups by faking the possession of his disease so that he will have people to talk to him.

“ We have worked so hard all the time. This is the only place I ever relax and give up. This is my vacation. . . This is how it is with insomnia. The insomnia distance of everything, you can’t touch anything and nothing can touch you” (Palahniuk, 1999: 5).

The quotation above expresses the feelings experienced by the narrator. The narrator seems to be a lonely person, no one cares him. He is very tired of his work.

Because of the suffering he experienced, the narrator becomes someone who has no spirit, no life, no goals as he reveals in the support cancer groups.

4.2.2 Tyler Durden

Tyler Durden is the important character in the novel because he has great influence on the storyline. Tyler becomes a narrator's best friends since his encounter with the narrator on a business trip. The narrator describes Tyler as a perfect person. He has an apartment with complete furniture and he has a job with a good salary to keep his life. The narrator also regards Tyler as the savior of his life from a world that makes him powerless like when the narrator's condominium is exploded as quoted "Oh , Tyler , please rescue me. Deliver me Tyler, from being perfect and complete" (Palahniuk, 1996: 27)

Tyler is a confident, charismatic, courageous, and outspoken man. The narrator really craves Tyler figure on him. On the other hand, Tyler changes becomes so aggressive and rude. Tyler turns to be stronger in his leadership in the *Fight Club*, he changes *Fight Club* into Project Mayhem without Narrator's authorization. In Project Mayhem, every member must follow his command for a more dangerous mission in which they will gain more violence. "He does not care if other people get hurt or not. His main purpose is to teach the men to be more powerful in taking control of the world" (Palahniuk: 1996: 87). The most prominent characterization of the Tyler is that he is known as a tough man in the fight against something he claims to be untrue.

4.1.2 Conflict

4.1.2.1 The Conflict Between the Narrator and Modern Society

The conflict between the narrator and modern society occurs because the place where he lives today does not have sense of humanity towards the others. The modern society is expected everyone to follow the rules of society by being a hard worker. Besides that, individual is deeply embedded in modern society which makes the narrator uncomfortable with his life. The narrator feels alienated from his working place and his society because there is nobody cares about him as seen “This is when i'd cry, your life comes down nothing not even nothing, oblivion” (Palahniuk, 1996: 8).

The narrator wants to feel free of the rules that make him miserable. He wants to break away from the modern society until he meets Tyler Durden who is also the opposite of the modern society. Then, they establish *Fight Club* to destroy modern society. “There is no better life than in the *Fight Club*, where I can finds a better life there” (Palahniuk, 1996: 35). *Fight Club* makes the narrator more alive and he feels like he is part of the community. People more respect to others and it makes the narrator comfortable and *Fight Club* has become the most important thing in his life.

4.1.2.2 The Conflict Between the Narrator and the Narrator's Boss

In his working place the narrator has a problem with his boss. The narrator's behavior at work deteriorates and his boss reprimands him. He come to the office with bruises on his face and wear blood-stained clothes. His boss ask the narrator to run the demo to Microsoft, but his boss does not want the narrator run the demo with a black eye and half his face swollen from the stiches inside his cheek. “My

demo to Microsoft, I feel blood flowing on my face and have to start swallowing it” (Palahniuk, 1996: 32). Meanwhile, the narrator makes his appearance getting worse. He hit his own face until his lips split and he was covered in blood. “More my lips are sticky with blood as I try to lick the blood off” (Palahniuk, 1996: 32). Then, his boss decide to deliver a presentation to Microsoft personally because the narrator's appearance is bad enough. The narrator has no interest in the presentation, so he just sits in dark side of the room and running the laptop projector. In this case, it can be seen that the narrator start showing his courage to oppose his boss.

The narrator’s boss finds a copy of *Fight Club's* rules the narrator left in the copy machine. ““My boss brings a sheet of paper to my desk and asks if I looking for something. This paper left in the copy machine.” He says, and begins to read”” (Palahniuk, 1996: 66). His boss reads the first two rules out loud and giggles. The narrator is enraged to hear Tyler's words come out of my boss because the first rules of *Fight Club* is you do not talk about *Fight Club*. Then, the narrator says to his boss that he knows the secrets of his company's dirty business. The narrator uses this situation to threaten his boss.

