

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.86

ISSN 0976 - 8165



THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

12th Year of Open Access

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Peer-Reviewed
Open Access e-Journal

Vol. 12, Issue - 5 (October 2021)

Editor-In-Chief : Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor : Dr. Madhuri Bite



www.the-criterion.com



AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Predestination in the Black Swan: A Parallel Reading of Aronofsky's Retelling of the 'Swan Lake' and the Fairy Tale

Reshma V. S.

Dept. of English Language & Literature,
Sree Narayana College,
Kollam, Kerala.

Article History: Submitted-30/09/2021, Revised-19/10/2021, Accepted-20/10/2021, Published-31/10/2021.

Abstract:

“What haunts Nina Sawyers?” - is essentially the question addressed in this reading of Darren Aronofsky’s *Black Swan* (2010); Is it something psychological? Or is it the culmination of predestined tragedy? As a psychological drama imbued with strains of predestination, the movie broaches on quest for artistic perfection which in many ways justifies the plot as an introspective search for the flawless Black Swan which becomes inextricable to the movie as well as the protagonist. The depiction of ‘Swan Lake’, in many ways holds a mirror to the struggles of the protagonist (the significations on ‘psyche’) which often veils the underlying text (the source of Black Swan) which anticipates the events. The analysis as a ‘reading between the lines’ reiterates, the story of “Swan Lake” is haunting Nina’s fate and it thereby shifts the center from its psychological predilections to fatalistic tendencies.

Keywords: Black Swan, Swan Lake, Schizophrenia, Predestination, Significations, Deconstruction.

INTRODUCTION:

More than a decade following its initial release, *Black Swan* holds a distinguished position in the reel space as a psychological drama, a denouement of artistic brilliance, a delineation of character metamorphosis, a detailing of the repercussions of toxic mother-daughter relation and ultimately, a conjunction of many dualities including black/white, good/evil, innocent/malevolent, man/woman, passion/perfection etc. By its brilliance of character evolution and a haunting plot, *Black Swan* is unconditionally one of the best movies that transpired under the directorial of Darren Aronofsky and for more than one reasons it stands unique as a psychological drama. The movies of Aronofsky are characterized by the theme of “obsession” in the lead, often colored in an abundance of white and black to connote

metaphorical extremities. In its delineation of the 'psyche', Aronofsky's filmography can be defined as a ride through emotional and psychological limits heightened with liberty of experimentation on the theme and technique. This comes evident in depiction of the conflicted psyche amidst the intense black/white in *Pi*; the hyperactive and downward spiral in *Requiem for a Dream*; the strain of obsession and the evolution of the plot from darkness to bright ending in *The Fountain*; and the ultimate notion of 'tragedy as an essential quality' in *The Wrestler* and the *Black Swan*.

When it comes to the delineation of the 'psyche' in the movies, "The silver screen has featured prolific images of madness since the dawn of cinema at the turn of the twentieth century. Incidentally, this was also when the ideas and practices of Freud and modern psychology had begun to spread westward from Europe" (Beachum 15). However, the depiction of psychological issues in *Black Swan* takes a paradigm shift from the traditional violent representations to a grey area in its rendering of Nina in a distortion of the metaphoric White and Black Swans. The plot can be read as a *kunstlerroman* as it shows the growth of an artist from her immature-good-innocent-fragile self (White Swan) to mature-evil-sultry-virile self (Black Swan). While the traditional portrayal of mentally troubled characters often takes a turn for violence and grotesque in movies, Nina Sayers, the title lead, a talented ballet dancer and an aspiring Swan Queen, breaks the paradigm as the confluence of an inherently good White Swan and the antagonistic Black Swan which shows her in a grey area defined by a self-destructive obsession for perfection.

