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The theme of Masculinity

From time immemorial, the key role of a man has remained to be the principal breadwinner in their families. Traditionally, people were supposed to provide and look after their wives and children. What would happen if a man never had a woman? What if a man came from a family that was broken and no father? How would such a man be in a position to take great care of his family if he grew in a family without a good example to follow? Palahniuk, in his novel "Fight Club," brings about the above-discussed issues and that relate to the theme of masculinity. This paper explores Palahniuk's values as posed by the idea of masculinity.

The novel, in its entire plot, brings about the issues men of today pass through. People think that when they have the masculinity power, they stand a better chance to have authority over themselves. With that notion, they tend to forget about their inner selves. That one value a person cannot change no matter how masculine you appear to be. It has happened in this world that many men have lived to think that their masculinity power will make things right. Advertisers' makes that seem to be the order of the day, while it only makes men vulnerable to violence as they see they are not fit in the society they live.

The main characters, Joe and Tyler, seem to be more intertwined to an extent, a later stage, where the readers come to a point and note that indeed they are the same person. There are a lot of places that gives a hint which ascertains that the two characters indeed are the same person. At various points in the novel, Joe says "I know this because Tyler knows this," (Palahniuk 1). Firstly, this statement would portray that Joe and Tyler are indeed close friends and they happen to share the same knowledge carefully. On the other hand, it would show that the two characters are the same person.

Another hint that indicates that these two characters are likely the same is because they both fell in love with Marla, but just one happens to sleep with her. Marla in the novel is seen talking to Joe as her boyfriend, but Joe speaks of her as his friend's girlfriend. In my view, Tyler begins as a real personality and later turns out to be an evil altered ego the time Joe realizes the truth. Tyler has been wishing to have the same characteristics like Joe portraying an idyllic version of Joe.

The theme of masculinity in this novel is evidenced by the study of the notions of anarchy and conformity. The difference between Tyler and Joe's boss aids in the examination of conformity and non-conformity. Joe's boss wearing of a different tie every day portrays the stereotypical male role. Tyler is totally directly different from Joe’s boss. Tyler squats in a particular house located in the warehouse slices pornographic single frames and urinates at an individual hotel on their tomato soup. He is the overall non-conformist.

The relationship between different opinions about God and the authority figures indicates the lives of Palahniuk's characters. People would have a hard time believing in a loving God if they came from a background that portrayed no love at all. I conform to Palahniuk's opinion of people's view of God which is solely based on an individual's experience. Men are conforming to Tyler's ideals. This makes the Mayhem Project appear ironic portraying the idea of non-conformity. There conditions to be met if anyone wanted to join Tyler's Project Mayhem. He goes on to criticize the society for showing equity to everyone and yet in his project; men became Tyler's queen's drones. They were performing the duties allocated to them whether to tend the garden, make soap or clean the toilets all day. He demeans his followers and treats them like children when he gives them homework assignments after every Fight Club.

The theme of masculinity manifests itself to one of the minor characters in the novel named Bob. Bob ended up with testicular cancer after using a lot of steroids to maintain his masculinity power as an ex-body builder. The steroids he used had an effect that resulted in Bob having breasts instead of real muscles. The situation reveals a frightening condition that men can get after high use of steroids as they result in much testosterone, a male hormone associated with masculinity which can make a man have a woman's breasts.

Conclusively, the author of this novel presents the argument that the male human being in today's society has been taken to a position where they are seen as people who cannot do anything hence they watch others do things instead. The notion of being a man have been altered and being man shows that you have owned an asset; a good watch, a car, a fancy home or an individual company instead of one knowing their actual values; knowing who they are. Masculinity theme happens to be the major theme in this novel, and most of the characters conform to it while others do not. The traditional perspective of man has been challenged. The story is also quite challenging and provides us with different views about the world.