

Investigating Main Character's Perfectionism in the Black Swan Movie

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Abstract--This research aims to explore the connection between socially prescribed perfectionism and conflict, particularly how perfectionism can trigger various conflicts. Focusing on Nina Sayers, the protagonist of the film Black Swan, the study examines how her perfectionism contributes to both internal and external conflicts. The motivation for this research stems from a notable lack of studies linking socially determined perfectionism to conflict, particularly its role in eliciting psychological distress and interpersonal tensions. Using the Black Swan movie as a data source, observations and note-taking techniques were employed to identify key scenes illustrating Nina's struggles. The study employs qualitative methods and descriptive techniques, presenting its findings informally. It draws on the Multidimensional Perfectionism theory by Hewitt et al. and Kenney's conflict theory. Findings reveal that Nina embodies socially prescribed perfectionism traits, including the intense desire for perfection to earn recognition and acceptance. Her interactions with influential characters, such as Thomas (the ballet director), Beth (a former star dancer), Lily (her rival), and her controlling mother, shape her perfectionist tendencies. This leads to significant internal conflict due to psychological pressure and obsession, while external conflict arises from competition and unrealistic expectations, with her need for validation exacerbating both internal and external conflicts.

Keywords: *perfectionism, conflict, main character*

Abstrak--Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara perfeksionisme yang ditentukan secara sosial dan konflik, khususnya bagaimana perfeksionisme dapat memicu berbagai konflik. Berfokus pada Nina Sayers, tokoh utama dalam film Black Swan, penelitian ini meneliti bagaimana perfeksionisme berkontribusi terhadap konflik internal dan eksternal. Motivasi untuk penelitian ini berasal dari kurangnya penelitian yang menghubungkan perfeksionisme yang ditentukan secara sosial dengan konflik, terutama perannya dalam menimbulkan tekanan psikologis dan ketegangan antarpribadi. Dengan menggunakan film Black Swan sebagai sumber data, observasi dan teknik pencatatan digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi adegan-adegan kunci yang menggambarkan perjuangan Nina. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan teknik deskriptif, yang menyajikan temuan-temuannya secara informal. Penelitian ini mengacu pada teori Perfeksionisme Multidimensi oleh Hewitt dkk. dan teori konflik Kenney. Temuan-temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa Nina mewujudkan sifat-sifat perfeksionisme yang ditentukan secara sosial, termasuk keinginan kuat untuk mencapai kesempurnaan untuk mendapatkan pengakuan dan penerimaan. Interaksinya dengan karakter-karakter yang berpengaruh, seperti Thomas (direktur balet), Beth (mantan penari bintang), Lily (saingannya), dan ibunya yang suka mengatur, membentuk kecenderungan perfeksionisnya. Hal ini menyebabkan konflik internal yang signifikan karena tekanan psikologis dan obsesi, sementara konflik eksternal muncul dari persaingan dan ekspektasi yang tidak realistis, dengan kebutuhannya akan validasi yang memperparah konflik internal dan eksternal.

Kata Kunci: *perfeksionisme, konflik, karakter utama*

1. Introduction

Perfectionism, as one of the personality traits, is a complex psychological phenomenon that often has contradictory effects. On the one hand, this trait reflects high motivation, a strong drive to achieve success, and a desire to achieve perfect results. On the other hand, Perfectionism can also cause mental stress, excessive anxiety, and disruptions in social relationships. Perfectionists tend to set extremely high, even unrealistic, standards for themselves and others. When reality fails to meet these expectations, frustration, failure, and deep dissatisfaction arise, disrupting psychological stability. According to Pacht (1984), Perfectionism is an internalized fantasy. In real life, perfection is impossible, and the cost for those seeking it is excessively high. This statement emphasizes that Perfectionism is not merely a drive to improve but an internal fantasy that can lead to severe psychological consequences.

