SELF INDIVIDUATION PROCESS IN THE MAIN CHARACTER OF *BLACK SWAN* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

Black Swan movie directed by Darren Aronofsky is a movie which includes many psychological aspects in it. This movie tells us about a journey to find the true self of the main character named Nina Sayers. The writer uses library research in collecting the data. The objectives of this thesis are to describe both intrinsic aspects which include narrative (theme, character, setting and conflict) and cinematic elements (mise-en-scene, camera distance, and sound) and to explain extrinsic aspects. To analyze the extrinsic aspects of the movie, the writer usespsychological approach. The writer analyses how Nina finds her true self related to Carl Jung theory about self individuation process. There are four kinds of archetypes in order to acknowledge the self individuation process. They are "persona", "shadow", "anima and animus", and "Self". Eventually, the writer finds that Nina does not experience those four archetypes. The result of this thesis is the "shadow" and "persona" are two archetypes which dominate Nina. It can be stated that the main character does not succeed in the process of self individuation proposed by Carl Gustav Jung.

Keyword: life, journey, the true self, analytical psychology, self-individuation, archetype

INTRODUCTION

Literature has become an important part of human beings for ages. It develops that literature not only become part of human's being life but also lifestyle for the consumer. As time goes by, technology also improves dramatically that literature can be enjoyed through film. The film functions as a media to depict the imagination, ideas, thoughts, feelings, or information toward the viewer. Therefore, the viewer can sense the message that the film maker makes. The film may contain several themes that the viewer may be interested in such as thriller, action, science fiction, or even psychology.

Black Swan is one of the movies involving psychological aspects. The writer is interested in analyzing how this movie actually describes the deepest side of human being. Most of the psychological aspect can be found in Nina Sayers as the main character. Eventually, she strives to gain a perfection which leads her to self destruction. This phenomenon reflects the self individuation process that is experienced by Nina. Self

individuation is actually a term given by Carl Gustav Jung in his theory of analytical psychology.

The unconsciousness is Jung's main interest. He analyzes more about human's spiritual of personality. As stated in *PsikologiDalam* by Dewi and Kahija,

"pemikiran Jung lebihbersifat spiritual dimanakepribadianmanusiaterpusatdanmengarahpada Self (diriterdalam). Upayamanusiaseumurhidupadalahmenemukan Self itu.Penemuan Self inidisebutindividuasidiri.Perjalananmenujuindividuasidiriadalahperjalananpanjang yang melewatiberbagaitantangan, khususnyaberbagaikompleksdalamketidaksadaran personal danberbagaiarketipedalamketidaksadarankolektif.Pribadi yang sehatadalahpribadi yang telahmenyadarikompleks-kompleksnyadanmengenalarketipe-arketipedalamdirinya" (2012:52).

In his theory, Jung considers that human has a spiritual journey in discovering himself. He states that it is a life time journey for human. This is also called individuation process. It is a very long journey which includes all obstacles and challenges in personal unconsciousness and various archetypes of collective unconsciousness.

Personal unconsciousness exists behind human's consciousness. It is relative since people sometimes realize, sometimes not if they do something. Another unconsciousness part of human is called collective unconsciousness. It consists of some archetypes which exist in every person. Archetype comes in various forms. Actually, these archetypes are commonly known but sometimes they are uncommonly recognized. All those forms are symbols needed to be understood. There are five main kinds of archetypes in Jung's theory which are "persona", "shadow", "anima" and "animus", "manna", and "Self". These archetypes must be recognized its existence in order to manage the process of self individuation.

Jung explains that self individuation must be experienced by one's life. The writer will use this theory as tools to examine the extrinsic aspect of the *Black Swan* film.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

The writer uses library research to collect the data for both intrinsic and extrinsic aspect of the movie. As it is stated by Mary W. George that "library research involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal / expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point" (2008:6).

SELF INDIVIDUATION

Self individuation is a term given by Carl Gustav Jung to explain about an actualization of someone in figuring out who they are. It is a very long journey in order to find out one's self. Jung believes that every person's development leads to this process. Self individuation talks about how human bring consciousness and unconsciousness part all together. It can be inferred that it is every one's struggle to bring ego as the center of consciousness to the unconsciousness (Self). Jung states,

"The unconscious is a process, and that the psyche is transformed and developed by the relationship of the ego to the contents of the unconscious… Through the study of… collective transformation processes and through understanding alchemical symbolism I arrived at the central concept of my psychology: *the process of individuation*." (Jung in Nicolaus, 1995: 235)

Therefore, it is concluded that a healthy personality must acknowledge the unity of the ego (consciousness) and the Self (unconsciousness). The consciousness part is very important since it is related to the outer world. Through this part we can understand what happens around us. Meanwhile, the unconsciousness is the part we cannot understand easily. Unconsciousness part consists of personal unconsciousness which includes many complex in it, and collective unconsciousness involving many archetypes in it. These all archetypes will help the formation of self individuation in one's life. If a person already recognizes all the archetypes in his life, then it can be said that he has experienced the self individuation process well.

