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The Construction Of The Meaning Of "Perfection" In The Narrative Of Darren Aronofsky's Film "Black Swan"

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the narative of the film Black Swan (2010), directed by Darren Aronofsky. The study employs a qualitative text analysis method grounded in Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, which encompasses denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. Research data were obtained through observation of scenes in the film, analysis documents from previous studies and academic sources, interviews with informants who had watched Black Swan, and a sample of comments from the film review community sites IMDb and Letterboxd. Data validity was tested using methodological triangualtion. The results indicate that at the denotative level, the meaning of "perfection" is represented through bodily discipline, self-control, and technical skill in the world of ballet. At the connotative level, perfection is interpreted as a form of obsession, identity conflict, and psychological pressure experienced by Nina, leading to her psychological disintegration. Meanwhile, at the mythical level, perfection is constructed as a cultural ideology that normalizes suffering and sacrifice in the pursuit of a specific ideal standart. This study consludes that the meaning of "perfect" in the film Black Swan is contradictory because, on the one hand, it is viewed as the highest achievement, yet on the othe hand, it ultimately leads to destruction of the identity of Nina Sayers, the film's protagonist.

Keywords: Film; Meaning Construction; Semiotics

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BACKGROUND

With the current developments in the digital age, there is a phenomenon that has given rise to various platforms offering easy access to a wide range of content, including movies. One of the popular media platforms providing high-quality streaming services is Netflix, which, as a pioneer in global streaming services, has become a major player in the entertainment industry and has influenced the way people consume media, particularly movies (Mitrin & Ramadhan, 2024). Movies are a form of mass media that often serve as a source of entertainment. They can be a tool for conveying various messages to the general public through storytelling (Harsono & Pangastono, 2024). There is a fairly popular film with a unique theme available on Netflix; this film features elements of "perfection" often associated with unattainable ideal standards—that can trigger internal conflict within the characters.

This phenomenon is evident in popular culture trends, where an obsession with perfection—such as in the beauty or sports industries—has led to an increase in cases of psychological disorders, as reported in a 2022 survey by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Indonesian Ministry of Health), in which 35% of adolescents in Indonesia reported psychological stress due to expectations of perfection influenced by social media (Indonesian Ministry of Health., 2022). A key relevant issue is how the media shapes the construction of "perfection" as a cultural ideolody that influences individual character a factor often overlooked in mainstream analysis. The film Black Swan (2010), directed by Darren Aronfsky, is an interesting example because it explores an obsession with perfection that leads to psychological transformation and a shift in individual identity. The film depicts the journey of the protagonist, Nina Sayers, as she struggels to land the role of the "Black Swan" in Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake film (Prayoga et al., 2023). Faced with her own limitations and pressure from her ballet instructor, Nina struggles on her journey toward perfection.

Previous research has exmined the deadly desire through Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic approach, discussing the protagonist's highly destructive ambition; however, no study has focused on Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, which explores how the denotative dimension of a ballet performance (as an art form) evolves into the connotative dimension of paranoia (obsession), and ultimately the myth of perfection as a cultural norm that triggers destruction a topic that has nos been sufficiently explored before. The theorethical significance of this research lies in its contribution to the study of meaning construction in media text analysis, particularly through the lenses of semiotics and psychoanalysis, which can help bridge this gap. Practically, the results of this study can raise awareness about the dangers of an obsession with perfection, helping to prevent mental health issues. This research is also relevant for content

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creators to avoid the harmful glorification of perfection. The objective of this study is to conduct a semiotic analysis of the construction of the meaning of "perfect" in the film Black Swan on the Netflix app.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several previous studies on this film have been conducted. Prayoga et al., (2023) discusses the representation of feminism in the Black Swan movie poster using gaze theory, which focuses on a person's gaze toward the objects depicted in the poster. Vignoles-Russell, (2024) In his definition, a film that achieves interiority is one in which the perspective presented on screen is a different or alternative one from that of the protagonist—not the perspective of society in the real world or the film world itself, nor even the director's personal perspective. Lumbanraja et al., (2021) dalam her analysis of the delusional disorder Nina is experiencing, which affects both her physical condition and her perception of the people around her, based on Leeser and O'Donuhue's classification of delusions. Menwhile, Putri & Nugroho, (2024) discusses Nina's obsession with achieving fame through her role as the Black Swan and using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.