In real life, the drive to be perfect often leads to internal pressure, a feeling of never being satisfied, and a tendency to be overly critical of one's mistakes and those of others. The accumulation of such pressure has the potential to trigger psychological disorders such as stress, anxiety, self-esteem issues, and dysfunction in interpersonal relationships. According to Pacht (1984), perfectionists, even when they achieve something, seldom are able to savor the fruits of their accomplishments, as they tend to downplay their achievements and continuously pursue higher goals without pause. This phenomenon has personal implications and can create tension in social relationships, especially when people cannot accept their surroundings' imperfections.

Perfectionism is not always a driving force for growth and development, but rather more often a defensive mechanism to avoid failure (Sorotzkin, 1985). Instead of seeing opportunities for success, perfectionists tend to view situations as potential failures, which

ultimately leads to internal and external conflicts. In this context, it is important to understand perfectionism through a more structured theoretical framework. Multidimensional Perfectionism Theory by (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) offers a comprehensive view by dividing perfectionism into three main dimensions: self-oriented perfectionism (high standards for oneself), other-oriented perfectionism (demands perfection from others), and socially prescribed perfectionism (the belief that others demand perfection from oneself). These three dimensions indicate that perfectionism does not only stem from internal drives but is also significantly influenced by social pressure and the surrounding environment, which can directly or indirectly create psychological and social conflicts.

In line with this, the theory of conflict by Kenney (1966) explains that conflict occurs when two values, goals, or drives clash and create tension. In the context of perfectionism, internal conflict can arise when the drive to be perfect clashes with the reality of one's limited abilities, while external conflict arises from social pressure and unrealistic expectations of others. According to McCorkle (2018), interpersonal conflict involves both internal and external elements, where perfectionism develops as a mechanism to control uncertain situations. This suggests that perfectionism, which appears to be a strength, can become a major obstacle to inner peace, as it hides unresolved emotional wounds and feelings of insecurity.

Perfectionists are people who are highly susceptible to failure and its implications for the self (Flett & Hewitt, 2020). Perfectionists who are already experiencing a high level of daily pressures will be particularly vulnerable to the disruptive effects associated with the experience of negative life events (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Stress arises from chasing unattainable ideals and failing to abandon

them when feedback indicates it's time to ease up and lower expectations. Stress can also originate from being an other-oriented perfectionist who creates conflict by imposing unrealistic standards on others. Perfectionists are also susceptible to pressure that can come from themselves, other individuals, and their various life roles. These pressures can also arise from peers, specific environments, or society in ways that have implications and relevance for various fields of psychology, extending beyond personality and clinical psychology to include applied psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, family psychology, and health psychology. While there is a general understanding that socially prescribed perfectionism often originates from parental pressures placed on the self, this dimension actually reflects more widespread sources of social influence. (Flett et al., 2022).

Conflict within humans generally arises when desires are not fulfilled or when reality does not match expectations. According to Gebehu and Detebo (2019), conflict stems from three main sources: physical environmental barriers, limitations imposed by others, and incompatibility between conflicting drives or goals. In literary works, the perfectionist nature of characters often serves as the primary source of conflict, both internal and external. Literature, which reflects the realities of human life, becomes an effective medium for depicting the complexity of such personalities. Fictional characters who are perfectionists often struggle internally between idealism and reality, and face social pressures that intensify their internal conflicts. According to Timbayo (2023), in fiction, conflicts can be analyzed as representations of real-life issues, particularly in the context of unpleasant or anxiety-filled emotional experiences. Thus, perfectionism that triggers internal pressure and conflict is a real issue relevant for research, particularly within the context of character psychology.

This phenomenon is strongly depicted in Darren Aronofsky's film *Black Swan* (2010). The film presents an extreme representation of perfectionism through its main character, Nina Sayers, a young ballerina who is obsessed with performing perfectly in her dual roles as the White Swan and Black Swan in *Swan Lake*. The internal pressure she feels, the influence of her dominant mother, the expectations of the choreographer, and the competition in the ballet world push Nina to experience severe mental stress. She firmly states, "I want to be perfect," reflecting her perfectionist motivation. This pressure leads to internal conflicts such as insecurity, fear of failure, and doubt in her abilities. Additionally, Nina faces external conflicts, particularly with her overprotective mother, a manipulative ballet director, and her competitive peers. The accumulation of this pressure results in Nina's tragic psychological breakdown as a consequence of extreme perfectionism.