There are five main archetypes which will help the process of the self individuation. They are "persona", "shadow", "anima and animus", and "*Self*".

PERSONA

Persona is one of the archetypes existed in Jung's theory of Analytical Psychology. Persona is often synonymous as hero/heroine. According to Cassement in her book *Key Figures in Counselling and Psychotherapy,*

> "The definition of persona is that it represents that aspect of an individual which is in relation to the outer world. It derives from the Greek word for 'mask' and denotes those masks that were worn by actors in performing comic/tragic parts in Greek plays. The less acceptable parts of the personality are kept hidden behind the persona. A

well-differentiated person develops a well – fitting persona and the latter is essential for survival" (2001 : 142).

As stated above, persona or hero/heroine tries to reveal the fake figure of someone who pretends to be someone which is not himself. It can also be seen in the diagram above that persona always relates to the outer world. The purpose is for the sake of approval or survival of the society or environment. The writer believes that each of individual has something he/she has to deal in life. It leads someone to 'wear' that mask in order to be approved in that situation, environment or society. Although it causes him to lie or cheat himself to be someone else. Jung's theory believes that every human being has his own mask that is not recognized by people except one's self.

The rise of the acceptance of the social requirements is very important in which it leads people to 'put on' the mask. This assumption derives from the fact that people manage to actualize themselves by becoming what society wants them to be. Jung called this phenomena as a compromise between one and society in order to fit in into the community or environment. On the other word, people willingly appears to be someone different so they can fulfill the demand of the society.

SHADOW

Shadow is another archetype in Jung's theory. Jung states that it is the first stage or journey in the process of the self individuation. It is completely different from persona. Shadow reflects the dark side of human being. As we know that shadow depicts the dark or black color, therefore, it actually refers to the dark or evil side of human being. It is in line with Cassement's statement (2001 : 143) "Archetypal shadow is identified with the dark side of the self, which is here treated as an archetype. It is the archetypal shadow that Jung was referring to when he talked about the existence of evil."

According to Fordham in Killick's book *Art, Psychotherapy and Psychosis (: 244)*,

"The shadow is the personal unconscious; it is all those uncivilized desires and emotions that are compatible with social standards and our ideal personality, all that we are ashamed of, all that we do not want to know about ourselves. It follows that the narrower and more restrictive the society in which we live the larger will be our shadow."

The statement above implies that shadow is a kind of archetype which opposing the true self or personality. It can be inferred that the shadow's existence is against the ideal

personality. Shadow always tends to do anything which break the social rules or standards. Therefore, Jung states that shadow depicts the image of evil.

Copra pictures that the existence of shadow is undeniable. In his book *The Shadow Effect: Illuminating the Hidden Power of Your True Self,* he states

> "Ignoring or repressing our dark side is the norm, the sobering truth is that running from the shadow only intensifies its power. Denying it only leads to more pain, suffering, regret and resignation. If we fail to take responsibility and extract the wisdom that has been hidden beneath the surface of our unconscious minds, the shadow will take charge, and instead of us being able to have control over it, the shadow winds up having control over us, triggering the shadow effect" (2010 : 2).

It can be summed up that shadow is "the existence" we should admit. The more people deny its existence, the more it destroys and takes over their personality. Thus, recognizing the shadow is one's responsibility toward himself.

ANIMA AND ANIMUS

Jung believes that anima and animus is the second stage in discovering the self individuation process (Huskinson, 2014). In Latin language, words which is ended with suffix "-a" refers to female/feminine while suffix "-us" refers to male/masculine. Anima is woman's soul which is existed in male. On the other side, animus is male's soul which exists in female. Huskinson states in his book,

> "Jung's concept of the anima and the animus is enabled many individuals to accept themselves as they are and not as they should be according to rigid gender stereotypes. On the other hand, in describing anima and animus, Jung is basically using the established gender stereotypes of his time to define what is female and what is male."

