



Camden Council Library Services – Movie Club

Fight Club (1999)

Discussion Questions

1. The most obvious target of the film is commercialism. For example it critiques the Narrator's excessive interest in Ikea ("Ikea boy") and his condo, and the ultimate target of Project Mayhem is to wipe out credit card company records. A linked target is the success/failure culture (i.e. you either succeed to excess or you are a failure—there is no middle ground). Does the film provide an accurate depiction of these cultures? On whom does the film place the blame of consumer culture? Is it justified in its assertions? Does it provide a solution to the success/failure culture?
2. The common trait among the members of Fight Club is a sense of numbness and searching. This is best represented with the Narrator as he tries to alleviate his numbness. He starts with support groups for conditions he does not suffer from so that he can cry and sleep, until eventually creating Fight Club and executing Project Mayhem. What is the cause of these feelings either from a character's perspective or the film's perspective? Do the characters know what they are searching for? Is it simply to break out of the cycle of numbness, or are they actually searching for something more concrete, more positive?
3. What do you make of the violence in the film? It allows the participants to feel something, but how 'real' is an isolated punch with no emotional context? Does the film glorify violence, or does the violence have a narrative purpose?
4. What is the significance of Marla Singer? Her screen time would indicate a minor role, yet we are told by the Narrator at the beginning of the film that his current situation has to do with meeting her. What is her role in starting the events of the film?
5. The Narrator idolises Tyler Durden: he is sexy, intelligent, charismatic, independent, and strong willed. He is seen as a modern day guru. This is ironic with the casting of Brad Pitt as Durden, especially considering Durden's line that the media is making everyone think they will be "rock stars and movie gods". But do Durden's beliefs provide any solutions or simply critique the modern world? Are his critiques of modern life justified? Are any of his solutions viable? Do they need to be?
6. All the main characters as well as the Space Monkey's feel a great sense of isolation from larger society. Those who join the ranks of the Space Monkey's gain a sense of belonging,

but in the process they give up any individuality. How does the film deal with this paradox of isolation and individuality versus belonging and conformity? Is the conformity required in the Space Monkeys comparable with the modern world? Can a comparison be made with the support groups the Narrator attends earlier in the film?

7. As with [The Breakfast Club](#), [The Graduate](#), and [Rebel without a Cause](#), *Fight Club* is a generational film, especially for young men faced with the commercialism that arose during the Baby Boomer generation. How representative is the film of the generation? Would it apply to a whole generation or only a small segment? Can you draw any parallels between yourself and your generation and that portrayed in the film?
8. “Women, who have had a lifetime of practice at dealing with little-boy posturing, will instinctively see through it; men may get off on the testosterone rush.” (Ebert, [Fight Club](#) [Review], 1999) Ebert is very critical of the film as macho, even calling it “cheerfully fascist” and “macho porn”. It presents an escape from the modern world, but only for men. Do you feel that the film is overly masculine? How do you feel about the fact that the main characters are predominantly men operating in an all-male world engaging in acts that are celebrated for their manliness?