Although the topics of perfectionism and conflict have been widely discussed in previous studies, there is a gap in research that specifically examines the direct relationship between perfectionism as a personality trait and the dynamics of internal and external conflict within a comprehensive framework. The study by, titled "Psychological Features of Physical Perfectionism in Personality," only discusses the impact of physical perfectionism on psychological aspects such as anxiety, aggression, and narcissism, without addressing its implications for conflict. Meanwhile, in the study by Damayanti, (2021) titled "The Analysis of Main Character's Conflicts in Elizabeth Rudnick's *Maleficent*" only focuses on analyzing internal and external conflicts without linking them to perfectionistic traits. This indicates that there is still a research gap that needs to be bridged, namely how perfectionism can complicate the dynamics of conflict within oneself and in social relationships.

Based on the above description, perfectionism is a significant, relevant, and urgent psychological phenomenon that warrants further specific research, particularly in relation to the emergence of internal and external conflicts. This study uses the film *Black Swan* as its subject of analysis because it explicitly portrays a perfectionist character caught in the midst of intense conflict. The aim of this study is to examine in depth how Nina Sayers' perfectionist traits contribute to creating and complicating the conflicts she faces, as well as how these conflicts impact her psychological state.

2. Methodology

The data source for this research is the movie "*Black Swan*," directed by Darren Aronofsky. Released in the United States on September 3, 2010, the movie belongs to the psychological horror genre. The *Black Swan* movie was chosen as the focus of this study because it explicitly illustrates the phenomenon of perfectionism inherent in the main character, Nina Sayers, and how this trait influences the various conflicts she encounters throughout the storyline.

To collect data, the author used the observation method of note-taking techniques. The author also uses a qualitative approach and descriptive techniques to analyze data and informal methods for presenting data. The author of this study uses the multidimensional perfectionism theory by (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) and conflict theory (Kenney, 1966). This theory is used because it is relevant to the author's research.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This research produces two main findings. First, it discusses the nature of socially prescribed perfectionism in the main character of the movie *Black Swan*, Nina Sayers. In this discussion, three data points show the existence of this trait in the main character. Second, it addresses the conflicts

that arise in *Black Swan* as a result of Nina Sayers' perfectionist nature. Here, two data points on internal conflicts and four data points on external conflicts influenced by the main character's perfectionism are identified.

The analysis results show that Nina Sayers shows the characteristics of socially prescribed perfectionism, namely the drive to be perfect to gain recognition and acceptance from others. This trait is formed through her interactions with the social environment, especially in her relationships with Thomas (ballet director), Beth (former principal dancer), Lily (ballet rival), and her highly protective mother. The study also found that Nina experiences two forms of conflict: internal and external. Internal conflict arises from psychological pressure and her obsession with achieving perfection, which drives her to set high standards for herself. Meanwhile, there is an external conflict in Nina's relationships with other characters, which is full of pressure, competition, and expectations. The socially determined nature of perfectionism significantly influences both forms of conflict. Nina relies heavily on recognition, validation, and acceptance from others as a measure of her self-worth.

3.2 Discussion

This discussion found two main research focuses. First, the nature of prescribed perfectionism is seen in the main character in the movie *Black Swan*. Second, the conflicts that arise as a result of this perfectionism, both internal and external, are also discussed.

3.2.1 Evidencing the Socially Prescribed Perfectionism in the Main Character

This subchapter discusses the evidence of socially prescribed perfectionism in the main character, Nina Sayers, in the *Black Swan* movie. The analysis focuses on how Nina is driven to meet very high standards of perfection to gain acceptance and recognition from those around her. This drive reflects

Nina's deep need to always appear perfect in the eyes of her social environment.

