CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSION IN *THE LAST SAMURAI* MOVIE DIRECTED BY EDWARD ZWICK: 
A MARXIST APPROACH

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by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

*The Last Samurai* is the film directed by Edward Zwick, the film was published in December 5, 2003. It has 2 hours 34 minutes of the duration. The genre is action, adventure, and drama. This film was produced in United State with filming location in Japan, Los Angeles, California, New Zealand, and was presented by Warner Bros Pictures. Starting by Tom Cruise (Nathan Algren), Ken Watanabe (Katsumoto), Tony Goldwyn (Colonel Bagley), Masato Harada (Omura) Shichinosuke Nakamura (Emperor Meiji) Koyuki (taka) Togo Igawa (General Hasegawa).

*The Last Samurai* movie is very popular. Great color pictures and a photo shot from the movie are wonderful. Once upon a time, the emperor Meiji wishes Japan to become a modern country which has weapon appliance and complete clothes like American states. Mr. Omura as an advisor of the kingdom influences Emperor Meiji to remove samurai from the country. The samurai feel oppressed. Emperor Meiji ignores samurai culture and wants to remove them from country. The Government prohibits people to wear samurai dress and bring sword in public place. These situations make samurai angry. Therefore the samurai fight against government.

*The Last Samurai* movie tells about Captain Nathan Algren who was contracted by Omura to train imperial army in Japan. Emperor Meiji wished Japan to become a modern country like America having weapon appliance and
complete cloth. Captain Nathan Algren went to Japan after contract agreement
with Omura. He trained imperial army to fight against samurais. One day he
got command from Omura to stop samurais at the railroad but, the armies
were not ready yet for war. And then, Captain Nathan Algren went to railroad
to stop samurais. In the battle field he was captured by Katsumoto. He became
a hostage in a samurais village. Nathan Algren could escape from there, he
was confused because he did not know day, date and years. Everyday he learnt
about samurai culture which was different from his culture.

The dominant part in this movie is the characteristic of players; many
players in this movie have good character. Captain Nathan Algren as the main
character has emotional soul and never surrenders to fight again enemy.
Katsumoto is the leader of samurai, he makes sacrifice to serve the king.
Colonel Bagley as a general of war is an ambitious man; he defeats Cheyenne
tribe and all battle corps which involves farmers, children’s, and women.
Omura as a king adviser is a sly person; he influences the king to be removing
the samurai.

The theoretical approach to analyze this movie is Marxist. Karl Marx
and Friedrich Engels, leading ideologists of communism wrote, “History of all
hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” Conflict starts among
Samurai and governance of Meiji. There is an oppression to samurai that
makes complicated conflict. The emperor Meiji wants changes, he wishes his
country becomes modern country like West Country.
Considering all explanation above, Marxist Class Struggle theory is appropriate to analyze this movie because this film tells about the oppression between samurai and government of Meiji. Based on the story, the writer is interested in analyzing *The Last Samurai* use Marxist Approach, entitled:

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**B. Literary Review**

*The last Samurai* is a great movie and interesting to analyze. Other researcher has conducted the study of *The Last Samurai* is Mrs. Isnaini Kurniawati(2002) with title “*The Impact of Samurai’s society in Nathan Algren in edwad Zwick’s The Last Samurai: A Behaviorist Approach.*” She focused on the impact of samurai’s society on the personality of Nathan Algren.

Meanwhile in this research the writer takes the Marxist approach to reveal the class struggle against oppression in *The Last Samurai* movie.

**C. Problem Statement**

Based on title background of the study, the writer formulates the problem as follows; “How is the samurai struggle against oppression reflected in *The Last Samurai* movie?”

**D. Limitation of the Study**

The writer focuses on analyzing the samurai struggle against oppression. He focuses on Edward Zwick *The Last Samurai*, by employing Marxist Approach, particularly Class Struggle.
E. **Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the movie in term of its structural element
2. To analyze the movie based on Marxism approach.

F. **Benefit of the Study**

There are two benefits expected from this study they are as follows:

a. **Theoretical Benefit**

To give some contribution on understanding of the movie *The Last Samurai* especially by a Marxism approach.

b. **Practical Benefit**

To improve the researcher’s understanding and competence in applying a Marxism Approach in Literature.

G. **Research Method**

1. **Type of the Research**

The writer uses descriptive qualitative method besides books and other related references to support the subject matter

2. **Object of the Study**

The object of the study is *The Last Samurai* movie. This movie is directed by Edward Zwick and written by John Logan, published by Warner Bros Pictures.

3. **Type of the Data and the Data source**

The type of data in this study is dialogue and text that consist of word, phrase and sentences.
There are two types of data source in this study, primary data source and secondary data source.

a. Primary data source

The primary data source of the study is the film Edward Zwick *the Last Samurai*.

b. Secondary data source

The secondary data sources consist of the other data, which have relationship of the study, such as some biography of the author, and materials related to the study whether picking up from books or internet.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The method used in this study is library research by collecting and recording both of the primary and the secondary data. Some steps of collecting data applied in this study are as follows.

a. Observation

It is used to make the analysis by watching the movie several times to get understanding about this movie.

b. Library Research

There are some procedures in library research:

1) Watching the movie several times and determining the character that will be analyzed.

2) Reading some related books to find out the theory, data and information required.
3) Taking notes of important parts in both primary data and secondary data.

4) Classifying the data into categories.

5) Drawing conclusion to get the last result.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The writer uses two techniques in analyzing the data:

a. Analyzing the structural elements of the movie including the narrative elements and technical elements.

b. Analyzing the class struggle against oppression analyzing in this movie by using descriptive qualitative analysis.

H. Research Paper Organization

The writer makes an organization of this paper in order to make an easy understanding. There are six chapters in this research paper.

Chapter one is introduction including the background of the study, literary review, problem statement, limitation of the study, the objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter two is underlying theory. It deals with the notion of Marxism and theoretical application. Chapter three it deals with the social background of the nineteenth century. Chapter four is the analysis of the movie. It includes the structural element of movie. Chapter five is Marxism analysis that deals with the discussion. Chapter six contains conclusion and suggestion.