

**Becoming the Monstrous-Feminine:
Sex, Death and Transcendence in Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan***

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Abstract

Black Swan (2010) makes its mark as a significant text in queer cinema. It artfully illustrates the complexities of femininity and the obliteration of conventional boundaries between masculine and feminine. This article discusses the application of Barbara Creed's monstrous-feminine in the film and its importance for the queer monster of horror. Darren Aronofsky's ballet dancer reveals the various incarnations of the monstrous-feminine. In particular, the figure of the Black Swan is explored as an expression of the female vampire. Natalie Portman's character attempts to master the art of performing and being a woman, illustrating the conflation between life, performance and suffering through her 'monstrous-in-process'. Her progressive de/trans-formation is defined by 'sexual-becoming-towards-death'. Orgasm and abjection become signposts by which the artist achieves her ultimate goal of transcendence, producing a haunting representation of the monstrous sublime in the process.

Key words: Queer cinema, horror film, vampire horror, gender theory, sublime

Title Image: Production still taken from *Black Swan* (Aronofsky, 2010).

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Black Swan is the story of Nina Sayers, an introverted ballet dancer who wins the main part in a New York production of *Swan Lake*. Her role demands the successful portrayal of both the fragile White Swan and the dark temptress Black Swan. The film takes us through Nina's desperate attempts to become the perfect 'Swan Queen'; the more she strives for perfection the deeper she descends into insanity in the lead-up to, what appears to be, her tragic death on stage. Nina suffers for her art and in the process awakens to physical pleasures she has been sheltered from by her domineering mother, rebelling against her guarded domestic life with such 'sinful' acts as same-sex passion. One may simply view *Black Swan* as a predictable storyline of a sexually repressed woman and a struggling artist facing the gruelling demands of her profession. But a closer look reveals a narrative that exposes the complexities of femininity and offers important insights into queer theory, identity and spectatorship. *Black Swan* takes its place as a significant horror text, placing the 'monstrous-feminine' as an object of both dread and longing at its centre (Creed, 1993). Nina's transformation into the Black Swan is explored as a journey into the monstrous, with its critical performative elements grounded in 'sexual-becoming-towards-death'.

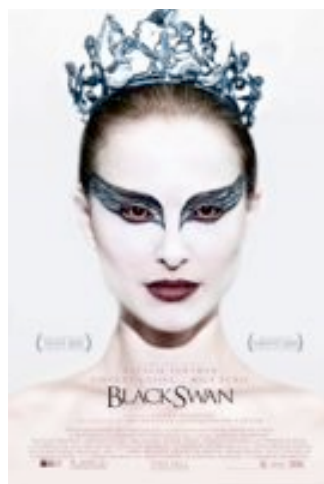


Figure 1: Natalie Portman as 'Nina Sayers' in *Black Swan* (2010)

Source: *Black Swan* poster (2010, p. 5 of 8)

Clip 1: Official Trailer [HD]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1nQtW4Hsp0>

Source: TRAILERSHDVID (2010)

‘Sexing’ the Swan – the monstrous-feminine and vampire horror

The role of women as horror subjects in film and literature, often conceptualised as victims of a symbolic masculine monstrous presence, has been the focus of much debate (Creed, 1993, pp. 3-4). Barbara Creed (1993, p. 7) in her seminal work *The monstrous-feminine: film, feminism, psychoanalysis* has challenged this patriarchal view, presenting the female reproductive body as the archetype of all definitions of the monstrous. *Black Swan* incorporates a number of the seven ‘faces’ of the monstrous-feminine, including ‘castrating mother’, ‘monstrous womb’ and ‘archaic mother’ (Creed 1993, p. 7). Most significantly, the application of Creed’s (1993, p. 59) analysis of the female vampire as an expression of the monstrous-feminine is highly relevant to an investigation of *Black Swan* as horror – the role of the Black Swan represents the need for ‘a more aggressive expression of female sexuality’ definitive of the female vampire figure since the 1970s. It will be illustrated that *Black Swan* shares central pre-occupations with the vampire film in its representation of women: ‘woman as lesbian vampire; woman as victim; woman as creature; gender and metamorphosis; abjection and the maternal’ (Creed, 1993, p. 59).

Creed’s (1986, p. 45) work explores Julia Kristeva’s (1982) theory of abjection as a way of separating the human from the non-human form. In *Black Swan* the monstrous is ‘produced at the border between ... man and beast’ (Creed 1986, p. 49). Here, it takes on the form of a tall black human-like Swan, which is more beast than its graceful animal counterpart (Figure 2). The Black Swan represents the ‘Other’ within Nina – it exists at the permeable borders of the self, as a primal symbolic figure (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 65). Kristeva (1975, cited in Oliver, 1998, p. 2-3 of 8) utilises the maternal body to illustrate we are all a ‘subject-in-process ... always negotiating the other within’. Through contact with the monstrous, Nina will teeter on ‘the edge of non-existence and hallucination of a reality that, if acknowledged, annihilates [her]’ (Kristeva 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 47). Nonetheless, the abject must be endured, for what threatens to extinguish life also helps define it (Creed, 1986, p. 46). In this journey, the abject will become Nina’s ‘safeguard(s)’, leading to the discovery of the Other within and the negotiation of her ‘monstrous’-in-process (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 47).

Nina’s transformation into the monstrous-feminine shares defining stages that characters in vampire horror must undergo in order to metamorphosise into their monstrous alter ego. Horror subjects must first establish contact with the Monstrous Other.

