

Ambition For Fame in Darren Aronofsky's Black Swan Movie: A Psychoanalytic Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the indicators of ambition for fame, how ambition is reflected, and why ambition for fame is reflected in *Black Swan*, a movie directed by Darren Aronofsky. The analysis of the ambition for fame in Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan* movie is the research problem. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. To analyze the data, the researcher used Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory. The data was collected by taking notes and doing library research. The theory posits three fundamental concepts: the Id, Ego, and Superego. The result shows that Nina Sayer's id is subconsciously driven by a deep desire for perfection in the ballet world and her ambition to become a swan queen. The Ego can be seen in Nina, who tries to fulfill her strong desires with many demands from her mother. The Superego can be seen in that Nina is under pressure from her mom, so she feels depressed. So it can be concluded that the ambition for fame in *Black Swan* movie can be reflected in Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory.

Keywords: psychoanalytic, ambition, *Black Swan* movie.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi indikator-indikator ambisi untuk terkenal, bagaimana ambisi tercermin, dan mengapa ambisi untuk terkenal tercermin dalam film *Black Swan* yang disutradarai oleh Darren Aronofsky. Analisis ambisi untuk menjadi terkenal dalam film *Black Swan* karya Darren Aronofsky adalah masalah penelitian. Metode kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Untuk menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan Teori Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara mencatat dan melakukan penelitian kepustakaan. Teori ini mengemukakan tiga konsep dasar: Id, Ego, dan Superego. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa id Nina Sayer secara tidak sadar didorong oleh keinginan yang mendalam untuk kesempurnaan dalam dunia balet dan ambisinya untuk menjadi ratu angsa. Ego terlihat pada diri Nina yang berusaha memenuhi keinginannya yang kuat dengan berbagai tuntutan dari ibunya. Superego terlihat pada Nina yang mendapat tekanan dari ibunya, sehingga ia merasa tertekan. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa ambisi untuk menjadi terkenal dalam film *Black Swan* dapat direfleksikan dalam Teori Psikoanalisis Sigmund Freud.

Kata kunci: psikoanalisis, ambisi, film Black Swan.

INTRODUCTION

Ambition is a strong desire to achieve a goal, often leading to success without us realizing it. When we accomplish something, we make others proud and earn their respect and appreciation. (Kinanti & Amalia, 2021). Ambition is a psychological issue. It may appear when someone feels something is pertinent to them, for example, when watching a movie, practicing an instrument, or progressing in their education (Yastanti & Adhi, 2023). Yusman et al. (2023) state that ambition is a positive quality, especially for people trying to develop a sense of their own will to achieve their goals. Ambition can be a catalyst for success but can also lead to failure in certain situations. We can discover ourselves and tap into our God-given talents by pursuing ambitious goals. (Rahayu, 2017). Ambition can be known through each person. Some people pursue ambition through various means, such as practicing hard daily and using all means to be seen as the best. Someone with ambition has a specific goal, such as becoming famous and known by many people. Ambition is important because everyone can reach their desires and will do everything possible to achieve them. Strive is the willingness of a person to strive for success or excellence. Second, aggressive is the behavior of a person who wants to attack something seen as disappointing, obstructing, or hindering. Third, perfectionism is the behavior of a person who does not want something to achieve mediocrity, so the person tries to prove it as best as possible so that they look perfect, as stated by Millenia, A. P., & Wardaningsih (2023).

Fame is defined as being well-known by name, recognized in person, and discussed or written about by a public that remains unfamiliar to the famous individual. (Brim, 2009). Sociologically, fame pertains to a person or group when assigned that status by others in a particular group or society. While this avoids the individualistic psychology of fame, it also acknowledges that specific personal characteristics of the person or group receiving fame status may be enhanced, given their personal qualities or talents (in some cases, erroneously described as 'charisma') (Holloway, 2023). People desire fame because millions who are deeply driven to achieve it stand apart from the rest of society. This pursuit of fame stems from a fundamental human need for acceptance and approval. When this need goes unmet—often due to rejection from parents, peers, or others—underlying insecurities arise, fueling the desire for fame. (Brim & Brim, 2009). The basic human need for acceptance and approval has given rise to the motive of fame. *Black Swan* is a psychological horror film directed by Darren Aronofsky. The story follows Nina Sayers, a young ballerina with an obsessive drive to land the lead role in her studio's upcoming production, *Black Swan*. In pursuing this role, Nina does everything she can to convince her superiors that she can portray the little swan.