Further research conducted by Kurniasih et al., (2024) In relation to feminism and character development, the discussion highlights that Judy in Zotopia (2016) though understimated due to her physical appereance and gender as a woman ultimately succeeded in achieving her dream through her own struggles, drawing on an existential exploration of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist values and Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis. Physical criticism can also serve as a motivating factor for personal change, leading to self-rejection and a decline in self-confidence, as seen in Imperfect (2019) through the lens of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory (Sandra et al., 2025). A study titled "A Phenomenological Study of the Upin and Ipin Animated Series on MNCTV in Shaping Imitative Behavior Among Children at Al-Muhibbin Kindergarten in Sumber Subdistrict, Cirebon Regency" demonstrates that the reciprocal interaction between behavior, environment, and cognitive processes is a key factor in understanding individual mechanisms in the learning process, as revealed through phenomenological research (Sari et al., 2019), which, in this context, relates to the main character in the movie Black Swan and her toxic environment, and how she adapts to it.

A research gap in studies on the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in media texts—particularly films—arises from a lack of in-depth interdisciplinary approaches. Through his semiotic analysis, Roland Barthes has discussed how the media constructs myths as the hidden meanings behind a sign, while Carl Jung has explained the unconscious mind within each

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individual and the development of their personality. However, research that integrates these two frameworks to analyze a specific film Black Swan remains very limited. Most previous studies have focused more on the film's aesthetic dimensions or general psychological aspects, so few have examined how the mechanisms of signs through denotation, connotation, and myth play a role in shaping the internal conflict resulting from an obsession with perfection.

The novelty of this study lies in a previously unexplored combination of approaches: integrating Roland Barthes's semiotics with Carl Jung's psychoanalysis to uncover the construction of "perfection" as a destructive myth that influences narrative formation in the film Black Swan. Unlike previous, separate studies, this research combines a new analytical framework by mapping Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis (elements of denotation, connotation, and myth) with the psychological processes experienced by the protagonist,providing insight into the harmful nature of the obsession with perfection.

Semiotic Analysis

Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis expands on the concept of the sign to uncover the layers of meaning hidden behind cultural representations. He asserts that a sign is not merely a simple symbol, but rather a part of a system that plays a role in shaping social reality. Semiotics, as a model of the social sciences, understands the world as a system of relationships in which the basic unit is the "sign."(Wibowo, 2013). In his semiotic analysis, Roland Barthes identifies three main dimensions: denotation, connotation, and myth;

1. Denotation refers to the literal or direct meaning of a sign, such as a word or image, which is understood objectively without additional interpretation (such as an image of an apple, which denotatively means the fruit);
2. A connotation is an implicit or emotional layer of meaning added by cultural context; for example, in the Bible, an apple connotatively symbolizes knowledge or temptation;
3. Myths, as the deepest dimension, are cultural ideologies hidden behind signs, through which meaning is constructed to reinforce social norms—such as the myth of "success," which oppresses individuals with idealized expectations (Harris, 2021).

This review emphasizes that Barthes's semiotics helps reveal how signs shape our understanding of the world, with the potential to critique power structures in society. Furthermore, in the context of film studies such as Black Swan, this approach opens the door to a more in depth analysis of how the myth of perfection, as a cultural ideolody, can also trigger psychological distress. This underscores that semiotics functions not only as a descriptive tool but also as a crtitical framework for understanding and examining social norms that may be

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potientally harmful.

Construction of Meaning

The construction of meaning refers to the proccess of forming, understanding, and negotiating meaning in texts, communication, or culture, in which individuals or groups build a shared understanding through social interaction, context, and representation (Garcia, 2022). This process involves how elements such as language, symbols, and narratives contribute to meaning, which is often subjective and influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors (Lee, 2023). From the perspective of meaning construction, this process can be viewed as a dynamic in which meaning is not static but is constructed through a dialogue between the sender, the reciever, and the context. For example, in the mass media, the construction of meaning involves how narratives shape perceptions of reality, with the potential to reinforce stereotypes or trigger social change.