Nina comes at the opening scene to the movie – she dreams she is dancing in *Swan Lake*. Initially, it is a beautiful performance, innocent and tranquil. Suddenly the Black Swan enters, its presence ominous, disruptive; threatening to destroy Nina’s purity and grace. Like the vampire, the image of the Black Swan is terrifying for the psyche. It threatens to destabilise and disintegrate all that is familiar.

However, Nina is irreversibly drawn to it, as is the vampire victim to its predator. The presence of the monstrous element in the form of the Black Swan and its colonisation of the erotic imaginary can be analogised to the seductive allure of the vampire, as ‘an excellent example of the identity of desire and fear’ (Moretti, 1983, cited in Craft, 1984, p. 107). The dance in Nina’s dream carries the ‘surcharged emotion’ of erotic proximity with the Black Swan and the lingering terrifying, yet tantalising moment of ‘erasure of the conventional and integral self’ (Craft, 1984, p. 107). Just as *Dracula’s* (Stoker, 1987) Mina is slowly but surely drawn into the world of the undead, so too is Nina gradually engulfed by the force of the Black Swan, breaking the barrier of terror of the Other and becoming one with it.



Figure 2: The Black Swan as the ‘Monstrous Other’

Source: *Black Swan* 22 (2010, p. 6 of 8)

Queering the gaze – danger, power and ‘becoming’

Nina endures a series of painful rites of passage for her performing art. Horror subjects must be ‘shocked into maturity’ commonly via ‘sex’ and/or ‘death’ (Bjerre, 2007, p. 735). They must feel their powerlessness and sexual frustration to the full extent, and a degree of agony unlike any they have experienced. Obsession with the otherworldly image of the monster becomes a key aspect of the initiate’s metamorphosis. As the artist must be consumed by their creative concept in order to materialise it, Nina becomes possessed with emerging as the Black Swan, illustrating the confluence of art and suffering.

The cycle of being devoured by the monstrous and its forms followed by expulsion, also becomes an integral part of the maturation process. In line with other texts in queer cinema, Nina's 'female interiority' becomes accessible and its complexities revealed (Brinkema, 2006, p. 153). As a result of this accessibility, her body is a 'frequented place' (Augé, 1984, cited in Brinkema, 2006, p. 153). Nina's journey into the monstrous is therefore marked by a fight for control over her body, her sexuality, and the forces that seek to invade her female interiority.

The most prominent element characterising Nina's frequented physical space, is the gaze. As in an investigation of the 'monstrous/menstruous woman' in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* by Tookey (2004, p. 24), 'the power and danger of the gaze' is a central theme in this film. Nina is constantly haunted by images seeking to destabilise her – her mother, her director, the other dancers' scathing whispers, the audience, her reflection as dark temptress in the mirror. The 'power dynamic' of 'to be seen is to be subject to control' is present in the movie – all characters that revolve around Nina try to morph into her, and mould her into feminine subjectivities that empower *them* (Tookey, 2004, p. 29).

In many respects *Black Swan* fits in with the classic feminist notion of the gaze as gendered; 'the subject, the one who looks, is male; the object, the looked-at, is female' (Tookey, 2004, p. 24). In *Black Swan* Nina's obsession in perfecting her role appears to stem largely from her desperate search for approval from her director, Thomas Leroy. Thomas, responsible for casting the Swan Queen, personifies the male gaze. He is first introduced to us when the ballerinas are rehearsing. He enters proudly, with an animal magnetism that the ballerinas are drawn to. They seek to be chosen and singled out by him not only as performers, but women. His sexual seduction is reminiscent of the hold that Count Dracula has over the women he meets. They want to be the objects of his affection; they want to be sexualised. These young female dancers are literally at the mercy of the gaze of Thomas, whose piercing look can make or break their career.

Dadoun (1977, p. 40) argues that the *Dracula* version of the vampire movie is 'an illustration of the work of the fetish function'. The fetishist is generally assumed to be male (Creed 1986, p. 66). When Nina captures Thomas' attention and is picked for the role, she is instantly sexualised. Henceforth her purpose is to become 'his princess'. In order to achieve this Nina must be shocked into maturity by a sexual awakening. This is made clear to her early on – Thomas touches her and instructs her to use masturbation to begin to experience

the unexplored terrain of sexual pleasure, establishing Nina's fetish function. She must let go of the controlled timid Nina and experiment, to cross the passage from 'virgin' to 'transgressive princess' (Tookey, 2004, p. 24). In the final scene after successfully performing the Black Swan he finally calls her 'his princess'. In that moment, she becomes Dracula's Mina, securing the approval of the male gaze and achieving the ultimate status as his 'dark bride' (Shuttle and Redgrove, 1994, cited in Tookey, 2004, p. 25).

Flirting with danger is a prominent theme in the movie. Thomas as the fetishist places women in jeopardy, especially Nina. She subconsciously flirts with him in the beginning and wins the part of the Swan Queen. Thomas is like the vampire 'who rises from the grave ... in search of young virgins'; Nina is the embodiment of the perfect vampire victim in her purity and unexplored sexuality (Creed 1993, p. 62). To be seduced by the dark lord is to become an initiate into the realm of the monstrous, a world where 'abjection acknowledges ... [the subject] to be in perpetual danger' (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 48). Like Salomé, Nina 'is not too innocent to recognise lust; and any innocence she does possess is lost through her encounter with' Thomas (Tookey, 2004, p. 25). Consistent with vampire horror, there is an underlying subtext in the movie of the desire to penetrate and be penetrated. Nina and Thomas may not physically have sex but he arguably penetrates and colonises her female interiority in the ultimate way – by freeing her erotic impulses, but only within the parameters of male desire and fantasy, as in lesbian passion, making her the quintessential male fetish object.