[3-1] Nina : **I just wanted to tell you that I practice the coda last night, and... I finished it. I thought you should know.**

Thomas : Okay, Nina, listen. Honestly, I don't care about your technique. You should know that by now.

Nina : Yeah, but yesterday...

Thomas : No. Anyway, I've already chosen Veronica.

(B.S. 00:19:42 – 00:21:07)

The dialogue between Nina and Thomas in example [3-1] shows the formation of socially prescribed perfectionism in the main character, Nina Sayers, in the *Black Swan* movie. In this scene, it is clear that Nina has a powerful drive to be perfect and gain recognition and acceptance from those around her, especially Thomas, the ballet director. Thomas has the power to determine who is worthy of playing the Swan Queen's lead role in the Swan Lake performance and, therefore, becomes a central figure in Nina's struggle for external validation.

In the excerpt, Nina actively approaches Thomas to report that she has been practising hard for the Coda, one of the most challenging parts of the *Black Swan* role. She even says she completed the part despite failing to perform it perfectly during the audition. This shows that Nina went to great lengths to prove herself worthy of the lead role, even when she was willing to manipulate reality by saying that she had mastered the dance perfectly.

Nina's actions reflect that the drive to be perfect in herself does not arise from a personal need to develop or achieve inner satisfaction but rather as a form of fulfilment of the social expectations imposed on her. She feels that she must always look perfect to be accepted and considered appropriate by

others, especially by Thomas, the highest authority in the ballet world to which she belongs. In this context, Nina's perfectionism is socially prescribed, which arises because individuals feel that others expect perfection from them and that failure to meet these expectations will lead to rejection or disappointment from their social environment.

As such, this scene reinforces how Nina's perfectionism stems from constant social pressure, especially in a competitive environment such as the world of ballet. She grew up in an atmosphere that demanded perfection and left no room for failure. As a result, she builds a self-image that is entirely dependent on how others judge her, which ultimately becomes one of the primary triggers of the mental and emotional collapse she experiences throughout the movie.

[3-2] Thomas : All that discipline for what?

Nina : **I just want to be perfect.**

Thomas : You what?

Nina : **I want to be perfect.**

(B.S. 00:21:06 - 00:21:14)

Example [3-2] shows the formation of socially prescribed perfectionism in Nina Sayers, the main character in the movie *Black Swan*. In the dialogue, Nina explicitly conveys her motivation to continue practising and disciplining herself, namely her desire to be perfect. She even says it twice, indicating that this desire is not just a momentary ambition but has become a deep-rooted obsession.

Nina's statement in [3-2] reveals that all her efforts and hard work so far have not been entirely driven by an intrinsic desire to improve, but instead triggered by the need to fulfil the expectations of others, especially Thomas, the ballet director. Thomas is an authoritative figure whose opinion and recognition Nina craves. In this relationship, Nina positioned herself as a subject who

always had to prove her worth through technical perfection and high discipline.

Nina's perfectionism is social because her self-esteem depends on how much she can please or be recognized by others. She believes that by performing perfectly, she will gain validation and status as a dancer worthy of playing the role of Swan Queen.

As a result, the pressure to be perfect shifted Nina's focus from authentic artistic expression to an obsession with self-image in the eyes of others. She loses the balance between control and freedom of expression, which is essential in performing the Black Swan character. When art becomes merely a means of proving oneself, the space for creativity and spontaneity is marginalized.

Thus, example [3-2] indicates that Nina's primary motivation in pursuing the role of the Swan Queen is based more on the need for social recognition than self-actualization. This is the essence of her socially prescribed perfectionism, the drive to be perfect to be accepted and appreciated by others, even at the expense of psychological stability and true identity.

