

J. Monica Therese Research Scholar Research Department of English St. Joseph's College
(Autonomous) Trichy.

Dr. M. Amutha Assistant Professor Research Department of English St. Joseph's College
(Autonomous) Trichy.

Abstract

Chuck Palahniuk is an American writer, novelist, essayist and journalist. He is mainly known for his transgression style. His writings are based on post modernistic ideas and he transformed the concepts or ideas from the genre of horror to transgression for his lovable audience. He applies his postmodern ideas through the parodic series of especially transgression genre in *Fight Club*, *Fight Club 2*, *Invisible Monsters*, *Choke* and *Lullaby*.

Keywords: Parody, Transgression, Simulacra, Postmodernism.

Chuck Palahniuk is an American writer, novelist, essayist who categorises his work as transgression fiction. He is the author of many award winning novels such as *Fight Club*, *Invisible Monsters*, *Choke*, *Survivor*, *Rent* etc. He recognised that his writing is one of the finest forms of emotion. His methodology of writing is terror on top and the horror below it. He wants to terrify reader, if he cannot, at least he tries to horrify readers through his works. His subjects are media, capitalism, crime, endless parade of body experience and porn. His methods are proto Christian morality, cliché and caricature. He is giving the horror genre to a modern contemporary transgressive fiction to the reader which is an innovative idea of writing the subject matter in this current millennium.

Fight Club is a best example for above ideas. It could be seen as a transgressive horror novel and science fiction. *Fight club* also considered as a psychological thriller with romance and attributes of realism.

"I am totally Joe's Gallbladder" (58).

"I am Joe's reading Bible act

I am Joe's Grinding Teeth

I am Joe's Inflamed Flaring Nostrils" (59).

"I am Joe's White Knuckles.

I am Joe's Enraged, Inflamed Sense of Rejection" (60).

Palahniuk often uses this name Joe and the name usually identified as horror. He uses this name for a person who feels uncomfortable in his work as a product specialist in automobile company. Joe as someone unable to form a strong relationship as well he finds no place in society through consumer capitalism. A person who is dissatisfied with his life and he is searching for a better life. His alter ego is Tyler Durden. They were never seemed at the same time. While narrator is sleeping, Tyler is active. Marla Singer is an important character who ties up the two different personalities together.

In *Fight Club II*, Palahniuk named the narrator of *Fight Club* as Sebastian who married Marla and they had a son. In *Fight club* there is a character called Big Bob who mortified himself for project Mayhem.

"It was a cordless electric drill that the police thought was a gun when they blew Big Bob away.

There was nothing to tie Big Bob to project Mayhem or *Fight Club* or the soap" (177).

Big Bob is like a monster with a gigantic physicality and the members chant him as Robert Paulson. He died as a martyr for to Tyler's project Mayhem. Tyler reveals that Bob's half of the skull was missing and he resurrected from his death. In *Fight Club II*, the members of *Fight Club* announced his resurrection as a miracle. These characters are continuously parodied by Palahniuk. He tries to mass up the characters from *Fight Club* to *Fight club II*.

Palahniuk describes *fight Club* as "Fuck Club", "Fight-like-A-Girl Club" and "Bite Club" (212). He mocks the existence of *fight Club* through these names. There are several places in *Fight*

Club which explained the concept of postmodern parody. Parody means imitation or making fun of another's work, style, subject or anything and it can be ironic or satiric imitation of previous work. Parody also tinged with sarcasm, irony and filled with the dark side of cultural criticism. Parody is a style of writing which is usually defined a literary form of ironic rewriting or genre or text that satirizes but which has been refined in debates on postmodernism. According to Fredric Jameson, parody is the basis for his definition of pastiche; which he argues the result of postmodernism's inability to create anything new and which results in the creation of blank Parody, which both foregrounds a literary work's textual nature and imitate for the sake of imitation.

According to Linda Hutcheon, parody is the "repetition with critical distance and allowing for ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity" (*second version*). He has argued that postmodern writers' used parody as a different function in which it is used to defamiliarize textual conventions not with the goal of revealing the contractedness of fictional or poetic texts, but to problematize the cultural values and ideologies implicit within particular forms and genres.

People are begun to do some small experiments with new identities and new social hierarchies. He parodied the Christian's religious belief of resurrection.

"Everything in heaven is white on white Faker,
Everything in heaven is quite, rubber-soled shoes.
I can sleep in heaven.

The angels here are the old testament kind legions and lieutenants, a heavenly host who works in shifts, days, swing, I've met God across his long walnut desk with his diplomas hanging on the wall behind him" (207).

This is the ending scene of *Fight Club*. The narrator taking notes of God's word on the pad and he argues with God. He said that the angels of Old Testament brings food on a tray with a cup of meals. The people of heaven write to him that he is their hero. Palahniuk spoofs the conventions of the *Holy Bible* through his writing.

Palahniuk's another interesting novel is *Invisible Monsters*, in which he chooses some literary and cultural topics to parody them and to build up the hyper-parody which supports his postmodern literary views. The opening scene of the story is "Brandy Alexander who's laid out, shot gunned, at the bottom of the staircase, bleeding to death" (12). The scene soon appears with the mixture of both detective and thriller genre. The narrator starts to narrate the story. Then the readers find out that the narrator also been shot by someone in her face. Victims end up being tricksters and the killers become innocent. It shows that the life is a game and you can follow any rules (immoral activities) in order to win. There are imitated appearances without any reality disguised appearances.

The large part of the novel is parody on *The Road* which is an American post-apocalyptic survival movie directed by John Hilwar and it is based on the novel by Cormac Mccarthy (2006). There are two main characters in this movie Viggo Mortensen as a father and his son. They struggle to survive after a global disaster which caused a big loss. They are roaming here and there and try to escape from cannibals as well as try from their emotional previous life. The movie also parodied by Palahniuk in *Invisible Monsters*. Along the road trip, the narrator travels with Brandy and her lover Manus. But their plans are criminal based. They planned to steal drugs and there they steel expensive make-up kits.