There are stereotypes made by the society in depicting the characteristic of male and female. Male is characterized as a person who is decisive, bold, argumentative, responsible, working hard, etc. On the other side, female is characterized as a person who is gentle, patient, passionate, easy to forgive, etc. Therefore, this archetype tells that male has female's component and male also has female's component. Anima and animus often appear in a dream. Sometimes they appear in many symbols related to the gender. For example, female's symbol is often described as earth, cow, cat, cave, or ship. While male's symbol is described as eagle, lion, penis, tower or castle (Dewi and Kahija : 2012)

SELF

Self is the center or the deepest part in human unconsciousness. Jung views "the Self as both the center and the totality of the psyche, it has a strong claim to be regarded as the central concept of his entire psychology. The Self is the goal toward which the process of individuation strives" (Papadopoulos : 2006).

Self can also be translated as who we really are or our true self. Human should recognize the self into the consciousness part in order to have a healthy personality. Self appears in a very complex way in our collective unconsciousness. In a dream, there are various symbols which depict a power and figure that looks strange and unrecognized.

Self Individuation Process In The Main Character Of *Black Swan* Movie

SELF – INDIVIDUATION

Self - individuation is the process that must be encountered by everyone. In order to successfully manage to the self individuation process, one must face a very long process in his entire life. Therefore, the writer will analyze if the main character of the movie has successfully experienced the self individuation. The key of success in this process is to recognize all the complex and archetypes that help the process of self individuation. There are main archetypes that will be analyzed through the main character, Nina, they are "persona", "shadow", "anima or animus" and "*Self*".

PERSONA

Jung believes that each of person has persona. Persona is often symbolized as 'mask' covering our face. Therefore, people will not see our true self unless they let go the mask. This theory proposed by Carl Gustav Jung is experienced by Nina as the main character of this film.

This persona actually begins when Nina convinces Thomas that she can dance both the white and black swan. In fact, Nina is an innocent yet is very perfectionist. It can be said that she accepts the 'challenge' to dance both although she has to be someone else. The conversation between Nina and Thomas is depicted by the dialogue in minute (00:20:37 – 00:21:25).

Thomas	: When I look at you, all I see is the white swan. Yes you're beautiful, fearful, fragile. Ideal casting. But the black swan? It's a hard fucking job to dance both.
Nina	: I can dance the black swan too.
Thomas	: Really? In four years, every time you dance, I see obsess getting each and every move perfectly right but I never see you lose yourself. Ever. All that discipline for what?
Nina	: I just want to be perfect.
Thomas	: You what?
Nina	: I want to be perfect.
`Thomas	: Perfection is not just about control. It's also about letting go. Surprise yourself so you can surprise the audience. Transcendence.

(***Black Swan*** (00:20:37 – 00:21:25)

The moment when she lied or cheat to herself to become someone who is not herself brings such a depression on her. Some scenes show how Thomas asks Nina to 'seduce' the audience in the middle of the practice. He also asked Nina to give him more than just a 'bite'. This pressure somehow makes Nina to put that mask on so she can impresses Thomas and prove to everybody that she is perfect. It is proven in picture 36 which is taken with medium shot technique. It depicts that Thomas asked Nina to metamorphosed into the evil twin of white swan.

Picture 36   (00:27:49)   **Picture 37   (00:12:44)**

Another evidences which reflect the persona of Nina is the fact that she admires Beth Macyntire and wants to be like her. She is obsessed to be like her until she steals Beth's stuffs like lipstick, ear ring and knife. It is depicted in picture 37. This act leads her to be as stunning as Beth so everyone impressed by her. Beth is one of a senior ballet dancer in The Royal. But because of some controversy, she has to retired to the career. Beth character is very different with Nina's. But here Nina wants to be like Beth when she dances because she is terrifyingly beautiful. The fact that Beth can dance bot terrifying and perfect can be proven in this dialogue in minute (00:41:34 – 00:41:56)

Thomas	: You know what, I'm almost sure she did it on purpose.
Nina	: How do you know?

Thomas   : Because everything Beth does comes from within, from some dark impulse. I guess that's what makes her so thrilling to watch. So dangerous.Even perfect at times.But also so damned destructive.

(*Black Swan* **00:41:34 – 00:41:56**)

SHADOW

As stated in the theory previously that shadow is the dark side of human being. It is all those uncivilized desires and emotions that are compatible with social standards and our ideal personality, all that we are ashamed of, all that we do not want to know about ourselves. In this film, it can be seen clearly that shadow is reflected indeed on Nina as the main character. It actually begins with her character which is a perfectionist one then it leads her to wear the 'mask' in order to be accepted or gained praises from people. The story continues reflecting how shadow influences her character and life.