- [3-3] Beth : You stole my things?
Nina : **I was just trying to be perfect like you.**
Beth : Perfect?
(B.S. 01:22:04 - 01:22:06)

Example [3-3] shows the strong tendency towards socially prescribed perfectionism experienced by Nina, the main character in the movie Black Swan. In her conversation with Beth, a senior dancer who used to be a prima donna at the ballet company, Nina shows a deep obsession to be perfect like the figure she idolizes. This obsession is not just ordinary admiration, but a psychological pressure that drives Nina to equate herself with the standard of perfection she sees in Beth.

In Nina's words in [3-3], it is clear that her primary motivation for emulating Beth

comes from a desire to be perfect. This statement reinforces the idea that Nina is not just trying to develop herself as a dancer, but rather to fulfil the social expectations and idealized images that have been shaped by the competitive environment of the ballet world. She considers that the perfection inherent in the figure of Beth is the only way to gain validation, both from Thomas as a choreographer, from the audience, and herself.

Nina's act of stealing Beth's personal belongings, as revealed in [3-3], shows that she has lost the healthy boundary between admiration and imitation. This is an indicator of perfectionism that no longer relies on an internal drive to improve, but on external social pressures that force individuals to continue to meet the standards set by others. In this context, Nina's confidence is not built on the recognition of her abilities, but on how far she can imitate or match the standards set by figures who are considered more perfect than her.

Thus, data [3-3] reinforces that Nina's perfectionism is socially prescribed. Her identity and self-worth are heavily influenced by social judgment, which ultimately undermines her psychological stability. The drive to be "like Beth" not only makes Nina lose her way as an individual, but also accelerates the mental collapse that occurs throughout the film's narrative.

3.2.2 The conflict experienced by the main character

This sub-chapter discusses the various conflicts that influence the formation of socially prescribed perfectionism in Nina Sayers, the main character in the movie Black Swan. The analysis includes internal and external conflicts that influence the development of Nina's personality and perfectionist mindset. Through this explanation, it will be seen how internal pressure and external demands play a role in

shaping Nina's obsessive drive to achieve perfection in the eyes of others.

3.2.2.1 Internal conflict

Internal conflict occurs within the character's mind. When facing their struggles, characters must also manage their emotions, thoughts, and feelings. In addition, internal conflict can manifest as insecurity, mental health challenges, moral dilemmas, self-doubt, and confusion. This research examines the internal conflict experienced by the main character.

[3-4] Nina : **I'm gonna talk to him tomorrow. I'm gonna tell him I finished it.**

Erica : You don't need to lie. It won't convince him one way or the other. Oh sweetheart. I know it's disappointing. And when you start getting older, there's all this ridiculous pressure.
(B.S. 00:18:03 – 00:18:23)

The conflict shown in example [3-4] is a form of internal conflict. This interaction took place between Nina Sayers and her mother, Erica Sayers. At the time, Nina was devastated when she failed to dance the part of the Black Swan in the audition for the role of Swan Queen. This failure made her chances of getting the lead role slim, as Thomas, the director, seemed uninterested in choosing her after a less-than-convincing performance.

Nevertheless, Nina was determined to convince Thomas to give her a second chance. This is reflected in data [3-4] when she shows her intention to approach Thomas and say that she has been able to dance the role of Black Swan, although, in reality, she has not. Her mother, Erica, had warned Nina not to do this, but Nina insisted. She felt disappointed with Thomas' decision and still wanted to try, even though she had to ignore honesty.

Nina's internal conflict reflects frustration, high ambition, and fear of failure. She is trapped between accepting reality and a strong desire to pursue her dream role at all costs. In this situation, Nina struggles with her thoughts - between the value of honesty and the ambitious drive that demands perfection. This triggers an inner conflict, where her desire to appear perfect in the eyes of others, especially Thomas, pushes her to ignore her principles and choose a manipulative path. Thus, data [3-4] shows that Nina experiences a strong internal conflict, which contributes to her perfectionist drive to achieve the role of the Swan Queen.

[3-5] Lily : So... do you want to talk about it?