Nina suffers from psychotic breaks that include visual hallucinations, audio hallucinations, delusions and paranoia that her chance at playing the Swan Queen is jeopardized by her personal fears. This is seemingly confirmed as Thomas Leroy (the director in the New York City Ballet Company) advises Nina (the protagonist) - "The only person standing in your way is you" (*Black Swan*). Performing the Swan Queen has become the transcendental goal of her life yet the only thing that stands in her way is her inhibitions. Further instances of her psychological struggles can be traced through her deep-seated paranoia along with possible traits of anorexia, metamorphosis of the character resulting in the transformation of her body and that culminates in observation of psychological problems like schizophrenia, anxiety and obsession. The possibility of all these condition in a single individual broaches the protagonist as a vulnerable woman, an ideal cast for playing the beautiful and fragile White Swan. It is a role that she perfectly nails. Yet it is the virile passions of the Black Swan that seems to evade her and she is solely driven by her ambition to play the Black Swan.

While the depiction of Nina's rapid descent to Schizophrenia may sound exaggerated and unlikely, the movie establishes its inclinations as a psychological drama by its theme and execution. Then again, all of these characters, introduced as detrimental to her mental well being, are perceived from Nina's perspective which compromises the nature of reality owing to her delusional paranoia and hallucinations which often connotes schizophrenia. "Schizophrenia is a disorder that impacts many domains. Some of its more recognizable symptoms involve difficulties in thinking (e.g., disorganized thinking, delusions) and perception (e.g., hallucinations)" (Kring and Caponigro). Thus, in a psychological perspective, Nina's conditions- schizophrenia and delusions- hold the center that becomes axial to the evolution of the plot.

While the psychological strain persists, the intend of this analysis is to read the movie in the light of the original story of the "Swan Lake", composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky where the story of Odette in Swan Lake anticipates the fate of Nina in *Black Swan*. As a helpless entity under the potency of fate, Nina would merely be a subject to forces beyond her control and that includes her overly controlling mother who treats her like a child, the manipulative director of the studio who takes advantage of her, the friend/foe Lily who is the root of her paranoia, among many others. Thus, the analysis attempted here, observes the evolution of Nina's fate parallel to the life and death of Odette in the "Swan Lake" and thereby shifting the center from psychological purview to haunting of the original story of the ballet.

Though Nina now embodies attributes of both the White and Black Swans, the inherently pure self resurfaces towards the climactic moment, reasserting the poetic triumph of White Swan over the Black Swan as it happens in the "Swan Lake". Further, Aronofsky paints the flip side of the dance form that is stressfully demanding and passively inevitable, countering the general estimation of Ballet dance as a romantic domain. Though grounded on psychological aspects, this analysis attempts to compromise the psychological signification by placing the whole text as a distortion of the original storyline of 'Swan Lake'. Thus the attempted deconstruction is by perceiving the "text" in the light of 'Swan Lake' by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky where the dissemination is done through shifting the center from the psychological aspects of the character to the fatalistic aspects of the storyline.

CONTENT:

“Fairytale have never been bedtime stories; in this day in age, they have morphed into a very effective means of exercising power over women and maintaining gender inequality” (Neikirk 1). Though it stems from the fairy tale, the ‘Swan Lake’ in the *Black Swan* takes liberty of a free adaptation to bring down the notion of ‘maintaining gender inequality’. Though the theme and its treatment have little to do with aspects of gender discrimination, Leroy as the controlling masculine power cannot be overlooked. Here, man (as embodied in Thomas Leroy, David who plays the role of Prince Siegfried and Nina’s absent father) and woman (defined through Nina Sayers, her mother Erica Sayers and the former Swan Queen Beth) shows its own mode of duality. However, the metamorphosis of Nina Sayers into the vivacious Black Swan revokes this pattern by reaching “perfection” and thereby negating any undercurrent of gender inequality.