Picture 38 (00:15:55) Picture 39 (00:40:10)   Picture 40 (00:51:24)

The shadow mechanism firstly is shown in picture 38 where Nina sees someone exactly looked like her wearing black clothes. In fact, it is just her hallucination that she is just someone else. This picture depicts the sign of her other self or the other words, the evil side of her personality. The story continues when Nina starts to touch herself just what Thomas asks her to. She masturbates in her room where she never does it before. She eventually stops it as she realize her mother is next to her. The event is portrayed in picture 39. The sound background used is using strings orchestra instrumental which depicts tense atmosphere.

Eventually, the shadow mechanism is developing as Nina starts to metamorphose leaving her true personality. Picture 40 which is taken with close up technique shows when she masturbates again in the bathroom. After she masturbates, there is some shed of blood on the water symbolizing sign that she is going to die. The picture is described in picture 41. Then, picture 42 symbolizes the appearing of the figure of her shadow.

Another evidences regarding to the mechanism is when she kisses a boy in a club. At that time, she already loses herself or even trains herself by letting the shadow influence and

control her. It can be seen in picture 43. Then, picture 44 is another proof that Nina already loses herself. The picture depicts when Nina and Lily have sex in Nina's room. In fact, it is all just Nina's hallucination since Lily confesses she does not sleep with Nina that night. The sound background used in the scene is the same as picture 39 which uses strings orchestra instrumental depicting a tense situation.
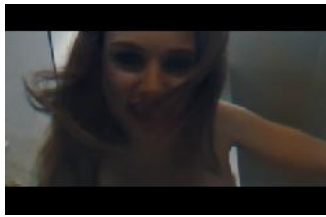
Picture 41 (51:50)   Picture 42 (00:51:53)Picture 43(01:05:20)
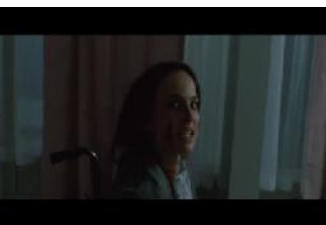

Picture 44 (01:08:48) Picture 45 (01:16:54)   Picture 46   (01:33:26)
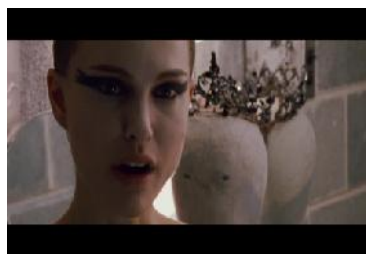

Picture 47 (01:10:13)   Picture 48 (01:22:37)   Picture 49 (01:20:39)

Picture 50 (01:33:15)

The figure of the shadow appears multiple times in picture 45, 47, 48, 49, and 50. Picture 45 describes when Nina prepares the clothes for the performance. In picture 47, the figure of the shadow appears when Lily hallucinates of having sex with Lily. In fact, it is the

mechanism done by the shadow. Another mechanism is shown in picture 48 when Beth turns into Nina's copy and begin to stab herself with a knife. Picture 49 depicts another hallucination of Nina when she sees Lily and Thomas having sex in the backstage. Eventually, Lily's face also turns into Nina's copy. The last time the shadow appears is in picture 50. It is again Nina's hallucination when Lily tries to replace her role as the swan queen. Lily's face transforms into Nina's copy (shadow). The conversation can be seen below in minute 01:32:56 – 01:33:20.

> Lily : Rough start, huh? Must have been pretty humiliating.
> Nina : Get out of my room.
> Lily : See, I'm just worried about the next act. I'm just not sure you're feeling up to it.
> Nina : Stop. Please, stop.
> Lily : How about I dance the black swan for you?
> Nina : Leave me alone!
> (***Black Swan*** **01:32:56 – 01:33:20**)

Meanwhile, in picture 46, another mechanism of shadow on Nina is seen. It shows how Nina somehow kills Lily whom she considers as her rival. In fact, she does not realize that actually she kills herself by stabbing the knife on her stomach.

In dialogue in minute 01:21:50 – 01:22:25, it is highlighted that shadow is somehow overcome Nina's life. Nina came to the hospital to see Beth and tell her the truth that she is obsessed with Beth.