The world she is thrust into is the epitome of peril – the further Nina tries to become her part, the deeper she descends into despair and a break with reality. Her hallucinations become more and more horrific, and it is in such images that the monstrous-feminine is apparent. The process of Nina's transformation is gruesome, as self-mutilation and her physical body as a space for the grotesque feature prominently. Images of blood, torn flesh, her compulsive scratching, red eyes, and overall intensifying bodily deformation comprise explicit images of abjection, placing *Black Swan* firmly in the horror genre. Nina's struggle to attain sexual and creative power is first and foremost hazardous to herself, as she loses complete control seemingly self-destructing by her own monstrous creation. Thomas' assignment to become the Black Swan beckons her and she cannot, or will not, resist his call.

It appears that in such a reading *Black Swan* serves to retain heteronormative gender dynamics, by rendering women in danger of being ultimately incapable of defining themselves as independent subjects with respect to male ownership, even through acts of sexual aggressiveness.

But gendered inscriptions in life are not always straightforward and the aspects of the gaze and female subjectivity in *Black Swan* are equally complex. Woman cannot simply be defined in opposition to masculinity, but as ‘a multi-layered embodied subject, ... a mutant, the other of the Other’ – never completely free from the ‘patriarchal scars’ born from the past and rapidly evolving amidst the multiple potentialities of the present (Braidotti 2002, p. 11, 12; Kristeva 1975, cited in Oliver 1998, p. 2-3 of 8). In this dynamic process, Deleuze’s (1986, cited in Sempruch, 2007, p. 334) multi-dimensional vision of ‘becoming-a-subject’ emerges as integral to our understanding of female subjectivity, and here, to Nina’s descent into the monstrous.

In *Black Swan* the presence of the monstrous means the gaze in the film and therefore the object and function of the fetish is queered, blurred and shifted back and forth not only from female to male, but female to female. Anyone, at any point, can become an object of desire and this is befitting of the permeating erotic layers of the film. Lily, another ballet dancer, is fascinated by Nina, her fragile beauty and talent. Although she appears to try to seduce Nina we get the impression that in fact it is Lily who is captivated by Nina and seeks her attention. Likewise, although Thomas appears to be pulling the strings of Nina’s fate through his ever-watchful male gaze, it is he who is seduced by Nina when she meets him in his office to plea for her part. When Nina bites Thomas during his kissing her he is shocked, and in that moment, overpowered. He encourages her to be the dominatrix; ‘your mission is destruction through seduction’, he instructs during rehearsals. And in this process it is implied that, as a man, he wants to be seduced, likening the erotic power play in the film to vampirism’s ‘interfusion of sexual desire and ... fear’ (Craft, 1984, p. 107).

Nina not only inspires sexual desire, but embodies it. Nina’s vulva literally becomes the central pre-occupation for both males and females in the movie, affirming the female reproductive body as the focus of this horror film – for Thomas as a vessel of hidden untapped sexuality, for Lily as a target of her sexual appetite, and even her mother, as a vestibule of innocence to be preserved.

This is the ultimate objective of the performer – to seduce the audience. Although she is the object of the gaze, Nina is like a muse that all central characters are drawn to and ultimately defined by as she literally unfolds before their eyes. Therefore, the ‘looked-at’ in the movie, not just the ‘looker’, carries enormous power, queering the distribution of sexual power and prowess.

The maternal subject in *Black Swan*

Perhaps the most significant application of Kristeva’s (1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p.49) theory of abjection in horror is in the maternal subject; in *Black Swan* the most pervasive presence that seeks to monitor and control Nina is her mother, Erica. The construction of the maternal figure as abject features prominently in the film and in relation to Nina’s monstrous-feminine, as she gradually rejects Erica for Thomas. Thomas poses the ultimate threat to Nina’s mother – the phallus that places her in danger of annihilation (Kristeva 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 49). Erica asks her to be cautious of his charms. She knows better than anyone else how easy throwing away one’s future for a man is; having Nina meant her ballet career and any chance of success was cut short. The discipline she imposes upon Nina reflects her desire to live vicariously through her daughter, to see her achieve the dream she never fulfilled.

It is here that we see female fetishism feature prominently, illustrating yet again the complex layers of the gaze in the film. Freudian ‘castration fears for the woman’ centre on ‘losing her loved objects, especially her children ... In order to ... disavow, that separation ... [she] tends to fetishise the child’ (Kelly 1984, cited in Creed, p. 67). Erica treats her daughter like a little girl, determining what she eats and where she goes. She keeps her childhood toys in her room which remains frozen in time, as does the image of her daughter’s purity. Thomas, who seeks to claim Nina as his own fetish object, not only represents a threat to Erica’s dream being trampled on a second time but the realisation of her fears of castration.

This becomes a battle for Nina’s interiority; in the process, however, the power from the fetishist is arguably reversed to Nina as the fetish object, for whose attention both Erica, the female, and Thomas, the male fetishist vie. As the movie progresses Nina is drawn further into the world Thomas opens her up to as Erica’s hold wanes. But this is a choice that Nina makes consciously – embracing the symbolic domain of the monstrous represents a rejection of ‘Nina, the child’, and a finite break in the mother-child bond as the maturation

process unfolds. This sets the scene for the construction of the maternal subject as abject and a force to expel from Nina's female interiority in order to successfully unearth the Other within.