Palahniuk's narrative strategy also parodied with the narrator's quest of escaping from the real world beauty and move towards an unknown area where she has to live in the world of simulacra with her new identity as a monster. The second half of her face has been completely spoiled by gun shoot. So she cannot talk and as a result she has to cover her whole face with veil. Here the author parodied how the woman keeping mum in patriarchy, but the narrator recognised herself as an invisible monster.

The narrator's invisibility also associated with the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison published in 1952. This book explores the issue of intellectual and social individuality, and personal identity of African-Americans. This novel won National Book Award for Fiction (U.S) in 1953. This book talks about the invisibility or monstrous condition. The protagonists of both novels have been escape from the staring eyes of others. "They say what people notice first about you is your eyes" (172).

“A good veil is the equivalent of mirrored sunglasses, but for your whole head.

“...a good veil is your tinted limousine window. The unlisted number for your face. Behind a good veil, you could be anyone. A movie star. A saint” (108).

For this reason they cannot identify their own relations.

Lullaby is one of the important novels of Palahniuk. This novel is about a short poem which causes death to those who listen to the poem. It covers four main characters. Carl Streator, Helen Hoover Boyle, Oyster and Mona.

Carl Streator is a reporter who investigates about sudden crib death (infant death). Helen job is to sell haunted house. Their past lives are very cruel. Carl Streator accidentally killed his own wife and child as well Helen also killed her own child without knowledge. Helen's loyal secretary is Mona and her boyfriend is Oyster who is an environmentalist.

The culling song is a reason for all these sudden infant death. All these infants are unknowingly culled by someone. There is a famous series which is also based on the same theme of people died after hearing or listening or watching something. The same idea is already followed by Hideo Nakata in his Japanese movie *Ring* in 1998. In this movie, there are series of deaths especially teenagers killed by a mysterious videotape. A woman and her husband investigate these deaths. At last, the investigation takes a big twist where their own son is a killer and he becomes a victim of this case. This movie is based on the novel *1991* by Koji Suzuki.

This novel is also based on the American pre-postmodern movie *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. In this movie, the audience were killed because of laughing. This idea carries an indirect charge of satire in this media-based society but Palahniuk was not afraid to explore this idea.

Choke is a novel written by the same author Palahniuk. This story is about the sex addicted Victor Mancini who is struggled to pay for his mother's treatment in a hospital. So he goes to various restaurants and begins to choke on his food items. The person who saves him from that critical condition will be his life time well-wisher. He earns some money from this idea and he spends it for his mother's treatment. He also goes to sex addiction clinic. There he had sex with fellow addicts. He collects some money from them. He leads his whole life by doing these jobs.

Victor talks about John Keats' famous line “A thing of beauty is a Joy forever” (from *Poems of Sentiments: IV*). It means a beautiful or natural or artificial object, makes a person happier for a long time even after the beauty fades and put into different situations. But Victor parodied the lines of John Keats

“The old rule about how a thing of beauty is a joy forever, in my experience, even the most beauteous thing is only a joy for about three hours” (16).

After three hours of sex, they start to narrate their childhood traumas. Palahniuk talks about the real pains in his life through these sex addictions and sexoholics.

“The story is even Bill Wilson a founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, couldn't overcome the sex monkey on his back and spent his sober life cheating on his wife and filled with guilt” (17).

Bill Wilson is a founder of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This method gives treatment to the addicted peoples not only alcohol, also for all general addictions. Before establishing this concept, he has often admitted in hospital for the treatment of alcohol addiction. Dr Silkworth shared his belief (Alcoholism is an allergy that created the desires for alcohol). After few years he established AA with Bill Wilson. He coined 13 steps in this method and as an elder member of AA who took advantage of using vulnerable members for sex. Although he got married, he involved many affairs with AA members. He is unable to control his sexual thoughts. His sexual desire raged him out of control. He gets irritated by this behaviour and he completely lost his good values and morals.

Bill Wilson's life is compared with sex addicts in *Choke* by Palahniuk. He explains that the sex as a pain killer and the people really not addicted to the sex, but addicted to the endorphin. He also talks about the different steps involved in sexual behaviour. “This is the twelve step world of sexual addiction-compulsive sexual behaviour” (14). Victor is a full blown sex addict. And he could not replace it by anything. Palahniuk parodies the idea of sexual behaviour and addictions from Alcohol Anonymous which is also a 12 steps programme in order to know the seriousness of all

addiction. The whole world revolves around some kind of addictions. Sometimes it can be replaceable. Some of them replace their addiction with religious (fanaticism) thoughts.

There are some examples extracted from Chuck Palahniuk novels, *Fight Club*, *Choke*, *Invisible Monsters* and *Lullaby*. It will help the reader to understand the post modern concept of parody thoroughly.

References

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. US: Random House, 1952.

Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. US: Duke University Press, 1991.

Keats, John. *Poems of Sentiments: IV*. London, 1820.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. US: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Palahniuk, Chuck. *Lullaby*. Doubleday, 2002.

---. *Choke*. Doubleday, 2001.

---. *Fight Club II*. US: Dark Horse Comics, 2015.

---. *Fight Club*. US: W.W Norton Company, 1996.

---. *Invisible Monsters*. US: W.W Norton, 1999.

Suzuki, Koji. *Ring*. Kadokawa Shoten Vertical Inc, 1991.

Wallace, Foster David. *Infinite Jest*. Little Brown and Company, 1996.

Wilson, Bill. *Alcoholics Anonymous*. US: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1939.