

Black Swan: a case study of a diagnosis and treatment planning course

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Author note

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BLACK SWAN: A CASE STUDY

A. Black Swan Synopsis

Black swan is a psycho-melodrama movie from Darren Aronofsky that is known as a glittering movie in 2010. This movie is about a 25s beautiful, vulnerable, sexually naive and susceptible to mental illness ballerina. Starring by Natalie Portman as Nina Sayers, the ballerina, she has to explore her dark side deeply to perform her role in this movie. She fears of penetration (having sex with a man), fear of body shape or being fate, fear of being replaced in the affections of a powerful man, love of being perfect, love of dancing, and the most important among all is passionate and overwhelming hatred of her mother who was a ballerina also.

Nina is striving for perfection ballerina in a New York City ballet company who has low-level and self-harm problems. In a tiny New York City apartment, painted with her mother's narcissistic paintings, Nina lives with her mother, Erica, who is controlling and difficult because of her experience as an impressive and satisfyingly nasty performance. She left her own stagnant ballet career because of pregnancy by an irresponsible wealthy person, and sent her into her wrath and disenchantment to her resulting daughter. She gave up dance to have her daughter and tries to infantilise her daughter bedroom with pinky colour, gonks, and also a dolorous musical box that sounds the theme of Swan Lake.

In the company, Vincent Cassel serves as Thomas Leroy, an exacting company director. He is looking for ballerina who can play the lead in Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake", a role that require her to perform both the gentle white and the seductive black swans. His eyes direct to Nina, a fragile and repressed ballerina. However, he told Nina that she has a big challenge to play the evil twin character. She has to shed her "sweet girl" persona and embrace her darker side such as sensuality to fully play the role and to meet her demanding and sexually aggressive director. To play the role, Nina works hard to practice and also to form her body

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and eventually her metamorphosis is so complete, that Nina develops webbed feet, bird-like legs and sprouts feathers and wings to actually become the black swan.

In one occasion, Thomas invites Nina to his apartment to have drinks intimately. In order to train Nina, he told Nina to go home and touch herself and also touch Thomas as one of the training agenda. Of this instruction, Nina goes home and does what Thomas said in her bed by masturbating. However, she is so surprised when her mother is beside her bed. She finally canceled to masturbate.

In addition, Thomas also encourages Nina to see the new ballerina of the company funky free spirit and Olympic-standard minx Lily. Mila Kunis serves as Lily in this movie. She helps Nina to unleash her dark side of herself with seductive overtures of friendship and other activities. Through this occasion Nina feels that Lily wants to steal her role in Swan Lake and makes her anxiety increase and worried about wierd feathery shin-rash in her body and becomes convinced that her mirror reflection stay look at her after she has finished in the opposite of the mirror and turned away.

In her visual hallucinations, she sees herself in a black-clad version across the subway platform and also in the crowded of hallways at Lincoln Center. In addition, the pink stuffed animals in her bedroom, where she shares with her neurotic mother, seem to come alive and laugh at her. She experiences a series of fantasies and delusions, and also including a lesbian love scene with Lily. They previously swallowed Ecstasy, a powerful hallucinogen, before Nina and Lily take in one libidinous scene.

Nina is meticulous in preparing her slippers, lining up the make-up in the dressing room and washing her hands at each turn. In some scenes, there are some hints of anorexia when she look at a simple pink grapefruit for breakfast and turns away the fatty-look cake her mother buys to celebrate getting the coveted role in the Swan Lake. Furthermore, Nina goes to the

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bathroom frequently to throw-up. She also scratch her fingers and cut her nails that oozes blood as she rips off old scabs.

Through her hallucination she thought that she fights with Lily in the dress room and stab her with the piece of broken mirror in that room and result in blood of Lily. However, as she come back the room to change her costume again, Lily is okay there and there is no blood on the floor as what she saw previously. In the scene, she moves her hand to her abdomen and she finds herself bleeding.

She continues to perform on the stage and in the last scene she, as the White Swan, goes to the top of a large structure to commit suicide. Nina does that performance and falls on a mattress. Everybody enjoys that performance including her mother and also Thomas. After falling, Nina does not speak but she just smiles and listens to the praise of viewer. Lily suddenly notices that Nina is bleeding and have someone to call a help. Thomas asks to Nina “What did you do?” and Nina answers calmly and quietly, “I was perfect” before she dies afterwards.

B. Diagnosis and Treatment plan

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN

Date: November 5, 2012

Patient Details:

Pt. Name: Nina

Description: Nina is a 25s beautiful, vulnerable, sexually naive and susceptible to mental illness ballerina. She has to explore her dark side deeply to perform her role in Swan Lake ballet show. To get the role, she strives to be as perfect as possible ballerina by keeping her dietary for body shape, practice hardly, and explore her sensuality as demanded in the role. In her efforts to reach the goal, she finds herself fears of having sex with a man, fears of body shape or being fate, fears of being replaced in the affections of a powerful man, loves of being perfect, loves of dancing, and the most important among all is passionate and overwhelming thatred of her mother who was a ballerina also. She hallucinates that the reflection of the mirror keep look at her when she is done of using it, refusing fatty food, becoming a sexual object of his director, throwing-up after eating, swallowing Ecstasy and

Risk Assessment

Based on the the risk assessment, she can be considered as risky to harm herself and more over she also harms Lily as her competitor even though it is only in her hallucination. In addition, she also tries to harm Thomas by biting his lips when kissing. She has no enough support system or close people who support her.