4.1.3 Setting of Place

There are various places that are mentioned in the novel. The first is in the basement of a bar where for the first time *Fight Club* are established by Tyler and the narrator, “*Fight Club* is in the basement of a bar, now, after the the bar close on the Saturday night, and every week there will be a lot of guys ” (Palahniuk, 1996:34). In the basement Tyler and the narrator try to invite men to fight. The members of *Fight Club* gather in the parking lot bar, then Tyler reads the rules that

the members must obey it. The members who have joined the *Fight Club* are people who afraid to fight something else in their lives.

In the end of the story, the narrator has blown up his office with the gasoline and he kills his boss. “ My office are blown out. I know my boss is dead. The tree ways to make napalms. I knew Tyler was going to kill my boss” (Palahniuk, 1996: 137). The narrator uses Tyler's guise as the boss killer because the narrator knows that Tyler does not like his boss. The narrator very regrets has killed his boss. By killing his boss, Tyler makes the narrator lose his job.

The next setting is Paper Street House. Paper Street House is Tyler Durden's house, he calls his house “The Paper Street Soap Company” because at his house Tyler run all activities of soap business production. “Tyler calls himself The Paper Sreet Company. People are saying it’s best soap ever” (Palahniuk, 1996:59). The narrator also moves into Tyler’s house after his condo is destroyed by an explosion. Paper Street House becomes training ground for Project Mayhem members and the headquarters members of Project Mayhem to plan some mission to break up civilization.

4.2 Extrinsic Analysis

4.2.1 The Upper Class Treatment To The Working Class in *Fight Club*

In the *Fight Club*, there is a class distinction between upper class and working class. Every class has a conflict between each other. The conflict occurs because of the bad treatment by the upper class who makes the working class feel uncomfortable. The upper class usually tends to oppress the working class because they want to show their potition and status in society or work place.

4.2.1.1 The Bad Treatment of The Upper Class to The Working Class

The bad treatment usually occurs because there is a dominating class between upper class and class who has less power like working class. In this novel, the bad treatment is also experienced by the narrator who works as recall campaign. He feels unhappy with his work because he always gets bad treatment from his boss. His boss always asks him to write a letter for recalling in campaign every night until he develops insomnia, as the following quotation “But this week, we’re doing a recall campaign. And this week insomnia is back. Insomnia, and now the whole world figures to stop by and take a dump on my grave” (Palahniuk, 1996: 66).

A strong position in the economic sector makes the upper class freely legitimize his positions in working life. The narrator wants to be free from his job because his work is so boring. He is basically employed to apply his company's profits to the potential costs of human life, this situation is utilized by the upper class to keep control their money. They do not care with what risks their employees will receive because the most important thing is how the company gain their profits.

The upper class uses the working class to work harder in order to gain more money. They convince the working class to keep working for a certain wage to buy something they need. For the working class, something that they buy by using their money, they regard it as a very valuable items.

Another depiction of a class distinctions that leads to the inappropriate treatment of the upper class against the working class is shown when the narrator and Tyler work as waiter at the dinner party in a hotel. Many rich people come to the dinner banquet with an elegant style. In this situation, the narrator wants to see how the lifestyle of rich people when they come for dinner banquet. The narrator

describes the rich people dinner party as “titans and their gigantic wives” and the working class as a cockroach as quoted below:

“my view is about a cockroach above the green linoleum, and from here at cockroach level the green corridor stretches toward the vanishing point, past-half open doors where the titans and their gigantic wives drink barrels of champagne and bellow at each other wearing diamonds bigger than I feel” (Palahniuk, 1996: 53).