Erica acts as the gatekeeper of her daughter's sexual maturation. This is made no clearer than when Nina wakes up and tries to masturbate for the first time, only to realise her mother is sleeping in the room as if watching her even through closed eyes. In this scene Erica is a barrier to Nina's first orgasm; there is no place in Erica's maternal world for such 'shameful' 'unclean' sexual acts. The 'maternal imaginary' is integral to the process of the female journey of becoming (Irigaray, 1985; 1987, cited in Sempruch, 2007, p. 334). As an adult Nina has become her mother, embodying Irigaray's (1985; 1987, cited in Sempruch 2007, p.335) 'proximity of the maternal'. Like her mother Nina lives for ballet and is prepared to sacrifice everything for her career. But in *Black Swan*, as in Sempruch's (2007, p. 334) investigation of Saramonowicz's *Siostra*, the maternal subject has turned into an 'overwhelmingly oppressive and inescapable bodily force'. Therefore in Nina's case her 'becoming' is grounded in the power struggle with the maternal imaginary and is defined in relation to its resistance.

Nina is haunted by distorted monstrous images of Erica in paintings that appear to come alive; these are the images of the maternal subject, the devourer, or Creed's (1993) castrating mother. Her female wrath is obvious in such scenes where she cuts Nina's nails violently after seeing the marks on her back: 'It's the role isn't it? It's all this pressure. I *knew* it would be too much. *I knew it*', she says to Nina with an underlying tone of hysteria. She must stop this transformation which will take her 'sweet girl' and castrating power away. In her increasing sexual awakening and development of persona as Swan Queen, Nina fights to free herself from her mother's hold and desire to keep her trapped in time as the perfect innocent little girl. She must resort to locking her room and even acts of physical violence to keep her mother out.

When Nina burns her toys it marks a significant turning point in the movie; she is dismantled as the maternal subject's fetish object, symbolically severing their bond. The process of Nina's becoming into the monstrous-feminine is 'a decisive rejection of the inherent maternal symbolism engulfing [Nina's] female bod[y], [and] a refusal to participate in and endure the "becoming'-of-the-mother' (Sempruch, 2007, p. 339).

Her transformation into the Black Swan represents the death of the maternal subject and its displacement as an abject element in the construction of the monstrous-feminine in the film.

Performing the monstrous – orgasm, death and the beautiful grotesque

The pathway to the monstrous requires Nina to cross the passage from ‘virgin’ to ‘transgressive’ princess and engage with her Homoerotic Other – without this significant rite of passage expulsion of the maternal imaginary and ultimate becoming of the monstrous-feminine cannot occur (Tookey, 2004, p. 24). The Other, here, gains meaning as Nina’s sexual ‘double’ in the form of her co-star Lily, with whom a homoerotic encounter becomes central to her sexual maturation (Freud, 1919, cited in Creed, 1993, p.54). Creed (1993, p.54) explores Freud’s (1919) use of the uncanny as analogous to the abject in its disturbance of ‘identity and order’; the presence of the double is one of the three main expressions of the uncanny explored in horror film related to the representation of the womb, and is a pivotal element in Nina’s journey.

Nina becomes obsessed with Lily. She is Nina’s psychological twin, embodying the sexual aggression and womanly confidence her timid persona so desperately lacks. Nina already embodies the perfect White Swan with her overwhelming softness and fragility. Craft (1984, p.115) argues that ‘desire between anatomical females requires the mediation of a hidden masculinity’; Nina’s union with Lily is a desire for the phallus, to seek out the masculine aggressiveness she requires to effectively perform the part of the Black Swan. Lily personifies the traits of the female vampire in her adept seductiveness and allure. She seeks Nina out, her mission it seems to defile her. Lily is the disturber of identity, order and the domestic; she does not obey ‘the rules of proper sexual conduct’ and is the second figure endangering Erica’s maternal power and guarded domain (Creed, 1993, p. 61). For, ‘Once bitten, the victim is ... lost to the real world forever’ and to her mother, as will become of Nina (Creed, 1993, p. 61). ‘What happened to my sweet girl?’ cries Erica; ‘*She’s gone!*’ screams Nina.

Nina’s obsession with Lily is a lust for the monstrous-feminine within. And as vampire victims are chosen by their predator, it appears to be Nina’s destiny to enter the realm of the grotesque and the forbidden; it is not a coincidence that Lily bears a tattoo of wings on her back, carrying the mark of the Black Swan and affirming her role as a necessary conduit to the monstrous. Nina fears the overtness of Lily’s sexuality and risk-taking lifestyle, something she has never been allowed or allowed herself to be.

But it is this very fear that makes her desire for the unleashing of the queer monster within all the more powerful. She is drawn to the terror like a moth to a flame. She must conquer that fear – and the only way to not be dominated by the monster is to become it. The union with Lily as her sexual opposite is key to the demise of her fragile self and birth of the ‘dark bride’ (Shuttle and Redgrove 1994, cited in Tookey 2004, p. 25).