According to Fadhila et al. (2024), *Black Swan* examines themes of ambition, perfectionism, and the psychological consequences of obsession in the cutthroat realm of professional ballet. The film portrays Nina's spiraling descent into madness as she pursues artistic perfection, causing the boundaries between reality and hallucination to blur. (Zhang, 2020) described Psychoanalytic theory, developed by Sigmund Freud, explaining personality by attributing thoughts and behaviors to unconscious motives and conflicts. Originating in the

19th century, this psychodynamic approach focuses on the unconscious mind and dream analysis. Psychoanalysis represents the first wave of psychotherapy and has significantly influenced the overall development of psychology and subsequent psychologists. Personality psychology is a specialized area that examines psychological types and individual personalities. Freud, a pivotal figure in psychology, founded psychoanalysis and was the first to propose a personality theory centered on the concepts of the id, Ego, and Superego, representing the three layers of personality in his framework.

PSYCHOANALYTIC

According to (Damayanti, 2023), Sigmund Freud developed the psychoanalytic theory to understand the workings of the human mind. He divided his psychological framework into the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. Differently, psychoanalytic aims to convey as much of what is conscious as what is subconscious or unconscious. Fadhila et al. (2024) stated that Sigmund Freud developed this theory after conducting numerous therapy sessions with his patients. From these cases, he realized that a part of the human mind contains elements that remain unknown to individuals at a conscious level, highlighting the existence of the unconscious mind. The "laws of transformation" refer to the principles explaining how people suppress or sublimate memories within the unconscious. Freud likened the mind to an "iceberg," with the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind representing different layers of skin to the sky, surface, and deep sea. The iceberg analogy also encompasses the id, Ego, and Superego.

Kurnia & Santyaputri (2023) argued that the Id has existed long since birth, consisting of instincts and impulses. The Ego is the conscious aspect of personality that balances the Id's demands with practical considerations. Every individual possesses an ego, which represents a self-oriented need that must be fulfilled to meet both personal desires and the expectations of others. Abdulloh (2023) said that the Ego is the only conscious aspect of personality. The Ego employs defense mechanisms to maintain this rational, logical state, aligning with the reality principle as it regulates the desires arising from the id. Zhang (2020) stated that the Superego embodies the conscience developed during early childhood. The Id, Ego, and Superego interplay shape an individual's behavior and personality, influencing how they act in society and interact with others. This theory of Id, Ego, and Superego is a cornerstone of Freud's personality theory.

AMBITION

Ambition is an essential trait within a workgroup to compete effectively with other teams. It represents a strong desire to attain goals and often drives us toward success without realizing it (Kinanti & Amalia, 2021).

BLACK SWAN MOVIE

Efani et al. (2023) stated that Black Swan is a standout psychological horror film directed by Darren Aronofsky. It follows the story of a ballerina named Nina Sayers, who aspires to become a flawless performer. In her pursuit of perfection, Nina faces intense psychological

challenges, including hallucinations, and often inflicts harm on herself unconsciously. Natalie Portman's portrayal of Nina Sayers is a key element in the film's success.

METHOD

This research is classified as a literary study because the data is drawn from various works of literature, and this study falls under the category of library research. Maulana & Nugroho (2024) stated that Literary studies examine imaginative written works, with poetry, drama, and narrative fiction being the most well-known genres today. This research employed qualitative methods to analyze the data. Qualitative research is a natural method that generates descriptive data in written, spoken, or other forms. It is inherently descriptive, with data collection primarily focused on words rather than numbers (AM et al., 2017). The method used in this research is the documentation technique. To find research data, researchers employ two methods. The first involves taking screenshots from the Black Swan movie to collect image data by capturing relevant scenes for analysis. The second method includes gathering text data from the film using note-taking and copy-and-paste techniques to document significant interactions and dialogues. The researcher analyzed the movie's plot and reviewed its script in this study. They collected data by observing and recording every transformation of the main character throughout the movie. The researcher applied Sigmund Freud's theory to identify and interpret the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

THE INDICATORS OF AMBITION FOR FAME IN THE BLACK SWAN MOVIE

PRACTICING HARD

Practicing hard is one of the characteristics that is frequently used as the foundation for ambition. In the Black Swan movie, researchers found the indicators in this movie. This movie primarily focuses on Nina's ambition for fame to be the main character in Swan Lake's performance. It can be seen when Nina practicing so hard to take the main character. The coach, Thomas asks Nina to portray both swan characters, the White Swan and the Black Swan. Nina performed the role of White Swan well, but not the role of Black Swan. Thomas asked her to focus on practicing the Black Swan, whose character contrasts with the White Swan's. The Black Swan embodies a sensual persona.