Tyler and the narrator uses this opportunity to defoul food before they serve it to their rich customers. Before Tyler serves the food to the guest in that dinner, he contaminates the food by urinating soup bowls and put in other things. This is a form of middle class uprising against the upper classes that treats the working class like a trash with their money.

The upper class can treat the waitres as they please because they have spent their money to pay the services they will receive. “The rich people just want to see the waiters run around for their money. Because they have paid the waiters service, the rich people can treat them as a dirt” (Palahniuk, 1996: 54). The workers must do the job so boringly meanwhile the upper class do not care about it. The upper class want to see the workers running for their money, because they want to show their wealth and status.

4.2.2 The Resistance of Working Class Men Against the Upper Class in *Fight Club*

In a working place, the oppression always occurs toward the working class. They must work hard all day to gain their money with all the rules which make them confined. The working class who dislike being oppressed, usually they will resist against the oppression from the upper class. As a working class, Tyler Durden tries to make a revolution to go against the upper class.

Tyler is a figure who inspires male workers to oppose the bad treatment by the upper classes. Tyler is anti-society and he lives without rules. So, he is free to do anything in his life without fear of anyone. Tyler also opposes the existing norms of society which he thinks makes someone unfree to do anything in their life because there are many restraints.

Fight Club is first formed when Tyler and narrator fight in the basement of a bar. Tyler wants to help the narrator to forget his all problems which he faces in his life after the narrator fights with him. Tyler also wants to make the narrator become a stronger and free person. Then, Tyler and narrator decide to establish *Fight Club* and try to invite all men workers to join in *Fight Club*. *Fight Club* is aimed to help all men workers to gain their freedom and break the rules which make them confined, as quoted "Nothing can piss you off. Your word is law, and if other people break that law or question you, even that doesn't piss you off" (Palahniuk, 1996: 33). *Fight Club* is a form of Tyler's revolution to destroy the existing authority in society and social norms convention.

All men workers who want to join *Fight Club* have to forget their identity and forget about the things that are not important to them. Through this fight, all men workers will be able to discover who they are and what ability they can do, although they must gain physical violence. In *Fight Club*, Tyler wants to help each man to eliminate his fear in fight against injustice in his life and empowers the men to take action and rebel against the upper class oppression.

Someday, Tyler and the narrator try to blackmail their bosses as a form of working class demonstration. When Tyler meets the President of Projectionist, Tyler looks so confident and courageous in doing something that other people are

never brave to do. He threatens his bosses to keep paying his salary every month to keep quiet the fact after he does sabotage and vandalism on the film project by tucking hundreds of porn videos over years. “Oh, that is not a problem, as long as the company kept sending a paycheck him, I will keep this mouth shut (Palahniuk, 1996: 79).

The narrator also does the same, he tries to go against the Manager of Pressman Hotel by threatening the Manager to send him check and tips every week or he will tell the public about the fact that he had contaminated the food served at the banquet party. ”I say how I urinate into the soup, fart in the creme brules, sneeze on braised endive” (Palahniuk, 1996: 80). The narrator and Tyler have nothing to lose after stating the facts to their bosses. They just want to show that they have power to oppose the upper class and their reluctance to be controlled by social construction.

After *Fight Club* grows bigger, Tyler tries to make a revolution by changing *Fight Club* into a revolutionary group called Project Mayhem. Project Mayhem aims to the destruction of the capitalist civilization in order to create a better society, where people are free and satisfied with themselves. “Project mayhem will force humanity to go dormant or into remission long enough for the Earth to recover” (Palahniuk, 1996: 86).

Project Mayhem is like *Fight Club*, but the difference is that Project Mayhem is more dangerous and has bigger social plans. *Fight club* gives an opportunity for men to better know themselves and find out something inside them, but Project Mayhem sends each member on some dangerous missions to spread worldwide justice but in a slightly anarchic way. On the other side, Project Mayhem is misused

by Tyler to fulfill his authority where all of the members must obey his command as quoted below:

“Tyler read the proposals and gave the committee its homework. By this time next week, each guy on the Assault Committee has to pick a fight where he won’t come out a hero. And not in a fight club. This is harder than it sounds. A man on the street will do anything not to fight” (Palahniuk, 1996: 85).