The allusion to orgasm and elation throughout the movie, whether literally or symbolically, is critical to Nina’s metamorphosis. If the subject is seen as a ‘becoming’ entity immersed both in relations to power and knowledge and in relation to unacknowledged regions of desire’, Nina’s sexual becoming is a means of reclaiming power through newfound knowledge gained from her awakening desires in the previously uncharted territory of her erotic imaginary (Sempruch, 2007, p. 334). James (2006, p. 25) contends:

Death and sex/uality are inextricably linked in the Western cultural imagination. The French slang term for ‘orgasm’ (*la petite mort*) is said to literally translate as ‘little death’ ... while the ‘sex-leading-to-death’ motif is pervasive in narrative and aesthetic representations.

The implication of Nina’s character as a ballet dancer suffering for her art reveals a powerful intersection between performance anxiety, both on stage and sex, and its final release. This release arguably comes in the form of climaxes or ‘little deaths’ in focal points in the movie, comprising the following key elements in their materialisation: obsession; devouring/consumption; transformation/sexual-becoming; climax/ death/ release / expulsion.

The first orgasm is achieved in the sexual union between Lily and Nina. This is where the presence of the Homoerotic Other becomes crucial – Nina *needs* Lily to achieve her first climax in a sexual relationship and cross over to the next phase. The sexual act she imagines is a significant cornerstone, not of the physical act itself, but what it represents in the journey of her transformation into the monstrous-feminine. Here we see *Black Swan* featuring the consumption/devouring element in vampire horror. It is clear that in the erotic landscape of the monstrous seduction is the ultimate aim, as its target must first be seduced by the Other and subsequently transform into the seducer. Accordingly, Nina must be consumed/eaten/overpowered in order to achieve the state of the opposite.

Lily performs oral sex on Nina, symbolically eating/consuming her. This can be analogised to vampirism; the subject must be bitten in order to transform into the vampire (it is notable that Nina bites Thomas when he kisses her, thus deepening the significance of this act in sexuality and power in the movie). This is followed by the elation or orgasm. Then, as for the vampire initiate, the descent into darkness and a waiting period ensue before the full transformation occurs; the anxiety and tension are not fully released yet, setting the scene for the necessity of a second orgasm/death. This is obvious in Nina's case, as the scenes following her sexual union see her despair and violent acts both towards herself and others amplify.

This sexual act signifies not only that Nina is consumed during the homoerotic act, but that she in turn consumes the part of Lily she requires for her transformation. Lily's face in the scene is replaced by a flash of Nina as the dark temptress, an image she sees throughout the movie, signalling the merging of Lily's sexual aggressiveness into Nina. This represents the beginning of her journey as 'transgressive princess' (Tookey, 2004, p. 24). It is a marriage of the two sexual selves – the virgin and the whore, the meek and the predator. In that moment of sexual release Nina drives out her limited fragile self, the virgin/child, and materialises the expulsion of the maternal subject and its control over her. She is no longer bound by it, although it remains a part of her as the White Swan. She is unfettered to become the Black Swan and embrace the polar opposite of her gendered self.

It is now imperative Nina completes this act to achieve full metamorphosis and assume her place in the realm of the monstrous by connecting with the Other within (Kristeva ,1975, cited in Oliver, 1998, p. 2-3 of 8). Nina successfully overcomes the maternal subject's final fight to restore order as Erica physically tries to stop Nina from getting to her première the next morning. Upon a late arrival at the theatre she is shocked to discover that Thomas has replaced her with Lily. 'Not *her!*', Nina exclaims in dread. It is not a coincidence that Lily becomes her alternate as her psychological twin. Nina has been tortured by images of erotic acts between not only Lily and her dance partner, but the Black Swan. She is terrified of Lily stealing her part, and most importantly, her transformation. It is essential that Nina expels the Homoerotic Other and is set free from its hold over her female interiority in order to make her claim on stage, thus building up to the next orgasm/little death.

Nina performs the White Swan first; the act goes well until she is distracted by a hallucination and falls. During a break, just as it is time to perform the Black Swan, Lily comes into her dressing room. A confrontation ensues as Nina's growing rage escalates to a physical fight, resulting in stabbing Lily violently. Nina shouts, '*It's my turn now!*'; it is her turn to shine on stage and fulfil her destiny, no matter what the cost. Allowing Lily to take over her part would mark a failure to secure her rightful place in the order of the monstrous. This scene signals the second orgasm – Nina's stabbing represents her symbolically penetrating Lily, signifying a reversal to their sexual encounter in the event of the first orgasm, and the becoming of the phallus. Her repeated attacks and screams are orgasmic in a sense, like a release of built-up tension and reclaiming of power. The significance of Lily's murder not only lays in the expulsion of the Homoerotic Other from Nina's interiority, but in revealing the centrality of 'religious and historical notions of abjection' in which the construction of the monstrous in horror is grounded (Kristeva 1982, cited in Creed 1986, p. 46). Lily's death symbolises a necessary human sacrifice at the altar of the monstrous, its function to fully exorcise Nina's double.

The completion of this symbolic ritual seals her passage to the other side of the border. Nina goes from being in danger to *being* danger through her newfound seductive appeal and murderous intent; the 'devoured' becomes the 'devourer', taking Lily's place as seductress vampirette. Nina the 'vampire' has drained her female lover, as a pool of red blood seeps from Lily's vanquished body. For Kristeva (1982, cited in Creed, p. 59) blood is a crucial aspect of the horror film. Lily's blood becomes a 'semantic crossroads, the propitious place for abjection, where *death* and *femininity*, *murder* and *procreation*, *cessation of life* and *vitality* all come together' (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1993, p. 62). Nina is the 'femme castratrice' in her representation as a psychotic monster who feels 'symbolically castrated' by being unjustly robbed of her destiny (Creed, 1993, p. 122).