> Beth : What are you doing here?
> Nina : I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry! I know how it feels now. She's trying to replace me. What do I do?
> Beth : You stole my things?
> Nina : I was just trying to be perfect like you.
> Beth : Perfect? Oh, I'm not perfect.
> (***Black Swan*** **01:21:50 – 01:22:25**)

The final mechanism is occurred in the end of the performance when the black feathers start to cover her whole body symbolizing the shadow that totally influences and changes her personality. It is depicted in picture 51 and picture 52. Picture 51 is taken by using long shot technique. In the picture, the shadow somehow destroys her own personality which symbolizes her whole body covered by the black feathers. Picture 52 depicts how the feathers starts to grow covering her whole body. The sound effect supports the scene with the sound of the feather's rise on her whole body. In the end, this symbolization leads Nina to death.
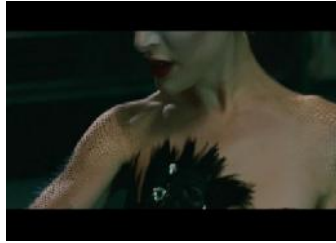
Picture 51 (01:36:37)   **Picture 52 (01:36:02)**

ANIMA AND ANIMUS

Since the main character of *Black Swan* is a woman then it can be said that she has men's soul according to Jung's theory. On the other words, she has "animus" mechanism on herself. Jung believes that unconsciously there is some male elements which exist on female. We can see from the main character, Nina who somehow acts like a man along with male's characteristic.

Some evidences are shown from some scenes that Nina is very determinant, competitive and working hard. In a dialogue between Nina and her mother, it implies that Nina is a work harder kind of person because she practices the dance everyday. It is shown in minute 00:17:45 – 00:18:10.

Nina's Mom   : You're working yourself too hard. We all have off days.
Nina   : If that girl hadn't barged in…
Nina's Mom   : I'm sure she didn't mean to. Remember when you first started? If I hadn't taken you to each of your classes, you would have been completely lost.
Nina   : I'm going to talk to him tomorrow. I'm going to tell him I finished it.
Nina's Mom   : You don't need to lie. It won't convince him one way or the other.
(***Black Swan*** **00:17:45 – 00:18:10**)

The next morning, Nina eventually goes to see Thomas to ask for a part. It is a very brave act since Nina must have known that Thomas had to choose any role in his project of Swan Lake. But she takes a further step to see Thomas if he wants to give the main character to her. It is seen in picture 48 which is taken by using medium shot. In picture 49 which is taken by using extreme close up technique, her hard working nature is also shown where her foot finger is attached one another. It proves that Nina puts too much effort in it which cause her foot that way.

Picture 53 (00:19:28)Picture 54 (01:28:28)

SELF

After recognizing all the archetypes above, *Self* is the archetype which becomes the center of the unconsciousness. It appears in a dream in various symbols. But in fact, the writer cannot find the existence of Self mechanism on Nina as the main character. The scenes are dominated with Nina hallucination not in her dream. Therefore, in this film, it can be concluded that Nina has not encountered this archetype yet.

CONCLUSION

Self individuation is a process that must be encountered by every single person in order to recognize their true self. This life-time process requires much effort to acknowledge all of the complex and archetypes in our unconsciousness. Self individuation is considered succeed if one can admit the existence of all the complex and archetypes. The main archetypes are persona, shadow, anima and animus, and Self. These archetypes help people in order to manage the process of self individuation.

The writer found that all archetypes are experienced by the main character, Nina Sayers except the Self. There are four evidences of persona mechanism which can be found. These evidences are determined because of Nina's characteristic. Her characteristic shows that she pretends to be someone else in order to be accepted by the environment. This leads to her transformation becoming someone who is really different. Another characteristic found on persona mechanism is her ambition in striving for perfection. Her ambition itself is the reason why she must become someone else.

Shadow is another archetypes who mostly dominates Nina. There are 17 evidences the writer has found based on her characteristic. Shadow tends to appear in her other figure,

which is the evil one. In the film, shadow appears in many scenes. Another characteristic regarding the mechanism of the shadow is the dramatic metamorphosis of Nina. The tendency of shadow is to overcome one's self. Nina shows how shadow eventually controls her whole personality unconsciously. Later, the shadow somehow destroys herself making her die.

Animus is male's characteristic existed on female. Nina is considered to have many characteristic of male. There are 3 evidences which show its mechanism toward Nina. They are the competitiveness, hard-working and courage.

However, the archetype of Self cannot be found on Nina. Self is appeared through a dream symbolizing various figures or object. But in this film, its mechanism do not exist since Nina mostly hallucinates things instead of dreams about it.

Hence, it can be concluded that Nina does not manage the process of self individuation successfully. It is because she can not recognize all of her archetypes well. In fact, based on the analysis previously, the mechanism of shadow and persona mainly dominates the main character. This is the reason of Nina's disability to control these archetypes which finally causes her to death.

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