The construction of meaning is understood as a process of meaning formation that does not depend solely on signs, but is also influenced by the underlying cultural system and social experiences. In semiotics, Roland Barthes, (1997) explains that meaning is formed through two stages; denotation, as literal meaning, and connotation, as meaning influenced by cultural values, which then develops into myth as a form of ideology that is naturalized within society. Thus, meaning is not static but is continously shaped and reproduced through social practices and symbolic representations. Furthemore, Stuart Hall (1977) emphazise that representation plays a crucial role in this process, as a meaning is generated through language, symbols, and discourse within a culture. From a psychological perspective, the construction of meaning is also linked to an individual's internal dynamics. According to (Jung, 1968), human experience including the interpretation of symbols is influenced by the interaction between the concious and unconscious, particularly through the concept of the "shadow" as a repressed part of the self that nonetheless plays a role in shaping one's understanding of reality. Therefore, the construction of meaning can be understood as the result of the interaction between a system of signs, cultural context, and an individual's psychological state in understanding a phenomenon.

Movie Review

Movies are a form of mass communication that remains a favorite and continues to be popular with the public to this day (Saputra et al., 2022). The way people watch movies has changed due to technological advancement is no longer limited to movie theaters. With the advent of streaming platfroms, a more individualized, global and digital audience has emerged.

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Viewers can watch movies anytime and anywhere, and they can also interact with others via social media to share their opinions and interpretations. This situation has resulted in a more diverse audience, which has also broadened the scope of film's influence on society's social and cultural life (Wessels, 2023). In this digital age, there are various ways to acces movies, ranging from films shown directly in theaters to streaming apps like Netflix. Netflix has evolved from a DVD rental service into one of the world's largest streaming content providers, with over 200 million subscribers worldwide (Eryc et al., 2024). Black Swan is a psychological thriller directed by Darren Aronofsky, released in 2010, and is now availble to watch on Netflix. The film follows the journey of Nina Sayers. Nina is given a golden opportunity to play a dual role in production of Swan Lake: the graceful White Swan and the sensual, mysterious Black Swan. The competitive world of ballet which is steeped in feminime stereotypes as a results of social constructs is often narrowly percieved through attributes such as passivity, gentleness, beauty, and attractiveness, which ultimately limit the scope for expression (Sloey, 2021). However, her obsession with achieving perfection in this role began to take a toll on her mental health, triggering hallucinations, anxiety, and a terrifying transformation of her identity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative text analysis approach. The qualitative text analysis approach is used to study subjects in their natural setting, with the researcher serving directly as the primary instrument. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena experienced by the research subjects, including their behavior, perceptions, and actions (Sugiono, 2014). In this study, this approach is used to analyze the film Black Swan as a media text. The researcher examines the intrinsic elements contained in Black Swan, such as plot, characters, and setting, using semiotic theory that encompasses the dimensions of denotation, connotation, and myth (Roland Barthes, 1977).

The primary subjects of this study are viewers who have watched the film Black Swan; they serve as the main informants. Additional sources, such as film reviews from the media and film websites like IMDb and Letterboxd, were used to corroborate the data presented in this study. The selection of informants in this study was conducted systematically using purposive sampling to obtain relevant and in-depth data in line with the study's focus on the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the film Black Swan (Sugiono, 2014). The subject of this study is the film text, which is analyzed through observation of scenes, dialogue, and visual symbols that appear. Their presence is important because it provides direct empirical experience regarding how the film is personally understood and interpreted, so that the textual analysis

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does not stand alone but is reinforced by reception studies. The reason for selecting this audience lies in its ability to illustrate the film's psychological impact—for example, through identification with the character Nina—which helps explain how the construction of the meaning of "perfection" shapes viewers' perceptions within the cultural reality of today.

To strengthen the research data, interviews were conducted with audiences who had watched Black Swan to gain an empirical understanding of how the film was received and interpreted, particularly regarding the concept of "perfection." This method allowed the researcher to capture the variety of viewers's subjective interpretations, which then complemented the textual analysis with insights into the film's influence on individual perceptions within real life cultural contexts. The inclusion of this interview data further enriches the validity of the findings regarding identity formation and the dynamics of obsession. The entire process adhred to research ethics principles, including data usage permissions and respect for copyrigth. Through this approach, the data collected is expexted to be comprehensive, reliable, and contextually relevant to the research.