Figure 3: Natalie Portman as 'femme castratrice'

Source: Bellamy and Howard (2010, p. 8 of 26)

Nina's intensifying physical deformation features prominently henceforth, as the abject image of the monstrous-feminine within is ascending. She hides the dead body in the dressing room and returns to the stage. What follows, is a captivating performance. Its completion results in a standing ovation by the audience, Thomas, the dancers and her mother, when she finally becomes the Swan Queen and spreads her wings. She overcomes her performance anxiety and achieves performance mastery, heralding her third climax. Lily's death illustrates that Nina no longer needs Lily as her psychological double to complete her transformation or achieve climax, and is now completely liberated from the two figures that have been instrumental to this process: the Homoerotic Other and the maternal subject.

The significance of the third orgasm is paramount. Becoming the Black Swan signifies reversing the power dynamics in the gaze – when Nina completes her performance she embodies an all-seeing being. She alone controls the stage. Everyone's attention is frozen on her monstrous magnificence. In that moment, Nina is both the looker and the 'looked-at', object and subject – she is the male and female gaze personified and the centre of sexual and artistic power, blurring the boundaries of seeing and concepts of spectatorship (Tookey 2004, p. 24). The unfolding of Nina as monstrous-in-process signifies the destabilisation of the symbolic order, as the parameters of the gaze are once again shaken to their core, allowing the re-negotiation of power in her female subjectivity and interiority.

However, perhaps the most critical implication of this climax for the status of the monstrous-feminine in *Black Swan* is that, in these final scenes, we witness the birth of the beautiful grotesque. Through her artistic performance Nina achieves a monstrous beauty that captivates the audience.

She attains mastery of the art of sexual seduction both as performer and woman. Full transformation into the Monstrous Other and her sexual-becoming is achieved, as the horror subject passes from erasure to sublime – Burke (1757, cited in Botting, 1996, p. 39) purported that, in contrast to conventional notions of beauty, the sublime evokes a marriage of both ‘delight’ and ‘horror’ in the onlooker. Nina’s presence as the Black Swan possesses an awe-inspiring quality that cannot be comprehended by the rational mind, but rather, stretches out the imagination to the expanses of infinity.



Figure 4: Becoming the Black Swan

Source: Parks (2012, p. 22 of 23)

When Nina’s arms extend into long black wings the monstrous-feminine becomes an object of aesthetic perfection and desire. In this scene, the element of abjection is momentarily subverted in its merging with two of the dominant images in the film as ultimate symbols of ‘soft’ femininity – the ballerina and the swan. They are crucial to establishing the grotesque as beautiful. Both the ballerina, with her physical extensions and elegance, and the swan have been historically perceived as quintessential symbols of grace, purity and beauty (Neville, 2007; Symbolism Wiki 2011, p.1). The Black Swan, in particular, is regarded as a ‘*rara avis* (rare bird)’, a ‘curiosity’ (Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, 1898, p.1 of 1).

In this particular film, the monstrous-feminine not only signifies the blurring of boundaries, but the destabilisation of its conception as abject. This is turned in on itself, as the object of terror/danger reverses into an artistic image of unconventional beauty, arguably resulting in the *apotheosis of the monstrous-feminine*.

Her feminine monstrosity enthralls and mesmerises; she is the cygnet which has transformed into a magnificent swan. The audience joins her in this space by viewing the performance, being elevated and reaching apotheosis themselves. Only in that brief monstrous moment does she become truly free – a woman in all her dark glory and overpowering freakish beauty. In the third climax, Nina achieves full connection with the other within, striking the perfect balance of beauty and terror in the image of the Black Swan.



Figure 5: The apotheosis of the monstrous-feminine in *Black Swan*

Source: Bellamy and Howard (2010, p. 7 of 26)

Clip 2: 'Just Dance': Black Swan Official Dance Scene with Natalie Portman'

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsvtIzebNcw>

Source: DanceOn (2010)

Return to the womb:

Performativity, expulsion and transcendence of the monstrous in *Black Swan*

The fourth and final climax comes in the form of Nina's probable death on stage. After her captivating performance Nina returns to her dressing room; there is a knock on the door and, to her dismay, Nina sees that it is Lily who is still alive and has come to congratulate her. Bemused, she notices shattered glass on the floor – she realises her stomach is bleeding and that Lily's stabbing was in fact her own. But this does not dampen her final act. Nina performs the White Swan faultlessly. She falls to her death as scripted in the play at the sound of thunderous applause; Thomas and the other dancers surround her and see she is severely wounded.

This is a crucial point in the movie as it illuminates important insights into the place of the monstrous-feminine in horror and queer cinema. Nina expels, but must in turn be expelled – this is a necessity of the horror genre so that ‘the subject takes up his/her proper place in relation to the symbolic’ (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 46).

The final scene signifies the completion of the cycle and expelling of the Black Swan or monstrous-feminine. Nina, like the vampire and other monstrous characters, represents an oddity and above all the ‘ambiguous’ (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 48). This has particular gender significance in *Black Swan* – her transformation means that not only has she gone from one extreme to another, she now represents a duality in its full extent. The costume and make-up of the Black Swan is visibly transgendered and embodies a distorted femininity, existing somewhere in between the world of the feminine and the masculine, the human and the inhuman; a place with no rules or borders. This existence cannot be sustained. It is fraught with danger that not only Nina’s female interiority, but the audience and broader society cannot easily accept beyond the boundaries of art; like the female vampire she has been ‘transformed from an innocent’ to a ‘threatening female figure’ due to her sexual awakening (Creed, 1993, p 66).

