

The films of david fincher: fight club



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Fight Club was released in 1999 and it was directed by David Fincher. It starred Brad Pitt as Tyler Durden, Edward Norton as our narrator and Helena Bonham Carter as Marla Singer. The film was not very well received by critics when it first came out. In fact, it even failed to live up to its expectations in the box office. However, recent re-evaluations show a different case. Dennis Lim in his NY Times review has even gone on to call Fight Club “ the defining cult movie of our time”. This movie is directed primarily at male adults aged 18 above.

The film revolves mainly around three characters which are the narrator, Tyler and Marla. The narrator is an average man working as a recall coordinator for a major car company. He is tired of his monotonous cubicle corporate work and he seems to have no purpose in life. The narrator is also a victim of insomnia. His inability to sleep causes him to live life in a half-asleep state and subconsciously create an alter ego that is Tyler Durden.

Marla is a complex character. She is seen as a threat to the narrator throughout the film. Marla was faking illnesses just like the narrator which made him feel guilty of what he was doing. This guilt made him lose his sleep. Then again when the narrator forms a bond with Tyler, we see it weakening after Marla’s entry into Tyler’s life. Tyler only used Marla to satisfy his sexual desires. However, she plays a very important role in keeping in the narrator’s life by keeping him sane and in contact with reality.

Then there’s Tyler Durden. Tyler is the complete opposite of the narrator. He’s built like a “ man”, doesn’t care about the rules of society and what others think about him. He lives his life on his terms. He’s basically

everything the narrator wishes to be. As a result, throughout the film we see Tyler act much like a father figure and mentor to the narrator.

My theory is that men in current society are obsessed with material possessions. They have no individuality. They work their jobs only to make money so that they can buy things. Masculinity, in today's society, is a way of selling things. Masculine men are used in modelling and advertising as a way to trick people into buying them, thinking it will make them more manly. This creates a false image in their minds of what a real man is. Hence, the possession of certain products, such as a certain car, make them feel more manly. Masculinity has been reduced to owning material possessions. Material possessions can only bring temporary happiness.

First, the most evident way in which the film depicts there is a crisis of masculinity is in fight club itself. When meeting up with Tyler, after his home had been burned down, he tells the narrator to hit him as hard as he can. The narrator is hesitant but eventually musters up the courage to hit him. This moment sparks a passion for fighting in them and they regularly start fighting. They both create Fight Club as a solution to the crisis of masculinity. Although, more a cult than a club, Fight club represents a place where workers are free from the strings of society. They are able to come into contact with their inner core here. At fight club men are able to regain their loss in masculinity due to their jobs. “” You aren't alive anywhere like you're alive at fight club...Fight club isn't about winning or losing fights “. The narrator isn't remotely excited about anything else as he is about fight club. The narrator is zombie-like when he is working at his job, but at Fight Club he is truly awake and alive.

Secondly, we see the narrator going to various support groups to cope with his illness. He has insomnia and he is unable to sleep at nights. So, he fakes illnesses and goes to various support groups for diseases he doesn't have. At a testicular cancer group, he meets Bob. The narrator lets go and cries in Bob's arms. For the first time he is able sleep, so he continues to attend the meetings. The reason why he is able to sleep is because he is emotionally comforted and feels like he is a part of something.

The third example is the symbolization of testicles as manhood. In the beginning of the film, we see Bob as the narrator's partner in the testicular cancer group. Bob was a former body builder who took steroids to in an attempt become more manly. However, he developed testicular cancer instead and grew very large breasts, which the narrator refers to as " bitch tits", after removing his testicles. As breasts are generally associated with women, Robert Paulson's bitch tits represent the emasculation of men in society. The loss of his testicles, along with the formation of his breasts, make Bob make feel like he is no longer a man. Another reference to balls as manhood can be seen in the scene where the narrator is threatened to be castrated for attempting to shut down project mayhem. This shows that this is the worst possible means of punishment for a man, as it will strip him of his manhood.

In the beginning of the film, the narrator's insomnia is temporarily cured when he is able to cry and receive affection from Bob. The creation of his alter ego, Tyler Durden, was to satisfy the loneliness in his life. Tyler's presence in his life changed the way he presented himself. During his time in fight club, he regains the feeling of what it is to be alive as he feels like has a

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purpose and is a part of a something. At the end of the film, the narrator's acceptance of Marla in his life represents the acceptance of himself for who he is. Again, and again the narrator is trying desperately to bond with someone throughout the film. Finding a balance in life by establishing connection with someone is the message conveyed by this film.