Data validity in this study was tested through the application of methodological triangulation, which was deemed most relevant to the characteristics of the research. According to (Sugiono, 2014), methodological triangulation involves the use of various data collection methods to test data credibility by comparing results obtained from different techniques. In the context of this study, methodological triangulation was applied by combining direct observation for the film Black Swan, analysis of documents such as journals and previous research, and interviews with informants (Sugiono, 2014). Film observation was used to identify visual and symbolic representations related to the construction of the meaning of "perfection," while document analysis served to strengthen interpretations through relevant academic studies. On the other hand, interviews provided an empirical perspective that helped deepen the understanding of the research finding. By comparing and integrating these three types of data, the results of the analysis became more consistent and verifiable. Thus, the application of this methodological triangulation enabled the study to produce findings that are more credible, comprehensive, and scientifically accountable.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a qualitive text analysis approach that focuses on an in depth interpretation of non numerical data to understand the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the film Black Swan. Based on the framework (Sugiono, 2014), data analysis involves three main stages that are conducted interactively and iteratively: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, data from film observation, document analysis, and interviews were selected by focusing on information

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consistent with denotation, connotation, and myth as defined by Roland Barthes, as well as archtypes as defined by Carl Jung. The data presentation stage involved organizing the data into descriptive narratives that illustrate the relationships between symbols, meanings, and character dynamics, thereby faciliating the interpretation process. Next, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher interprets the emerging patterns and meanings and relates them to Roland Barthes's theory of semiotic dimensions and Carl Jung's psychoanalysis to explain how the construction of the meaning of perfection plays a role in the psychological disintegration of the main character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Based on research conducted to construct the meaning of "perfection" in the character of Nina Sayers in Darren Aronofsky's film Black Swan through a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis, which encompasses three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Research data was obtained through direct observation of the film's text, analysis of documents such as previous studies and academic sources, as well as in terviews with a number of informants namely, individuals who had watched Black Swan and comments form film revies websites such as IMDb and Letterboxd. The interviews were conducted to explore in-depth perceptions regarding the meaning of perfection, psychological pressure, and interpretations of the conflicts experienced by the main character—perspectives that also apply to comments from film review websites such as IMDb and Letterboxd. In general, this study focuses on how the meaning of "perfection" is not only represented visually but also constructed through psychological experiences and its validity as a cultural value. Therefore, this Results and Discussion section will outline the research findings step by step through the three layers of meaning denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth to provide a comprehensive understanding of the construction of the meaning of perfection in the film Black Swan.

Semiotic Signs That Create a Complete Meaning in the Film Black Swan

In the film Black Swan, the author analyze seven scenes. Three of them depict the physical and visual representation of perfection as potrayed through Nina Sayer's ballet routines, the mirror as a symbol of self monitoring, and her transformation into the Black Swan. The other four scenes illustrate a shift in the meaning of perfection toward a psychological and ideological experience, depicted through moments when Nina practices ballet on her own.

An analysis of seven scenes in the film Black Swan shows that the construction of Nina

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Sayer's "perfect" meaning is based on Roland Barthes's three levels of semiotic meaninh: denotation, connotation, and myth. This indicates that the meaning of "perfect" does not emerge instantly but is constructed gradually through the semiotic signs found in the film. The results of interviews with sources, as well as existing theories and previous research, support this interpretation. The following table presents the results of the analysis of the semiotic signs that shape the film's meaning of "perfection.":

Table 1. The Meaning of Scenes in the Movie "Black Swan"

Scene	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth Meaning
 ***Figure 1. Nina is practicing her dance moves***	This scene shows Nina Sayers undergoing intense and repetitive ballet training, with demands for nearly flawless precision in her movements. This routine serves as the most literal visual representation of the standard of perfection in the world of ballet.	Nina's dedication to constant training is interpreted not merely as discipline, but as an obsessive drive to be recognized as a "perfect" figure; this shows that Nina's body has become the primary instrument for achieving perfection, even though she has pushed beyond the limits of her abilities	Relentless training is considered the norm—and even a requirement—in the world of professional ballet, so the extreme pressure Nina experiences is not viewed as an anomaly, but rather as part of a system that demands flawless performance.
	The mirror, which appears repeatedly,	The frequency with which the mirror appears	Constant self-scrutiny in front of the