While denying any serious conviction to gender discrimination, the movie broaches the duality of passion and perfection as ‘Swan Lake’ defines the ‘search for true love’ an essential quality of fairy tales and *Black Swan* is Nina Sayers’ pursuit of perfection. Further, the two important characters, Nina and Lily also embody perfection and passion respectively. Eventually, passion and perfection converge in Nina as she embraces the passions of Black Swan with her inherent perfection as the White Swan. The dualities can be further traced through the extremities of dark and light shades, black and white colors which symbolically foreground Odile and Odette’s presence as the black and the white swans, anticipating the evil-virility and innocent-vulnerability respectively. Thus, the good-evil, innocent-malevolent are fitting terms to address the union of these extremities in the protagonist. These dualities, literal and metaphoric, reinforced through the metamorphosis, the black and white shades, passion and perfection, and the persistence in acknowledging the roles as the White and Black Swans than Odette and Odile (original names in Swan Lake), reasserts the concept of duality in *Black Swan*.

The story that Aronofsky tells through Nina is an obsessive need for artistic perfection. As much as ‘the need for perfection’ haunts the character, another trail that lingers around is the price paid for it, as delineated through the various psychological issues confronted by the protagonist, ranging from symptoms of eating disorder to schizophrenia. To concur to the psychological inclination, an overview of the plot would suffice to delineate Nina Sayers, a young woman in her mid-twenties revealed with an obsession over perfecting her every single

move. Like every ballerina, Nina aspires to be a Swan Queen, for which she trains hard. Eventually, she lands the role of Swan Queen in this slightly altered theatrical production of “Swan Lake”. The Swan Queen has to perform both as the White Swan and Black Swan. Nina is perfect as the White Swan but she cannot feel the full passion of its evil twin. Her imperfection as a Black Swan thus brings about all the trials and tribulations. The psychological purview reinforces the idea of Nina’s artistic maturation in tempo with her psychological maturation which invariably implies overcoming the control exerted by her mother, her paranoia, anxiety among many others.

Nina’s paranoia is mainly rooted on the idea of the world conspiring against her reaching artistic perfection and Lily trying to steal her role as the Swan Queen. This fear along with her inability to fully express the virility of the Black Swan contributes to her anxiety. The mother-daughter relationship as delineated in the movie is much debated owing to the subtle dialogues which gives glaring implications on the immaturity and trauma in the highly sheltered and restrictive upbringing where the mother lives vicariously through her daughter. Erica Sayers, a single mom, former ballerina, had to drop her dancing career to raise Nina and the latter’s exchanges with her mother reflect the underlying insecurity and lack of self-confidence. The predominance of the pink shade in her room; the reluctant resistance to her mother’s invasion of her privacy; the shy and almost-scared address as “mommy” to reciprocate the mother’s adoration of her “princess”; points to a stunted psychological growth. This infantile treatment has indeed deprived Nina of the free will enjoyed by women of her age.

The culmination of her psychological issues is Nina’s obsession in playing the part of Swan Queen which invariably takes a toll on her. The former Swan Queen curses her and falsely accuses her of usurping the role. Ultimately the arrival of Lily with her imprecise yet unrestrained passion in her moves is better at doing Black Swan, which is dreaded by Nina as she could lose her shot at this and pushes her into a state of psychosis. Adding to it, the masquerading of Nina’s evil doppelganger, her vivid hallucinations manifesting as instances of explicit homosexuality, violence, and obsession convey all the conventional paraphernalia of a psychological movie. Thus, by the intention of the director and by the general credence, *Black Swan* is by and large a movie in the genre of psychological drama- the psychological aspects as the fixed locus around which the movie develops. This centrality of the

psychological ground is compromised when the movie as a text, is read as an adaptation of the original, 'Swan Lake'.

There is the performance of 'Swan Lake' towards the climactic moment of *Black Swan* while the whole storyline shows an inclination to the plot of 'Swan Lake' and in both cases; the fidelity to the original story is compromised by the artistic license. As James Harold broaches in "The Value of Fidelity in Adaptation", "it has long been established that fidelity is both a bad criterion and a harmful one. Fidelity is thought to be harmful because it crowds out other, more fruitful lines of inquiry (91). While the storyline follows the trail of 'Swan Lake', it is safe to say that, as a free adaptation, Aronofsky takes the liberty of giving a more flawed and more humanized attribute to the protagonist while detailing on a twisted adaptation of the fairy tale within the movie. The deconstructive reading of the text takes away this centrality of the psychological paradigm while placing it on the haunting of the original theme of Swan Lake.