Screenshot	Dialogue
 Nina practicing hard until last night (01:18:36)	Nina : "What happened?" Piano player : "I gotta life, deary. <i>Don't work too hard</i> . It's your big day tommorow." Black Swan (2009).

The dialogue above explains that the dialogue 'Don't work too hard. It's your big day tomorrow' illustrates that Nina practised so hard that the piano player told her to rest.

RIVALRY

Rivalry is a person or group of people who compete for the same goal in any case. According to vocabulary.com, rivalry refers to vying for the same goal against another individual. As seen in the Black Swan movie, it is explained that rivalry indicates ambition to become famous.

Screenshot	Dialogue
 <p>Lily says she'll replace Nina as Black Swan character (01:17:17)</p>	<p>Lily : "Georgina, I'm Lily. Thomas told me to.." Nina : "What's she doing here?" Lily : "<i>He made me your alternate</i>. Just in case.." Black Swan (2009).</p>

Lily comes to greet Georgina, the costume maker. She says that Thomas asked her to be an alternate for Nina. Lily says 'he made me your alternate' showing that Lily is rivalry with Nina to play the role of the Black Swan.

AMBITION TO BE FAMOUS

Ambition to be famous is a strong desire to be recognized by many people and achieve popularity. The ambition to be famous in the Black Swan movie can be seen when Nina talks to Thomas Leroy in his room. She persuades Thomas that she can perfectly portray the role of the Black Swan.

Screenshot	Dialogue
 <p>Nina asked Thomas Leroy in his office (20:36)</p>	<p>Nina : "<i>I came to ask you to give me a part</i>" Thomas : "Why should I give to you?" Thomas : " Truth is, when i look at you, all i see is the White Swan. Yes you're beautiful, restrained, glacial. Perfect casting. But, the Black Swan... it's a hard fucking job to dance both" Nina : "<i>I can be the Black Swan too</i>"</p>

In the dialogues 'I came to ask you to give me a part' and 'I can be the Black Swan too,' Nina demonstrates her ambition to achieve fame by successfully playing the role of the Black Swan. She keeps convincing Thomas that she can handle both roles simultaneously, despite his belief that she is better suited for the White Swan, as her character contrasts with the sensual and mysterious nature of the Black Swan.

AMBITION FOR FAME REFLECTED IN THE BLACK SWAN MOVIE

CHARACTERS

The characters in a movie play a crucial role. They drive the narrative and direct the plot. A good work of fiction always starts with a character, as they engage in the story's action. Characters contribute to the development and appeal of a story, representing figures that are undeniably relevant to life and experience (Hanggur & Deni, 2022). A character is a person who appears in a narrative, whether it is a drama, a short story, a novel, or a film. Character refers to the genuine traits exhibited by individuals, distinct from how they may appear. It reflects behavior that emphasizes values of good and bad, as well as right and wrong, either subtly or explicitly. (Damayanti, 2023). Darren Aronofsky uses characters to reflected ambition in Black Swan Movie.

1. The being ambition for fame character

Ambition for fame entails a solid urge to attain acknowledgment and widespread public admiration for one's accomplishments or talents. Nina, a meticulous ballerina, is set on playing the leading role in Swan Lake's ballet performance. She is one of the ballet dancers in a renowned ballet company in New York. Her character is depicted as beautiful, fearful, and fragile. She has a pointed nose and light brown hair. Several scenes illustrate her highly competitive nature. In other words, she is categorized as a perfectionist one, according to Suprpto (2016). Despite the challenges she faces, Nina is determined to portray the Swan Queen in the performance and has made significant efforts to persuade the director to cast her in both roles.