A perfect example of the necessity of expulsion in horror is found in the character of Beth Macintyre, an ageing, mentally disturbed ballet dancer and the Swan Queen before Nina. Beth represents the ultimate monstrous-feminine. Although we do not witness her actual physical death, her character is sidelined early on as she is run over by a car; it is notable this was a suicide attempt. Images of her scarred deformed flesh terrorise Nina when she visits her in hospital – these signify castration anxieties and the second expression of the ‘uncanny’ in *Black Swan*, stemming here from Nina’s fear of her own physical mutilation and the dissolution of gender boundaries (Freud, 1919, cited in Creed, 1993, pp. 53-54). Beth is bound by the monstrous and can no longer escape it. She can only be released by her grotesque becoming in death and in her failed attempt to destroy herself becomes bed-ridden, hidden from the world and thus eliminated from the storyline.

Beth’s fate is sealed in the realm of the abject, entering the status of an *anathema*. Nina represents the re-irruption of the monstrous; like the vampire, she must be vanquished, for its force cannot possibly be contained. The wound she inflicts on herself is reminiscent of a vampire’s stake to the heart. Death is arguably the only way to stop the monstrous from irreversibly contaminating her, leading to the kind of abjection witnessed in Beth.

If Nina does not die, she will almost surely pass the fleeting moment of perfection and transgress from apotheosis to anathema. There is something to be said then of the monstrous-feminine desiring its own extermination, as witnessed in Beth and Nina.

The activity of expulsion in Nina's case cannot be fully understood without reference to the third and final expression of Freud's (1919, cited in Creed, 1993, p. 53) uncanny in the film: that 'familiar/unfamiliar place' and 'the subject's 'former home'', the womb. Creed (1993, p. 53) argues that the 'womb is represented in the horror film in at least two main ways: symbolically in terms of intra-uterine settings and literally in relation to the female body'. Both of these forms are present in the movie – Nina is symbolically (re)born *and* gives birth to the Black Swan. In its second application Nina's psychotic behaviour throughout the movie is an expression of the womb as monstrous. Ancient accounts state that 'the womb began to travel around the body if the woman was sexually frustrated', resulting in madness; there is an undeniable link between Nina's sexual frustration and neurosis as dominant forces governing her female body (Bullough, 1973, cited in Creed, 1993, p. 56-57).

In Nina the elements of 'desiring death' and 'death of the maternal subject' intersect in a deeper way: when Nina transforms into the Black Swan she symbolically gives birth to the monstrous, re-affirming it as an archetype of the female reproductive body (Creed 1993, p. 7). For, as all artistic creations figuratively are to their creators, so too is the Black Swan Nina's 'baby', echoing the representation of the womb in other horror films in which the female body becomes the vessel of an 'inhuman offspring' (Creed, 1003, p. 56). The moment of conception is found in her sexual union with Lily when she subsumes the dark nature she needs to materialise the Black Swan.

Creed's (1993, p. 58) description of such monstrous births is poignant – the Black Swan marks its inception as 'grotesque through ... the protruding eyes, sweat, trembling ... the swollen face ... the body looks as if it may tear apart, open out, reveal its innermost depths'. Just as Nina rejected the abject maternal subject in the face of her mother, she must also reject her own maternal imaginary and kill off her creation. It is befitting that Nina stabs herself in the stomach, symbolically representing the killing of the monstrous foetus.

On another level, her impalement also represents the final penetration of a ‘natural’ order demarcating the masculine and feminine, as the male gaze strikes its final blow and punishes her for her overt and ambiguous sexuality, indicating the annihilation of the monstrous womb and resetting of the heteronormative order.

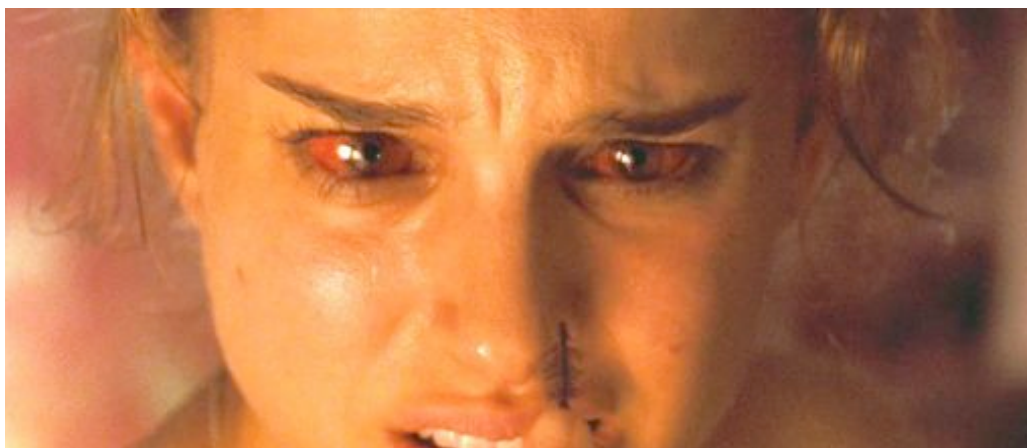


Figure 6: The birth of the monstrous in *Black Swan*

Source: *Natalie Portman* (2012, p. 16 of 19)

Clip 3: Watch ‘Black Swan – Go Away’

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIKoPpIF2pA&feature=related>

Source: FoxConnect (2011)