A condensed version of "Swan Lake" is defined in the movie as Leroy's holds - "We all know the story. Virginal girl, pure and sweet, trapped in the body of a swan. She desires freedom, but only true love can break the spell. Her wish is nearly granted in the form of a prince. But before he can declare his love, her lustful twin, the Black Swan, tricks and seduces him. Devastated, the White Swan leaps off a cliff, killing herself and in death finds freedom" (*Black Swan*). Here, the parallel can be traced in Nina's life where, she becomes the White Swan, pure, sweet, and trapped in her own fears. Nina desires freedom from her current self which is defined by paranoia and that can be achieved once she brings alive both the Swans on the stage. Nina's true love would indeed be her art which she perfects every day like an ardent meditation. Her wish is almost granted in the form of the role of Swan Queen but before its fulfillment, Lily turns up as an impediment to this wish fulfillment. Following the climactic wish-fulfillment of embodying the Black Swan, she realizes her true identity as the White Swan, fragile and full of realisations. The denouement shows Nina mortally stabbing herself in a fit of hallucination and finally jumping to her death from the cliff (a stage prop) to set herself free through death.

The events in her life are preordained to the story of 'Swan Lake'. Though the movie is too gripping and dark for a fairy tale (though at a point of time fairy tales from Europe and North America were not always meant for children), "The subject of narrative accuracy and the rocky relationship between fairy tale films and the oral and literary traditions that preceded

them raises issue about translating folk narratives across distinctive and popular mediums for different audiences” (Greenhill and Matrix 6). This can be observed on *Black Swan* as a free adaptation while shifting the centrality of “psyche” to acknowledge the text within it anticipating the tragedy as a predestined event. In placing the centre on fatalistic aspect (anticipating the tragedy of ‘Swan Lake’ in Nina’s life) and disavowing the apparent centre of ‘psychological grounds’, the “Classical thoughts concerning structure could say that the centre is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it. The centre is at the centre of the totality, and yet, since the centre does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its centre *elsewhere*. The centre is not the centre” (Derrida 248), where the ‘within’ and ‘outside’ is defined in terms of ‘psyche’ and ‘fate’ which can equally assume the ‘centres’ to say two different story of same event. This shifting of the focus from the psychological inclination to the parallel trail of Swan Lake would provide a deconstructive reading of the movie from its psychological convictions to fatalistic significations.

As Pearl S Buck observes, Fatalism “is a false premise. What will be is not necessarily what must be”, a notion shared by Natalie Clifford Barney who holds it as “the lazy man’s way of accepting the inevitable.” The perception of fatalism had it long negated in the realm of literary studies owing to its irrational milieu. Eventually, these concepts evolved more along the lines of what the concept of fatalism is understood today. “Fatalism can more generally be defined as the propensity of individuals or groups to believe that their destinies are ruled by an unseen power or are played out inevitably rather than by their will”(Maercker et al). Instances of fatalism in the movie can be discerned through the juxtaposition of the plotline to the original story of the fairy tale, Swan Lake. Here, fatalism operates like a rational dogma that accentuates the inevitability of some future event or events amidst the subjugation of all human power.

“In contemporary philosophy, arguments for fatalism are arguments for the conclusion that no human actions are free. ...what is characteristics of any arguments for fatalism is that, first, it purports to show by appeal to quite general logical or metaphysical assumption that no human action is free” (Todd Patrick). Fatalism in the text manifests through the revision of ‘Swan Lake’, the fairy tale that revolves around the trials of Princess Odette, who is cursed by the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart, along with other beautiful girls. They are cursed into swans and are doomed to reside in the swan lake that is filled with the tears of their parents. They turn to their original self by night and back to swan by every sunrise. It is about this time that Prince Siegfried turns up near the lake with his hunting party. The prince sends back the crew as he

