Psychoanalysis of Tyler Durden from Fight Club

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Mental Disorders and the Fight Club Narrative

Psychic disorders are prevalent in contemporary society. According to the National Institute of Mental Health Records, approximately one American adult among four has a mental disorder. The individual can be symptomatic or asymptomatic, and although the destruction of mental illness can cause it, it is still underestimated by society. According to the report of the US Department of Health and Human Services, the damage caused by mental disability, such as depression, is by all means equivalent to the suffering caused by blindness or paralysis. As the issue is prevalent, the portrayal of mental illness is frequent on the screen. The last century has brought many plots and characters roaming around mental illness. According to an accurate approximation, psychiatric disabilities are more familiar to see than any other disability. Various entertainment forms, including movies, convey to us various lessons as viewed through different lenses. One can happen to come up with varying interpretations of the same film. This essay is based on the evaluation of the character Tyler Durden from the movie Fight Club through the psychoanalytic lens (Palahniuk, 1996).

The Narrator Insomnia and Tyler Durden

The narrator has successfully conveyed multiple psychic disorders, initially starting with insomnia alone. An unnamed person plays the narrator's role in the movie. Edward Norton played the role of a white-collar job holder who is not only dull from his job but also suffers from insomnia. The cause of insomnia, as directed by the viewers, seems to be the malaise of his soul. The symptoms were evident as the character himself said that he was in an awful state that neither he was in asleep nor he was fully awake. As most people do, he initially tried to cure it with medicine, but it didn't work. Then he visited a doctor who didn't suggest any hallucinating medicines but instead suggested he join support groups for better catharsis. The idea worked initially; he cried out about his abandonment and then slept. Then Marla started joining the group, and somehow through her rebellious, fearless nature, he started getting distracted. The catharsis didn't work anymore. The sleep deprivation, loss of exciting hobbies, and tedious job, the narrator felt pray to DID, and the narrator welcomed his violent and impulsive alter Tylor. Tylor forces him to fight and behave violently as he misleads the narrator, as fighting is the prime catharsis and probably a sign of manliness. Through various meetups together, they both made the "fight club." Along with this, the movie has also successfully

displayed how anger is gradually built in an individual suffering from depression. The other prevalent theme is how the manifestation of mental illnesses can be fatal for a community.

Psychological Reasons for Character Selection

The reason behind choosing this character is that it not only manifests psychic disorders like depression, anger, and insomnia but also proves one of the psychological theories presented by Freud. According to him, the human personality is a complex of three separate entities, namely the Id, ego, and superego. The id constitutes unconsciousness entirely. Thus, it is innate and has all the primal instincts of an individual. Then comes the ego; it follows the id and makes sure that all the innate skills are met without building any guilt. Then comes the superego, it develops along with the upbringing and is much dependent on the surroundings. The superego has further two divisions; one of the divisions is conscience, and the other is the ideal ego. Together with the conscience and the ideal ego help in making the judgments. Fight club is an exceptional movie in which the writer has portrayed the main lead as convincing proof of the theory mentioned above. Tyler was narrator ID, seeking pleasure in violent and immoral acts (Spielman et al., 2020).

Freudian Id Ego and Superego

At the same time, the narrator portrayed both the ego and the superego due to the consistent sleep deprivation; the ego and superego surrendered in front of the ID. The narrator, ignorant of his ID, opted for various self-treatments; in the struggle of avoiding Marla, he used aversion therapy. He burnt himself to stop paining for Marla. He further used externalization as one of the defensive mechanisms. And felt powerless and victimized in front of the circumstances. His sleeplessness, anxiety, and conflicts with Marla gave birth to Tyler. As a result, he compartmentalized his personality, yet another defensive mechanism. Rather than sorting both the traits, he split himself into two halves, one being rebellious and another conformist.

Conclusion on Dissociation and Psychoanalysis

In light of the above discussion, the character has undergone massive psychiatric disruption compelling him to develop an alter ego. Psychoanalysis of the movie provides the initial diagnosis of insomnia, and later through his personal choices, he opted for aversion therapy himself. Preferably with the proper consultation and talk or psychosocial treatment, he could settle the issue. The talk therapy with the experienced therapist could help him in a better understanding of his instinctive take on Marla rather than forcefully avoiding her. The character chose variant defensive mechanisms like compartmentalization and externalization. However, if his DID had been in timely, then cognitive behavioral therapy or dialectic behavior therapy could have been used to alter his dysfunctional thinking pattern. If the character initially consulted his psychiatrist to feel detached from the social

group, then clinic hypnosis could have been used to prevent DID.

References

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