Nina : **I just had a hard day.**

Lily : Oh. Is Leroy playing a little too rough for you? Come on, Nina. He's a prick."

(B.S. 00:50:31-00:50:54)

In example [3-5], Nina experiences an internal conflict. This conversation took place between Nina and Lily in the ballet practice room. Lily asks Nina about her condition after a training session with Thomas, their ballet director. In this situation, Nina struggles with her own emotions, feeling depressed after a hard day of training pressure that constantly forces her to perform perfectly. Nina's dancing is still not optimal, and her inability to explore the character of Black Swan adds to her mental burden. In the dialog in data [3-5], Nina reveals that she had a tiring day, a response that shows the pressure she feels from the demanding intensity of the rehearsal.

When Lily calls Thomas annoying, Nina defends him by calling him brilliant. This reaction shows an inner conflict within Nina: Even though she feels pressure and harsh treatment from Thomas, she still admires him and is reluctant to admit that she

is being mistreated. This indicates a denial of the reality she faces.

In addition, when Lily expresses her views about Thomas, Nina rejects her, stating that Lily does not know Thomas. This statement is not only a defense of Thomas but also a reflection of Nina's attempt to convince herself that the pressure she is experiencing is part of the process toward perfection. Emotionally, she struggles to accept that she is in a painful and confusing situation.

3.2.2.2 External conflict

External conflict occurs between the characters in the story and something outside the story, such as other characters, society, or the surrounding environment. (Kenney, 1966) states that external conflicts can be classified into three types: man against man, man against society, and man against nature. In this study, external conflict is studied through the main character's point of view, focusing on man against man.

- [3-6] Nina : I came to ask for the part.
Thomas : Well... The truth is... **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 you obsess getting each every move perfectly right... But **I never see you lose yourself, ever!**
(B.S. 00:21:04 – 00:21:20)

In example [3-6], there is an external conflict between Nina and Thomas, who plays the role of director and decision-maker in the performance. In this conversation, Thomas doubts Nina's ability to play the Black Swan,

although he recognizes that technically and physically, Nina is very suitable for playing the White Swan.

Thomas' criticism of Nina's ability to focus too much on the perfection of movement but not enough to express the emotional side and lose herself in the role creates tension between the two. This shows external conflict because Nina deals directly with an authority that doubts her capacity and becomes an obstacle to achieving her desired role.

This disagreement is a matter of differing views and a real challenge that comes from outside herself and affects her character's struggle in the story. Therefore, example [3-6] reflects the external conflict between Nina and Thomas as an interpersonal barrier in a competitive professional world. and judgment of others.

- [3-7] Thomas : **Perfection is not just about control. It's also about letting go.** Surprise yourself, so you can surprise the audience. Tendence. And very few have it in them.
Nina : **I think I do have it in- (Thomas suddenly kissed Nina, and Nina bit his lips.)**
Thomas : **You bit me? I can't believe you bit me.**
Nina : I'm sorry
Thomas : **Now, that fucking hurt!**
(B.S. 00:21:20 - 00:21:50)

Example [3-7] shows an external conflict between Nina and Thomas, reflecting their differing views. Thomas, as a ballet director, emphasizes that artistic perfection comes not only from technique but also from freedom of expression. However, conflict arises when Thomas suddenly kisses Nina, and Nina responds by biting her lip-a spontaneous form of resistance to the violation of personal boundaries.

Although Nina apologizes, her actions reflect her discomfort with Thomas' manipulative approach. Thomas wants Nina to show her wild and spontaneous side, while Nina, who is rigid and perfectionist, feels pressured by Thomas' invasive manner.

This conflict shows how pressure from an authority figure exacerbates Nina's psychological condition. The tension between technical demands and artistic freedom symbolizes Nina's inner struggle between discipline and freedom, control and release.