gets fascinated by the one particular white swan which is Princess Odette. When night approaches Odette turns back to her human form and the Prince is immediately smitten by her beauty. The Prince confesses his love. Odette is happy for only true love can lift the curse. At this point, Rothbart turns up and takes Odette away from the prince. On the following day, the royal court summons many young women as prospective Queen but, the Prince's mind is preoccupied with Odette. About this time, Rothbart turns up with his daughter, Odile, who is under the guise of Odette. The prince supposes Odile to be Odette and at once he promises to make her his Queen. At this declaration, Odile and Rothbart assume their real grotesque self. The Prince sees the real Odette watching the entire development from a window. He pursues her but to no avail for his love has proven not to be true. Amidst the misapprehension, Odile turns up demanding the Prince to keep his promise. Odette forgives the Prince and they both resolve to protect the sanctity of their love by ending their lives in the swan lake and thereby lifting the curse. All the swans turn back to their human form. The souls of Odette and the Prince soar towards heaven while that of Odile and Rothbart, plunge to hell.

An analysis of the text would give several parallels and similarities to the original 'Swan Lake'. The movie places its characters in such a way that it progresses in harmony with its fairy tale counterpart. There are points where the parallels diverge into a symbolic plane which ultimately blend into a cathartic climax. This interpretation leads to the development of a paradigm that shifts from the preconceived locus of psychology to the revised centre of fatalism. The assertion can be substantiated by the various instances from the plots of both the texts. That Nina is the movie equivalent for White Swan is evident from her beauty and fragile nature. While it was Rothbart who cursed the Odette, it was Beth, the former Swan Queen who cursed Nina for usurping the role. Odette was cursed to remain as the White Swan till the true love sets her free. Nina's curse was her obsession over the need for perfection till her true love, which here is her art that sets her free in a moment of artistic consummation. It is Nina's vulnerability that makes her fragile like the White Swan, while it is Nina's paranoid obsession that manifests as Black Swan in Lily and later herself. Lily becomes Black Swan when Nina sees her as someone who could steal away her role, much like Odette fears Odile who tried to steal away her prince. Later, the Black Swan reveals as her doppelganger in shadows and reflections as Nina finds the same threat in herself, for the obsession was destroying her. So it throws light on the Black Swan as inherently virile and deceptive though in the movie it garners an added dimension of enigma and vitality.

In the fairy tale, the swans reside in the swan lake, which is filled with the tears of their parents. Much the same way, Nina is in a metaphoric lake of ballet as a wish-fulfillment of her mother's faded dream as a former ballet dancer. Thomas Leroy, the theatre producer, is simultaneously a reflection of Prince Siegfried and Von Rothbart. Leroy calls her his princess and promises to make her the Swan Queen, much like Siegfried who promised Odette to make her his queen. At a later point, we could see Leroy taking advantage of Nina, making him inevitably, the cunning Rothbart, but that similarity ends there. Thus, Nina becomes Odette, the white swan while, Odile, the black swan, lives through Lily and Nina; Leroy becomes Prince Siegfried and Von Rothbart. Thus, the characters of 'Swan Lake' become the characters of *Black Swan*.

Similarly, the events of "Swan Lake" become the events of *Black Swan*. There is an instance in "Swan Lake" where Odette falls for Prince Siegfried and starts obsessing over his true love. In *Black Swan*, when Nina bags the role of Swan Queen, she starts obsessing over perfection in her every move. In the American version of "Swan Lake", Rothbart initially appears like a young handsome man to lure Odette before cursing her. In *Black Swan*, Nina initially falls for the charms of Leroy, before he pushes Nina to her extremes till she breaks and sets the Black Swan free at the cost of her life. Following this, Odette finds Prince Siegfried attracted to the disguised Odile that destroys her. Likewise, Nina finds the man donning the role of Siegfried for the theatre production, getting personal with Lily, and that sets Nina off to a psychic breakdown.