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Scene	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth Meaning
Figure 2. Nina touched up her makeup	serves as a reflective surface that objectively shows Nina's body and movements as she touches up her makeup.	suggests that achieving perfection is inseparable from the practice of constant self-monitoring. Nina begins to lose the boundary between herself and her reflection in the mirror, signaling a strong attachment to an "ideal" self-image	mirror has become normalized as a natural part of the process of "becoming perfect," so the habit of excessively observing and correcting oneself is not questioned as problematic.
 ***Figure 3. Nina's Transformation into the Black Swan***	Nina's changes in makeup, costumes, and facial expressions underscore the duality of the characters she must portray, from the White Swan to the Black Swan.	In this scene, transformation is portrayed as a holistic performance that requires Nina to demonstrate that perfection is measured not only by technical skill, but also by a willingness to reconcile two	The duality of the White Swan and the Black Swan is interpreted as the necessity that perfection requires balance, which normalizes the idea that achieving perfection requires a person to

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Scene	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth Meaning
		opposing sides of her character	integrate even their dark side.
 ***Figure 4. Nina finally feels perfect***	This scene depicts the moment when Nina appears to have achieved a sense of "perfection" after enduring a series of pressures and physical hardships throughout her rehearsals and performances.	Pain, which had previously been viewed merely as a consequence of training, transforms into a symbol of the quest for self-validation. Nina's obsession with perfection is portrayed as a force that simultaneously destroys her	This moment of "feeling perfect" legitimizes the idea that the highest achievements can only be attained through extreme sacrifice, in line with the belief that one cannot achieve perfection without completely destroying oneself.
 ***Figure 5. Nina is acting aggressively, which is contrary to her true nature.***	The scene shows Nina's behavior changing to become aggressive and impulsive, in stark contrast to her previously quiet and docile personality.	This change reflects the hallucinations and distortions of reality that Nina is experiencing; she is becoming increasingly unable to	The disintegration of reality and the emergence of a dark side are normalized as natural consequences of the struggle for perfection,

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Scene	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth Meaning
		distinguish between what is distorted and what is real in her surroundings. This aggressive behavior represents the emergence of her shadow—the wild, uncontrolled side of herself that has long been suppressed by the demands of perfection as the White Swan	so that the loss of self-control is viewed as part of the price one must pay for achievement.
 ***Figure 6. Mrs. Nina, who always limits her activities***	The scene depicts Nina's interaction with her mother, who consistently restricts Nina's freedom of movement and autonomy in her daily life.	This relationship shows that perfection is not merely Nina's personal desire, but rather the result of a social construct shaped by external expectations. Nina is seen as "a vessel for her mother's	Excessive parental control is viewed as a form of love, so the pressure that limits an individual's independence is actually considered normal and legitimized as

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Scene	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth Meaning
		unfulfilled dreams," indicating that an obsession with perfection can be passed down and reinforced by one's immediate environment	part of the process of shaping a "perfect" child.
 ***Figure 7. Nina succeeded in achieving her goal of becoming perfect***	The climactic scene shows Nina finishing her grand finale and declaring, "It was perfect," marking the achievement she has been striving for all along.	The audience interprets this moment as a tension between Nina's success and her self-destruction, where relief over her achievement is intertwined with the tragedy of the self-sacrifice that accompanies it.	The statement "it was perfect" serves as ideological justification for the idea that achieving perfection is worth the cost—even if it means self-destruction—so the myth of perfection operates by concealing its destructive consequences behind a narrative of success.

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DISCUSSION

Based on the overall analysis conducted, the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the character of Nina Sayers is formed through three interconnected layers of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. These three layers do not exist in isolation but rather form a continuum of meaning that illustrates how perfection shifts from a visual aspect to a complex conceptual construct..

