

Multiple personality disorder in black swan by darren aronofsky

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



“Black Swan” is not the fairy tale of “swan lake” but a story of a ballerina, Nina. The story begins with the change of the company, the old lead dancer Beth is about to leave. The stage needs a new lead dancer who can act as both white swan and black swan to re-perform the ballet “swan lake”, the girls vie for the leading role, including Nina. Nina had been practicing ballet since she was a child, she was skilled, smart, beautiful and charming. Under the strict discipline of her cold single mother who also used to be a ballet dancer but gave up her dance career due to accidental pregnancy, Nina has been a particularly obedient and hardworking daughter since childhood. However, as a result, Nina is less of a bold and unrestrained passion, youth and sexual vitality in her body cannot be reflected. Nina pursues perfection by dancing carefully with each step, she is self-suppression and lack of emotional release. Therefore, although Nina hopes to win the coveted lead role, she cannot complete the role transformation of the evil and seductive black swan. As a result, in the selection, director Thomas felt she was not up to the job. Nina went home frustrated, practiced in her tiny room and trying to be perfect. She also tried to communicate with the director to let him know what she was doing, but instead of a satisfactory answer, she got a rude kiss. Just when nothing seemed to change her fate, Nina’s name appeared in the lead position on the final list. On the one hand, Nina practiced hard, but on the other hand, she was always afraid that someone would compete for this role with her. Under the great pressure of high mental tension and being replaced by other girls at any time, Nina began to suffer from mental hallucinations, accompanied by physical self-harm. During the following boring rehearsal, Nina was repeatedly asked to release

herself during the performance so as to conquer the audience in the part of the black swan performance. At the same time, she also felt more and more deeply worried about being replaced by others around a stronger sense of coercion. She tried to constantly adjust her state of mind to make the performance “ perfect”, however, she could not control the “ black swan” repressed in her heart for a long time anymore. Finally, at the end of the show, from her abdomen poured out of blood, Nina recognized that all the threats of being replaced is originally the illusion of herself in the mirror, the previous fear came from her own heart. When the moment of the white swan dares to pick up the broken glass to face the black swan, she has already had the strong spiritual strength and rebellious courage, just like in the ballet, timid and cowardly white swan only get the real freedom after suicide.

In the performance, the two parts of Nina’s personality (white swan and black swan) were completely split come on stage at the same time in her spiritual world. In temporary state of schizophrenia, Nina forcefully suppressed the main personality of “ white swan” by the extreme behavior of self-harm, allowing the successor personality “ black swan” to shine on the stage. Multiple personality, also known as dissociative personality, is a personality type with dissociation as the main defense mechanism.

According to Sigmund Freud, the individual is twofold: one peruses of his own ends, and the other as a link in a chain in which he opposes, or does not have his own will. (Freud, 1899) Generally, such patients have a part of the main personality. All emotions, thoughts and words and actions are carried out according to the characteristics of the main personality, without showing the traces of another identity. When the process of dissociation takes place,

usually after mental stimulation, it suddenly changes into a completely different identity, and all emotions, thoughts, words and actions act in accordance with the subsequent personality. When the successor personality starts to “ govern”, the original subject personality is not aware of it and forgets what has happened. The competition of the leading role in the dance, the unsmooth rehearsal and the high pressure of being replaced by the role are the realistic stimulation factors that lead to Nina’s multiple personality disorder and accompanying psychotic hallucinations and auditory hallucinations.

However, Nina had multiple personality traits even before that. When the mother notices obvious scratches on Nina’s body, she says that Nina’s bad habits are back on, which means that Nina has been scratching herself uncontrollably since she was a child and she cannot remember. The lovely girl in her mother’s eyes and the graceful white swan on the stage are Nina’s main personality in the real life, which is obedient, smart, sensitive and fragile, but Nina’s personality power is clearly not in the “ white swan” part of the main personality. At the beginning of the film, Nina left home to participate in the rehearsal of the leading role, on the subway, she saw the woman in black who looked like her for the first time from the reflection of the windows, it was the beginning of high pressure that directly stimulated her mental illness. Then, whenever Nina is faced with the pressure and stimulation brought by the dance, she will see another self in the mirror or in the water, which is another seductive and evil personality that she deeply represses. As the pressure of reality increased, the other self she saw came

closer and closer, and with blood, wounds and anger, jumped straight into reality and walked toward her. As the hallucinations became more real and frightening, Nina's personality disorder had unwittingly developed into a more serious psychiatric problem- this is Nina's disease, but also her struggle for self-salvation.