- [3-8] Nina : Beth! I'm so sorry to hear you're leaving the company.
Beth : Oh, what'd you do to get this role, huh? He always said you were such a frigid little girl. **What did you do to make him change his mind? Did you suck his cock?**
Nina : **Not all of us have to.**
Beth : **You fucking whore! You're fucking whore!**
(B.S.00:35:07-00:35:39)

In example [3-8], external conflict is seen through a verbal dispute between Nina and Beth, who was previously the lead dancer before being replaced by Nina. This conflict takes the form of a confrontation, where Beth accuses Nina of obtaining the lead role inappropriately, indicating that Nina may have used a personal or sexual relationship with Thomas to obtain the role. The accusation is crude and personally offensive, which makes the situation heated and emotionally charged.

The conflict is external, as it involves two characters with conflicting interests. Beth, who feels excluded and displaced, shows her anger and jealousy towards Nina, while Nina tries to maintain her dignity and responds defensively to the attack. The tension between them not only reflects the jockeying for position in the competitive world of ballet but also reflects power

dynamics, jealousy, and deep emotional wounds resulting from shifting status in social and professional hierarchies.

Thus, example [3-8] show an intense and emotional form of external conflict, where the main character faces attacks from others who feel aggrieved by her success. This conflict further reinforces the external pressures Nina faces in maintaining her role as Swan Queen.

- [3-9] Thomas : Lily told me that she saw you crying. **That you were upset and that I should take it easy on you.**
Nina : **I didn't tell her that.**
Thomas : **Maybe you need a little break, like a day or two.**
Nina : **Thomas!**
Thomas : **Or a month? What do you think?**
Nina : She shouldn't have said anything.
Thomas : **No, you shouldn't be whining in the first place.**
Nina : **I didn't!**
Thomas : **You could be brilliant, but you're coward.**
Nina : Sorry...
Thomas : Now stop saying that! **That's exactly what I'm talking about stop being fucking weak!**
(B.S. 00:53:02-00:54:36)

In example [3-9], external conflict is evident between Nina and Thomas. Tension arises when Thomas confronts Nina after receiving information from Lily that Nina was seen crying and feeling depressed. In this conversation, Thomas sarcastically suggests that Nina take a break from rehearsal - from one or two days, even up to a month. This statement directly threatens Nina's position in the performance, given that the show is only a few days away and every rehearsal is crucial.

On the other hand, Nina felt that she had never permitted Lily to say this, so she felt cornered by Thomas' unilateral decision and the betrayal she felt from her fellow dancers.

This external conflict involves a direct conflict between two characters with different interests. Thomas, as an authoritative figure with complete power over dancers' selection and coaching, pressures Nina verbally and emotionally. He belittles Nina's emotional expressions and explicitly calls her weak and cowardly, further escalating the conflict. Meanwhile, in a stressful situation, Nina maintains her position and professional dignity. Thus, data [3-9] reflect an intense external conflict in which Nina faces psychological pressure, sharp criticism, and threats to the status and role she has been fighting for. This conflict shows how power dynamics, professionalism, and interpersonal tensions significantly shape conflict in the story.

4. Conclusions

This study concludes that Nina Sayers, as the main character, shows the characteristics of socially prescribed perfectionism, which arises due to pressure or expectations from others. This trait is reflected in Nina's social interactions, especially with Thomas, the ballet director, and Beth, the former lead ballerina. Nina is very ambitious to perform perfectly and get recognition from Thomas that she can dance the role of Black Swan perfectly. In addition, through her interactions with Beth, Nina also expressed her desire to perform as well as Beth, which shows a drive to meet external standards. Thus, Nina's need to be perfect arises in response to the social demands and expectations of those around her.

The conflict, in this case, stems from Nina's socially prescribed perfectionism, both internal and external. Internal conflict can be seen in the pressure Nina places on herself, particularly her obsession with perfection,

which makes it difficult for her to feel satisfied

and at peace. Meanwhile, her external conflict manifests in the form of conflicts with other characters, each representing the challenges and pressures of the competitive ballet world. The tension between her and these characters creates an environment filled with pressure, expectations, and competition.

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