Eventually, in 'Swan Lake', we find Odette reconciling with prince Siegfried as the disguise of evil Odile is revealed. When it comes to the *Black Swan*, we find Nina reconciling with herself as she perfectly executes the role of Black Swan. The most significant similarity between the fairy tale and the movie is the climax where Odette and Nina jump to their death. Odette jumps into the swan lake preserving her purity and at the same time breaking the curse and setting the rest of the swan-ladies free. In *Black Swan*, Nina embraces her death after she realizes that she stabbed herself in a bout of hallucination. The bizarre thing about it is that Nina too jumps to her death as the final act of the ballet, thereby preserving the perfection in her dance, and this indeed was her final words- "I was perfect" achieving the very thing that she believed from the start.

Thus, from the beginning till its culmination in the death of the protagonist, the story of Nina agrees with the story of Odette. It would suffice to explain in terms of fatalism (as a

force beyond cognizance) that, Nina landing the role of Black Swan predetermined her destiny following the same path of its idol. The fate drags her life through the inevitability of the tragedy awaiting her in the storyline of 'Swan Lake'. This is where the implication of fatalism secures traction. Here, her psychological crises are but just elements that add another dimension to the character to humanize her and forge a more rounded character while the path she has to trail is predestined.

The movie as a free adaptation of the fairy tales travels leaps and bounds into the realm of real world away from the milieu of fantasy. Fairy tales, "makes the magical a normal part of the life but rarely ventures into the real world; the normal instead resides fully within the fairy tale world, which does not resemble the everyday one" (Lukasiewicz and Zipes 67). *Black Swan* with its realistic characters, humanized with psychological issues, negates any element of magic while summoning it closer to the real world, but the story line as inferred earlier, is predestined. It broaches the concept of fatalism as the inevitable centre and thereby substantiates the movie as one described by its fatalistic tendencies. "What do we mean by fatalism? That man is not master of his fate but that fate masters him. Do what he will- he cannot escape his destiny. Fate is irresistible, unconquerable and its decrees are absolute" (Leach). Odette was perfect in her purity and elegance and it was fated that Odette would leave the mortal world. Nina too was perfect as a Swan Queen so the trend would hold that it was her fate to leave the mortal world, like her icon. Therefore, fatalism as a theme anticipates the story of the protagonist in a plane, parallel to that of "Swan Lake", and thus the 'fate' as a symbol becomes the be-all and end-all of *Black Swan*.

CONCLUSION:

Black Swan as a psychological drama comes in the face of cognizance when the 'psyche' as a signified manifests through the psychological issues confronted by the protagonist. However *Black Swan* as an adaptation anticipates the fate of the protagonist in this parallel reading of the movie and the fairy tale. While it maintains its position as a free adaptation of 'Swan Lake' *Black Swan* progresses toward a climax which is a theatrical production of the nineteenth century ballet 'Swan Lake' written by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The fairy tale thus functions in the movie in two levels as the plot and its denouement, an observation that would reinforce the strain of predestination in the protagonist. The movie delineates the growth of the artist, Nina Sayers from her immature and restrained self to liberating and redefining her identity. Even if the climactic moment of the big revelation is

fleeting and tragic, it strangely imparts a cathartic influence on the protagonist and the audience. The simple observation that the events of her cathartic end were fated to the likeness of the fairy tale she strove to perfect, compounds the notion of predestination in the text.

The death as a symbolic perfection of her art reasserts the trail of 'Swan Lake' in *Black Swan*. In Aristotelian terms, *Black Swan* as an imitation (adaptation) of 'Swan Lake' provides a 'serious' and 'complete' narrative, evoking 'pity' for the protagonist and 'fear' for oneself (in the horror it brings through identification), though it offers a cathartic culmination. The ballet is precisely what Nina prepares her entire life for and from that standpoint the evolution of her trials shed a whole new light on the movie *Black Swan*. This is where the text can be delineated as more fatalistic than psychological. This disruption of the central presence compromises the psychological aspect as the functional centre of the text. In the context of *Black Swan*, the psychological aspect is perceived as the conventional centre of the plot. *Black Swan* remains as a separate character, unique by its abstraction and evasiveness, like an enigma. It is always fluid, lurking in the shadows and reflections.