In addition, as children go through latency, adolescence and adulthood, the identities may develop in number, complexity, and a sense of separation (R. P. Kluft, 1984; Putnam, 1997), the root cause of Nina's potential negative energy was her childhood experiences. The identities in psychoanalytic theory, the repression of sexual desire is the most important factor causing numerous psychological problems, which can also be well confirmed from the film. Nina grew up in a single-parent family, and the absence of her father's love since childhood undoubtedly had a huge impact on her psychological development. Moreover, Nina seemed to completely lose contact with the outside world due to her mother's excessive protection and micromanagement. Nina's mother attributed her perceived failure to having a daughter and being a single mother, which is a mother with a serious lack of narcissism. When she feels that she has devoted the best years of her life to raise her daughter and poured her heart into training her to become an excellent dancer, Nina has become an extension of her narcissistic satisfaction and an attachment to her personality. What is more, she was emotionally fragile, but her actions were so controlling that she clung to Nina, who is in her twenties. When Nina was out a little late, her mother's urgent phone call was bound to ring, when female colleagues came to visit,

they were also turned away by Nina's mother. Everything appears to be worried about her daughter out turning and safety issues, but in fact, it is the fear of her daughter's independence and departure will make her escape into the inner emptiness of the lack of narcissism. Nina has no choice in the subject personality part, only the authority and evaluation system symbolized by her mother. It is necessary to "take off the bright coat, appeal to intuition and present the truth" to play the swan queen, who is dressed in both black and white, which is exactly what Nina in the white swan part lacks. She is used to giving up her true feelings to satisfy her mother's emotional needs. Nina's self-control naturally permeates the dance, and each gesture can achieve the perfect standard, but isolated from the intuition of life; each step can jump to the outside world to appreciate the perfect, but lost her true feelings. Nina finally gets rid of the control of the real mother and the inner image of mother, which takes place on the night of the performance. Seeing that Nina was under too much pressure, her mother locked her in the room and stopped her from going to the show. Nina broke out, attacked her mother violently, knocked her to the ground, found the key and rushed to the show without looking back. This struggle meant betrayal and "abandonment" of her mother, but it also symbolized her emotional and spiritual independence. Before the black swan character took the stage, Nina experienced the most intense confrontation between multiple personalities in the dressing room. Rival Lily appears in Nina's hallucination, competing for the role. Nina stimulated herself through delusion of persecution, the "black swan" personality part stabbed the glass to Lily and killed her. In fact, Nina stabbed the glass into her stomach and killed another part of her personality

in the psychotic hallucination, allowing “black swan” to walk to the center of the psychological stage in a justifiable manner. In the last act of the show, the white swan jumps off a cliff and commits suicide. At this time, black swan in Nina’s body has been completely resurrected, she found her bleeding wounds. What is more, the multiple personality and the illusion of murder both came to her conscious mind at this moment. Instead of escaping into the chaos and fragmentation of the schizophrenic world, she took an affectionate look at her mother in the audience from the cliff top of the stage as a white swan, and then made a determined leap. Before she passed out, she smiled and said, “this is what I want to be perfect.”

Almost everyone has a white swan and a black swan, with a preference for white, for black, or an attempt to balance the two energies. Nina’s growing up experience makes her sacrifice the black part of expression to seek peace of emotional and real life. However, the deeper the repression, the stronger the forces within the black hole that seek to bounce back are. Even though Nina had separated the black swan part from a part of her personality that she didn’t know existed, it was still with the body, looking for every opportunity to scream, dance and prove its existence. So the swan was born and so it was destroyed, maybe we get a perfect swan queen, but we really cannot perfect the whole life, because the so-called perfect, is only the hard exploration of the fragile spiritual world.