2. Supporting Characters

A character in a narrative who is not at the story's center but is crucial to the plot or the protagonist and has enough appearances or mentions to be considered more than a cameo or minor character is called a supporting character. In Black Swan, there are three supporting characters: Thomas Leroy, the ballet director, who holds high expectations for Nina and puts her under constant pressure. He insists that she master both the Black and White Swan roles perfectly. Erica Sayers, Nina's mother, wishes for her daughter to be ambitious and take on the leading role in Swan Lake, believing Nina has the potential to achieve fame that eluded her. Meanwhile, the arrival of Lily, a new dancer at Nina's studio, causes Nina to view her as a rival, leading to a change in Nina's behavior.

3. Rival Balerina

A rival is someone competing for the same goal as another or trying to match or surpass them. In addition to being a new dancer, Lily is Nina's competitor for the role of Swan Queen, particularly for the Black Swan role. Moreover, many other rival dancers also aspire to take on the Swan Queen role.

EVENTS

1. Nina practicing hard alone until last night



Nina practicing hard until last night (01:19:12)

The events that illustrate Nina's ambition are practicing hard until late at night. She practiced late at night because she doubted herself and was still trying to reach her ambition as the Black Swan. Previously, during the rehearsal, Nina was accompanied by a piano player, but soon the piano player rushed home. Nina practiced hard until late at night to play the role of the Black Swan to the fullest.

2. Taking Beth's makeup without permission



Nina taking Beth's makeup without her permission (00:12:25)

Nina enters Beth's room and she looks at Beth's makeup. Nina took the makeup without Beth's permission. The purpose of Nina taking Beth's makeup was to become as perfect and famous as Beth because, as we know, Beth is the previous famous ballerina.

3. Asking to Thomas Leroy



Nina asked Thomas Leroy (00:20:36)

Nina met Thomas in his room. She did everything possible to convince Thomas she could play the Black Swan. She was very ambitious. She asks Thomas to consider her for the lead role, indicating she is ready to step up and take on the challenge.

SETTING

The setting is everything that happens somewhere or sometimes. The setting is an element of fiction that reveals to the audience where and when an event occurs. Setting and plot are of primary importance in developing the whole story, making the story more realistic and alive (Sokantara & Marantika, 2023).

1. Ballet Studio



Ballet Studio in New York City

Ballet Studio is located in New York City. Nina, Lily, and the other performers use the studio for ballet practice. The studio has visuals with mirrored walls and a barre. It is the place where Nina, Lily, and the other ballerinas practice ballet. Ballet dancers are ambitious to achieve success and fame.

2 Nina's Apartment



Nina's and her mother's apartment

Nina's apartment reflects her character. The apartment makes her have ambitions to become famous. Nina has no privacy so her mother always monitors all her activities.

3. Balerina's dressing room



Balerina's dressing room

The ballerinas dressing room reflects the competition and ambition of the performers to perform their best in the Swan Lake performance. In the dressing room provides an intimate view into the competition among ballerinas, including Nina and Lily and the pressure they feel to maintain or enhance their reputations.

The analyst utilized Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Perspective. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the pioneer of psychoanalysis, a clinical approach for treating psychological disorders through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. His theories revolutionized our understanding of human psychology and significantly influenced various academic disciplines, including literature, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry (Amir & Sahib, 2024). Thus, as psychology evolved, Sigmund Freud studied and developed it further, applying his model of thought regarding the id, Ego, and Superego in 1923. In Black Swan movie, the id, Ego, and Superego from Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be used to interpret Nina's ambition of fame in the film. Nina's relentless pursuit of success and fame as a ballet dancer reflects her id; this is particularly evident in her intense rivalry to obtain the major role in "Swan Lake," namely the part of the

Black Swan. Her Ego is on show as she battles self-doubt, anxiety, and hallucinations in an attempt to hold onto who she is despite the demands of her desire. Her Superego also influences Nina's ambition since she wants to live up to her mother's expectations.

CONCLUSION

This study's findings reveal that Nina Sayers in Black Swan movie actively longs for stardom, which can be analyzed using Freud's id, Ego, and superego framework. The conflict between intrinsic desires and many people's expectations interprets Nina's ambition to become famous. While her id propels her toward the need for acknowledgment and validation linked to her pursuit of fame, her Superego sets stringent standards and self-restraint. This internal conflict leads to Nina's psychological unraveling, underscoring the harmful consequences of unattainable aspirations amidst unresolved internal struggles and societal pressures. This research has found that Nina Sayers' ambition to be famous is portrayed through Sigmund Freud's three concepts of Psychoanalysis: Id, Ego, and Superego. Future research can be continued with other topics or even use the developed topic.

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