It projects itself in Lily for a brief moment, embodied in her strong passions, but then again evades Nina until the very end in the stage as Nina gives her flawless rendition of the *Black Swan*. Here the viewers get to see the evil twin of Odette in its vivid, concrete perfection. But after this, *Black Swan* disappears yet again at the revelation that all of Nina's passion stemmed from the delusion of evil deed she purportedly committed as murdering Lily. The delusion ends as it is revealed that Lily was alive and that she had stabbed herself, which resurrects the *White Swan* in all its innocence and vulnerability. Thus, the *White Swan* possesses Nina for one last time before Odette/Nina leaps to her death.

By decoding and dismantling the conventional psychological aspects of the *Black Swan*, we see a paradigm shift to the theme of fatalism that stems from the juxtaposition of *Black Swan* and 'Swan Lake'. Drawing the similarities, explicit and metaphorical, *Black Swan* proves to be a distorted reflection or rather a reflective distortion of the ballet, 'Swan Lake'. According to the attempted reading, the life of the protagonist of the movie can be discerned as predestined to the fate of the protagonist of the fairy tale. It shifts the textual signification from the psychological struggles to the inevitability of the fate and foreshadows the denouement of the story as a leaking into the 'Swan Lake'. Thus, by enforcing the theme of fatalism, this paper deconstructs the *Black Swan* as a movie centering on the theme of 'Swan Lake' which haunts the plot and protagonist.

Works Cited:

- Derrida, Jacques. 1970. Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences. In *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy*, pp. 247-272, edited by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato.
- Kring, Ann M, and Janelle M Caponigro. "Emotion in Schizophrenia: Where Feeling Meets Thinking." *Current directions in psychological science* vol. 19,4 (2010): 255-259. doi: 10.1177/0963721410377599
- Beachum, Lauren, "The Psychopathology of Cinema: How Mental Illness and Psychotherapy are Portrayed in Film" (2010). *Honors Projects*. 56. scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects/56?utm_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fhonorsprojects%2F56&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Maercker, Andreas et al. "Fatalism as a traditional cultural belief potentially relevant to trauma sequelae: Measurement equivalence, extent and associations in six countries." *European journal of psychotraumatology* vol. 10, 1 1657371. doi:10.1080/20008198.2019.1657371
- "Fatalism". In *obo* in Philosophy. www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0116.
- Greenhill, Pauline, et al. "Introduction: Envisioning Ambiguity: Fairy Tale Films." *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, edited by Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix, University Press of Colorado, 2010, pp. 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgn37.5>.
- Harold, James. "The Value of Fidelity in Adaptation", *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 58, No.1, Jan 2018, Pp 89–100, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayx041>
- Leach, Abby, "Fatalism of the Greeks" *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp.373-401, John Hopkins University Press. www.jstor.org/stable/289626
- Lukasiewicz, Tracie D., and Jack Zipes. "The Parallelism of the Fantastic and the Real: Guillermo Del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth/El Laberinto Del Fauno and Neomagical Realism." *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, edited by Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix, University Press of Colorado, 2010, pp. 60–78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgn37.8>.

Black Swan. Directed by Darren Aronofsky, performances by Natalie Portman, Vincent Cassel, Mila Kunis and Barbara Hershey, Twentieth Century Fox, 2010.

"Pearl S. Buck." AZQuotes.com. Wind and Fly LTD, 2021. 15 August 2021.
www.azquotes.com/quote/1145329

"Natalie Clifford Barney." AZQuotes.com. Wind and Fly LTD, 2021. 15 August 2021.
www.azquotes.com/quote/18756

Neikirk, Alice, "'...Happily Ever After' (or What Fairy Tales Teach Girls About Being Women)", *Anthropology 324 Essays*.
[/hilo.hawaii.edu/campuscenter/hohonu/volumes/documents/Vol07x07HappilyEverAfter.pdf](http://hilo.hawaii.edu/campuscenter/hohonu/volumes/documents/Vol07x07HappilyEverAfter.pdf)