Details of Clinical Judgment relating to Risk Assessment

- For many times she have harm herself by scratching her back and also her fingers and in fact she harms herself when in her hallucination she harms Lily.
- In her hallucination, she harms Lily in the dressing room.

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- She is under her mother pressure to become a perfect ballerina and her mother does not aware that Nina has problem in that ballet world.

Outcome Measure (List assessments used to assist with diagnosis)

Based on the movie story, this could be depicted as schizophrenia but it does not present the capture of psychosis. Individual with psychosis usually does not contact with reality but usually includes false beliefs or delusions, and sometimes hears whispers or things that are not there. In the movie, there is no auditory hallucination but visual hallucination that there is something in the mirror, subway, and also fighting with Lily in the dress room. : Nina consumes Ecstasy that could be a powerful hallucinogen, and there are indications that she suffers with anxiety disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and obsessive compulsive disorder

Provisional Diagnosis

Axis I : 307.1 Anorexia Nervosa

292.12 Substance-Induced Psychotic Disorder With Hallucination

Axis II : 301.4 Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

Axis III : None

Axis IV : abusive mother and sexual abuse of her dance director

Axis V : GAF=20 (current)

Based on the movie scenes she experiences Anorexia nervosa. The hints of this clinical condition is when she refused to eat cake that her mother have bought. Based on Halmi et. al (2005) this eating disorder has relationship with perfectionism and also obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. It is clear then that Nina has willing to be perfect physically and in the performance of Swan lake so that she has eating disorder in order to have a perfect body in the dance so that it stimulates fearness that lead to her hallucinations.

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Her hallucination is triggered by her fearfulness of being perfect and also her competition with Lily. In many scenes, her hallucinations portray that there are other people who sometimes make her feel threatened. It becomes clear when Nina goes to her dress room and fights with Lily but in fact, they do not do that but Nina stab her abdomen herself instead. Her anxiety makes her cognitive has compulsive of being perfect and also do not want to lose of other competitor. She also want to perform perfect so that she does practice excessively before the stage performance. This condition is stressful for Nina and makes her always in this condition that lead her mind and behavior on her pursuit of perfectness.

Her abusive mother has an influential role for Nina's condition. Under her mother control, sometimes Nina derive abuse behavior and makes her more and more oppressed. Her mother actually is a factor that could be very helpful for Nina to have healthier mentally but in this condition is opposite. More over, her dance director, Thomas is also an abusive person. He exploits Nina sexually then Nina cannot refuse it because Nina wants to explore her sensuality for the sake of a perfect Swan Lake.

In this condition Nina has attempts to harm her self and other even though for some extent she harms herself instead of other in her hallucinations. Her anxiety of competition and also to reach her perfectness have led her into aggressiveness to hurt herself and others.

Treatment goals

1. Reducing her willing to consume drug or other substance by utilizing substance abuse treatment and family therapy (Kaufman & Yoshioka, 2005).

Based on Kaufman and Yoshioka (2005) family therapy is a collection of therapeutic approaches that share a belief in family level assessment and intervention. IN substance abuse treatment, there are two main purposes of this therapy. First, this therapy seeks to use the family's strengths and resources to help find or develop ways to live without substances of abuse. Second, it reduces the impact of chemical dependency on both the IP and the family.

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2. Alleviating her obsessions of being perfect – Cognitive behavioral therapy (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2007)

Based on Seligman and Reichenberg (2007), cognitive behavioral therapy is structured, problem-centered, and present-oriented, and this therapy only needs limited analysis and expression of emotions. This therapy can be utilized to reduce the dysfunctional actions and also increase their capability to plan their behavior and also make decisions in social activities. Moreover, the client also can have more positive feelings and assertiveness in communication.

3. Enhance her self-development and mental health through Psycho-educational model strategy (Staden and Poggenpoel, 2009)

Staden and Poggenpoel (2009) addressed that dancers, including ballerina, experience common conflict between role identity and self-identity, perfectionism, other-oriented standards, surveillance, need for achievement, use of defences, lack of support system, and career transition. These characteristics are mostly fit with Nina in the movie. In their research, the data indicate that dancers are strongly influenced by environment which is usually potentially negative for their identity. This influence can make dancers to be dependent, depressed, have eating disorders, and also other personality issues. Some aspects of this model consist of creating trust environment, self-awareness, self-responsibility, self-direction, facilitation, and mental health/ self-development.

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