The visual elements that depict the world in this film consist of subway cars, mirrors, walls, corridors, and rehearsal spaces. The audience is drawn into a highly artificial environment; to convey the subjectivity of the protagonist, Nina, director Darren Aronofsky chose to eliminate outdoor scenery from the film—both for the characters and for the audience. In every scene, the confined spaces and the limitation imposed by the strict work environtment reflect Nina's inability to see beyond dance and her role, as well as the trap in which she is caught by the control of those around here. Wether the audience realizes it or not, the sensation of spatial confinement on screen affects them and causes them to identify with Nina (Vignoles-Russell, 2024).

On a denotative level, perfection is represented through a disciplined, controlled body capable of precisely meeting the technical standards of ballet. This representation is evident in the intense training regimen, the physical injuries Nina sustains, and the demand to portray two opposing characters in a single performance. These findings indicate that, literally, perfection is interpreted as the achievement of an ideal physical form and maximum technical ability. However, as discussed earlier, this representation does not stop at the visual level but serves as the foundation for the formation of deeper meanings.

On a connotative level, the meaning of perfection evolves into a psychological experience characterized by obsession, identity conflict, and self disintegration. Physical injuries, previously intepreted as the consequences of training, becom symbol of internal pressure, while the transformation from the White Swan to the Black Swan reflects the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. In this context, Carl Jung's concept of the shadow explains that perfection demands the integration of an individual's light and dark side (Jung, 1968). However, in Nina's case, this process does not lead to balance but rather accelerates her psychological breakdown. This is reinforced by the audience's perception that an obsession with perfection drives an individual to the point of losing the boundary between reality and illusion (interview results, March 8, 2026).

At the level of myth, perfection transforms into a cultural ideology that normalizes suffering as part of achievement. Within Barthes's framework, myths function by making cultural

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constructs appear natural and unquestionable. In the film Black Swan, perfection is positioned as a standard that must be achieved, even if its requieres individuals to sacrifice their physical and mental health (Harris, 2021). The audience's perception that achieving perfection requiers extreme sacrifice demonstrates how this ideology has been accepted as a self evident truth.

The integration of these three layers of meaning demonstrates that the construction of "perfection" in the film Black Swan is not singular in nature, but rather a process that moves from visual representation toward psychological internalization, ultimately becoming part of the cultural value system. In this context, perfection can no longer be understood as a positive goal, but rather as a problematic construct because it has a destructive effect on the main character, Nina Sayers (Putri & Nugroho, 2024).

This finding also underscores the novelty of research that integrates Roland Barthes's semiotics with Carl Jung's psychoanalysis in interprenting film texts. While previous research tended to separate symbolic and psychological analyses, this study demonstrates that the two are interrelated in shaping the meaning of perfection as a destructive myth. Thus, the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the character of Nina Sayers can be understood as the results of the interaction between visual representations, psychological dynamics, and ideological pressures operating simulatenousely.

Overall, the film Black Swan not only depicts an individual's journey toward perfection but also critiques how that concept is shaped, perpetuated, and normalized within culture. Perfection in this context is not an ideal endpoint, but rather a process fraught with conflict, pressure, and destructive consequences. Therefore, the meaning of "perfect" in this film actually points to a paradox, in which the highest achievement simultaneously becomes the point of ruin for the individual experiencing it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the construction of the meaning of "perfection" in the narrative of Darren Aronofsky's film Black Swan is formed through three layers of meaning. These include: the denotative level, which addresses the signs that directly appear in Black Swan, such as physical injuries resulting from excessive training, the recurring symbol of the mirror, and Nina Sayers's direct transformation into the Black Swan; the next level—the connotative level—where meaning evolves into a psychological experience marked by obsession, identity conflict, and the emergence of a shadow that drives self-disintegration. This connotative level is closely linked to the pressure Nina experiences from her unhealthy environment—through her coach's unrealistic expectations and her mother's excessive control

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over her freedom—which are the primary causes of the deteriorating psychological condition of the main character, Nina Sayers. Meanwhile, on the mythical level, perfection is constructed as a cultural ideology that normalizes pressure and suffering as part of achievement. Overall, perfection in this film is not interpreted as an ideal outcome, but rather as a destructive process leading to a loss of identity. Although initially viewed as a positive outcome, "perfection" can become something destructive for an individual without support from their surroundings and is exacerbated by an unhealthy mental state.

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