In this case, Tyler is chosen as the leader to run all missions in the Project Mayhem. Tyler asks the members of Project Mayhem to do some mission by creating chaos, acting anarchic, and disseminating untrue information to the society. ““ You justify anarchy,” Tyler says. “ You figure it out”” (Palahniuk, 1996: 86). To be able to control the world each man must have great strength in fighting because they will receive pain and violence within them after they fight. In this regard, it is not true because of Tyler’s idea to take control of the world is too anarchic and rough, so that it can endanger the lives of the members. Over time Project Mayhem grows more and more violent, even killing people in the name of ending civilization. “Project Mayhem will break up civilization so we can make something better out of the world” (Palahniuk, 1996: 86). Tyler wants to apply the doctrine of self-destruction to the capitalist world order by making a revolution because Tyler believes that the Mayhem Project will save the world and make a better world.

4.2.3 The Effect of Capitalism In *Fight Club*

4.2.3.1 Capitalism Attacks on Social Life

Capitalism is a prominent theme in *Fight Club*. In *Fight Club*, capitalism gives some impacts to human social life in society as experienced by the narrator. Capitalism gives some impacts on his life. As the impact of capitalism, the narrator feels alienated from his society where he lives and works. The highly individualized conditions of society make the narrator's life uncomfortable and

aimless. The narrator's life, as working class, is full of misery. He lives an unpleasant life which makes him very miserable until he goes to support cancer to find a new life.

Crying without hope with Big Bob has become the narrator favorite part because they have worked so hard all the time. In that place, he feels very relaxed and there is no burden in his life. People in the support group will feel strange if he does not say anything there (Palahniuk, 1996: 9).

It can be concluded from the quotation above that in support groups, the narrator is treated much better than in his working place. The effect of capitalism in social life is to make people more individual; they do not care about relationships with other people. They are more concerned with themselves because in capitalist society, it is hard to trust other people. Capitalism also tries to exploit the power, mind, and life of the working class to gain their profit.

Another impact of capitalism on the narrator's life is that he becomes a consumer culture. The narrator begins as a member of the capitalist society, who are proud his appearance and possessions. It can be seen when the apartment of the narrator explodes. All his possessions are gone. He lost all of the clever furniture which he has spent so much time to collect it.

“Something which was a bomb, a big bomb, had blasted my clever. Njurunda coffe tables in the shape of a lime green yin and an orange yang that fit together to make a circle. Well they were splinters now. My Haparanda sofa group with the orange slip covers, design by Erika Pekkari, it was trash now” (Palahniuk, 1996:25).

The narrator believes that his apartment is his life. He loves every furniture in his apartment, as the following quotation “I loved that condo. I loved every stick of furniture. that was my whole life.” (Palahniuk, 1996: 77).

To change his life, the narrator channel his frustration by buying many items such as IKEA furniture. For every item he has bought, he will appreciate it as a

means to satisfy his empty life. That is why the narrator regrets the moment he must lose his all IKEA furniture. The aim of the workers to buy IKEA furniture is to fulfill their desires to have a perfect life. “All young people try to impress the world and buy too many thing. People with financial difficulties do this stuff. They want out from under” (Palahniuk, 1996: 30). They believe that branded goods signify a good life and people buy those things to feel good about themselves. In this case, capitalist class tries to influence the working class to live as slaves to IKEA and convince them to work harder as experienced by the narrator “And I wasn’t the only slave to my nesting instinct” (Palahniuk, 1996:25).

4.2.3.2 The Emergence of Reification In *Fight Club*

A key symptom of upper class oppression is the reification of the middle class (working class). In *Fight club*, reification is described in several times. In the narrator’s workplace, the company requires him to use a formula to determine whether to initiate a recall on defective products, as quoted belows:

You take the population of vehicles in the field (A) and multiply it by the probable rate of failure (B), then multiply the result by the average cost of an out-of-court settlement (C). A times B times C equals X. This is what it will cost if we don’t initiate a recall. If X is greater than the cost of a recall, we recall the cars and no gets hurt. If X is less than the cost of a recall, then we don’t recall.” (Palahniuk, 1996: 17-18).

