

# The search for identity taken by the narrator in fight club



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Throughout the novel, *Fight Club*, by Chuck Palahniuk, the search for identity and meaning in life is explored through different aspects of the novel, specifically the characterization and development of the narrator. When the readers first meet the narrator, he has no sense of purpose in life and has essentially lost all sense of personal identity. He pretends to have illnesses in order to feel a connection to others. Throughout the novel, the narrator begins to develop who he is due to the struggles he endures, specifically with Tyler Durden. Tyler is subconsciously created by the narrator in order to help the narrator with his search for his identity. Tyler brings a new perspective to the narrator's life which helps him to discover what he really wants out of life. The negative consequences endured by the narrator due to Tyler's actions ruin his life but in a way allows the narrator to find a sense of appreciation for his traditionalist identity at the beginning of the novel as well as help him to discover how he wants to live his life.

In the beginning of the novel, Palahniuk shows the narrator's lack of personal identity through the narrator's actions and characterization. The narrator looks to different support groups for illnesses he does not have in order to experience emotion and a sense of identity in his life. When he goes to support groups, like Free and Clear, for blood parasites, it pushes him to cry because in that moment in time "[his] life comes down to nothing" (Palahniuk 17). He is able to make connections with different people in these groups which helps him to express emotions. For example, in one support group, the narrator meets Big Bob who "wraps his arms around [the narrator]" every week and lets him cry (Palahniuk 17). By showing this release of emotion by the narrator, Palahniuk shows that the narrator is not just a robot created by

society and that he wants to change his life in order to feel human and find some meaning in his life.

It's in one of these support groups where he meets Marla Singer who he ends up falling in love with. These different support groups allow the narrator to bond and connect to others over a common negative factor in their lives. The narrator connects with others under fake pretenses just to feel like he belongs to something. Also in the beginning of the novel, the readers continue to see how the narrator had no sense of identity when he refers to himself as different human organs. He states " I am Jane's Uterus" and " I am Joe Prostate" which tells the reader that he views himself as very ordinary (Palahniuk 58). He's identifying himself as parts of a larger whole which demonstrates his belief that he isn't in total control of his identity. The narrator has no desire to continue living the meaningless life he is, which is seen when he asks " if I could wake up in a different place, at a different time, could I wake up as a different person" (Palahniuk 33)? By going to different support groups and expressing his lack of identity the narrator begins his search for his individuality and purpose of life.

The narrator subconsciously creates another persona named Tyler, who helps the narrator discover who he is and what he wants out of life. The introduction of Tyler to the narrator helps to progress his search for individuality. This progression come from the destruction of the narrator's life. One of the first actions taken by Tyler concerning the narrator involves Tyler blowing up the narrator's apartment. When reflecting on the items he lost the narrator states " it took my whole life to buy [that] stuff" (Palahniuk 44). The destruction of the narrators materialistic items begins to show the <https://assignbuster.com/the-search-for-identity-taken-by-the-narrator-in-fight-club/>

narrator that he is not defined by what he owns and what he is able to buy. Tyler introduces to the narrator the idea of self-destruction in order to discover who you really are to be able to rebuild yourself. " Maybe self-improvement isn't the answer" the narrator realized " maybe self-destruction is the answer" (Palahniuk 49). Tyler shows the narrator that destruction is the best way to go about rebuilding. This idea supports Tyler's constant efforts to ruin the narrator's life in order to bring clarity to his life.

When fight club and project mayhem are formed the destruction of the narrator's life is intensified. The continuation of destruction in the narrator's life begins to be too much and the narrator becomes overwhelmed by the negative effect Tyler has on his life which pushes him to try and take back his life and Tyler's control over him. A common belief in the novel is the idea of destruction and rebuilding, which can be seen in the novel by Tyler destroying different factors in the narrator's life, who then tries to rebuild his life from the destruction. This connects to the theme of identity because Tyler destroys factors that define and identify the narrator in society. For example, with the destruction of the narrator's apartment he loses the place that helps to define his position in society, a working man who measures his success in furniture. The creation of project mayhem leads to the killing of the narrator's boss. This progresses to the biggest destructive factor in the narrator's life because he has now lost his last defining factor of who he is, his job. Due to this action the narrator has ultimately been destroyed, which was the main goal for Tyler.

Through all this destruction the narrator begins to find his identity even

though in most parts of his life it is too late. At the end of the novel the <https://assignbuster.com/the-search-for-identity-taken-by-the-narrator-in-fight-club/>

narrator states “ I’m Tyler Durden” which tells the reader that the narrator has discovered a large part of his identity (Palahniuk 179). This is significant to the narrator finding himself because now he is better able to understand how to go about taking back control from Tyler and rebuilding who he is. This can be seen by the action of the narrator shooting himself in order to take back his identity and rid himself of Tyler. The narrator realizes that he does not agree with the choices Tyler has made about his life and wants to rid the world of Tyler’s destructive nature. Throughout the novel, the readers see the struggle the narrator endures while finding who he is. The narrator has little sense of who he is in the beginning of the novel and is desperately looking for change. This change is seen in the form of Tyler who succeeds in ruining the narrator’s life with his idea of self-destruction in order to rebuild.

The search for identity by the narrator helped to develop the theme of self-destruction throughout the novel and show the readers how it can spiral out of control until you are left with nothing. The narrator discovers through the consequences of Tyler’s actions which parts of his life he has taken for granted and actually make him who he is. For example when his boss is killed the narrator confesses that he actually liked his boss. The search for identity is easily relatable for the readers of the novel and warns those who are seeking a better understanding of who they are to be careful about the destruction they may cause while trying to find out. The idea that only after everything is destroyed can our lives be resurrected seen in the novel, should act as a warning to those who are inspired by Tyler’s rushed acts of rebellion and destruction. It’s very easy to destroy a part of your life in order to discover who you really are, but is it worth the consequence you will face?