It can be seen from the quote above that the decisions of the formula used is based on whether the cost incurred for the consumer is greater than the cost of the recall, but for upper class corporation accepting human morbidity and mortality is easier than taking their companies financial losses. People are reduced to numbers and deprived of their individual values as human beings. It serves as a critique of the greed of upper class corporation that sacrifice their customers to gain profit.

Another example of reification in *Fight Club* is how people are portrayed as becoming objects after their deaths. The mechanic describes how people become the ashes and placed it in a jar after cremation. ““If you are going to die in the first minute you are person and the second time you will become an object” the mechanic says”” (Palahniuk, 1996: 107). It can be inferred that after people death they will lose their identification as a valued human being and becoming a commodities. This shows that there is a tendency by the upper class for reification of the lower class.

The most prominent example of reification in *Fight Club* is the product that is produced by the Paper Street Soap Company. Tyler said that to make soap, he needs to render some fat as the ingredients. Tyler and the narrator use Marla’s mother into a consumable product by boiling her liposuctioned fat to make soap. “Liposuctioned fat is the richest and the fattest thighs in the world” (Palahniuk, 1996: 110). It can be seen that Paper Street Soap Company uses human bodies to be traded. They have changed human values to become an object that has a sale value. Usually, the upper class performs a reification to the lower class and they tend to treat people as commodities during their revolutionary activities. If the narrator’s company reduce people’s mortality and morbidity to numbers to gain profit, the Paper Street Soap Company also does the same thing by using human bodies as the main ingredient in its product, which is, then, sold for a profit as much possible.

Project Mayhem also manifests a reification of its members through a different way than the paper street soap company. Tyler makes the members of Project Mayhem become “Space Monkey” as a slave for his dictatorship. ”The rule of Project Mayhem is you have to trust Tyler” (Palahniuk, 1996: 94). The narrator

describes Project Mayhem members as “trained monkeys” whose only purpose is to do some jobs without knowing the reason as seen “You just do your little job. You don't really understand any of it” (Palahniuk: 1996: 143). In real, Space Monkey only become identified as unique individuals after their deaths which demonstrated by Big Bob who have death in doing a mission. His real name is only revealed after his death when *Fight Club* members memorize and praised his name. The only way for *Fight Club* and Project Mayhem members to possess a unique identity is through death. This serves as a critique of Marxist movements that adopt capitalist practices that they want to destroy. The individual becomes commodities for their leaders to move and destroy as they command.

CONCLUSION

Fight Club tells about the unnamed narrator who is frustrated with his work and feels alienated in his working place until he meets Tyler Durden as savior in his life. Tyler is the narrator's creation of his miserable life. Capitalism becomes a prominent themes in *Fight Club* which make story more interesting. In *Fight Club*, capitalism leads to class division between the capitalist class and working class. This class distinction that triggers class conflict. The upper class often abuses their authority and position to control the working class to gain their benefit.

Bad treatment of the upper class makes the narrator and Tyler do a revolution by establishing a *Fight Club*. They want to help all men workers to gain their freedom and break the rules who limit themselves. Tyler changes *Fight Club* into Project Mayhem, in order that members of *Fight Club* to take control of the world. Project Mayhem aims to the destruction of the capitalist civilization in order to create a better society. This is a form of working class resistance to eliminate the inequities that exist in society by doing violence to get the same position.

Capitalism also gives some impacts in the society, such as influencing the human social life and triggering the emergence of reification in social life. As the effect of capitalism, society tends to be more individual and a culture of mutual tolerance among human beings has been lost. From this condition, people who less power like working class feels increasingly oppressed by the upper class. The upper class also tends to treat people as commodities which make people lose their values as humans.

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