But does the conclusion of *Black Swan* merely signal the eradication of the monstrous-feminine? Her acting out of the two identities in full on stage and eventual physical demise arguably represents something far more profound – the monstrous as a gateway to transcendence. The apotheosis of Nina’s performance suggests the triumph of ‘posttranssexualism’ which ‘calls for an acceptance of sexual ambiguity’ (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, p. 174). Becoming the monstrous-feminine is the means by which Nina reaches the peak of not only her performing career, but her artistry as a complete sexual being, embodying both masculine and feminine seduction in the same bodily realm. The space of the female body in Nina mirrors the desire for creative and sexual artistry, and unity. Nina is always seeking to extend herself internally and grow into the two forms as she does in a physical sense as a ballerina; the extension of her limbs in dance represents the desire to transcend creatively, as much as sexually.

Lacan (1977, cited in Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 63) uses the idea of a ‘mirror stage’ to explain how the infant begins the process of separation from the ‘m/other’ when being able to recognise itself as a ‘wholly separate being’. In a symbolic adaptation of this concept in the movie, the use of mirrors is a key aspect of self-monitoring; the ballerina gazes upon her image curiously. In Nina’s case this takes on an added dimension, as the image in the mirror becomes a reflection of Nina’s progressive de/trans-formation. Just as ‘the infant installs ... a fantasy of itself as all-powerful ... [and] an Other within itself’ in order to become a subject, so too does Nina in her journey to the monstrous (Lacan, 1977, cited in Cranny-Francis et al. 2003, p. 63).



Figure 7: The mirror and the Other. Source: Quinn (2011, p. 1 of 3)

The Black Swan or the Monstrous Other signifies the desire to be a ‘whole, complete, omnipotent’ being (Lacan, 1977, cited in Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 63); ‘I just want to be perfect’, says Nina coyly in the beginning to Thomas. The representation of the desire for wholeness is not only made possible, but heightened by queer cinema with its juxtaposition of opposites and elemental concerns grounded in gender and identity. *Black Swan* seamlessly blurs the boundaries of diametrically opposed selves within Nina – virgin/whore, grotesque/beautiful, child/woman, human/animal, and masculine/feminine.

The importance of the queering of the gaze lies in its demonstration that ‘gender is not a natural given but a performative process’; in *Black Swan* the queer gaze literally allows for ‘(the performance of) gender itself to be challenged’ via Nina, the artist (Mulvey, 1975, cited in Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 175). Nina is the epitome of restless sexuality. This is a state we constantly teeter in, whether consciously or not, between the extremes of male aggressive sexuality and soft femininity. *Black Swan* exposes diametrically opposed poles of desire and then queers them, by allowing them to co-exist in the same space.

The end result is the appearance of the Black Swan as an exemplification of an androgynous existence. To master both the White and Black Swan means to achieve mastery of both the feminine and masculine self – to be able to inhabit and embody each persona. Only then can one potentially release this intense sexual (and ultimately existential) anxiety and transcend to a unified state.

Paradoxically, the loss of unity of the subject is a necessity to the expelling process and an imperative to sexual and artistic catharsis. Nina must be disintegrated, as she is upon contact with the Monstrous Other, in order to transform and elevate to a new-found state of coherence: ‘perfection is not just about control’, emphasises Thomas to Nina – ‘it’s also about letting go ... *transcendence*’. The desire to be the monstrous-feminine exemplifies Nina’s body as a space of eternal struggle between the two sexual identities, an attempt to experience both in their entirety, and finally reconcile them in a harmonious state whilst preserving their individual integrities.



Figure 8: Letting go – embracing the Other and monstrous transcendence

Source: *Black Swan movie 2* (2011, p. 1 of 6)

Clip 4: Watch ‘Black Swan – Lose Yourself Nina!’

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss94-VLLdAM&feature=endscreen&NR=1>

Source: Michalina1001 (2011)

It is in the second representation of the womb in the movie that the significance of the monstrous-feminine as transcendence is fully revealed. For Creed (1993, p. 55) ‘The symbolization of the womb as ... any ... enclosed space is central to the iconography of the horror film’. In *Black Swan* this is found in the physical space where Nina’s ultimate rite of passage and final transformation into the monstrous takes place: the ballet theatre and the stage. It is in the ‘bowels’ of the theatre/womb that Nina commits her imagined murderous act towards Lily, as is commonplace of the monstrous figure in horror film, giving rise to the early stages of her birth as the Black Swan. The representation of the theatre as womb, as with other ‘intra-uterine settings’, is found in its dimly lit narrow backstage pathways, leading up to the stage as a symbolic birthplace of artistry and creativity. It can be a ‘familiar’ place with the experience of creative performance in its upliftment and/or dejection, yet ‘unfamiliar’ as the full gamut of dramatic emotion and its precise effect on a spectator can never be pre-determined (Freud 1919, cited in Creed 1993, p. 53).

For Nina the stage signifies a ‘womb phantasy’ (Freud, 1919, cited in Creed, 1993, p.53). This first appears in her dream at the opening scene when she is dancing as the Swan Queen. She is terrified of losing her way in its backstage alleys and, even worse, failing in her attempt to portray the Black Swan. She knows this place, and perhaps is most comfortable in its familiar surrounds – yet, it can take away her chance at metamorphosis and re-birth as easily as it can give it. The stage is the archaic mother, the centre of life and light. The desire to perform on stage is a ‘desire to return to ... the mother/womb’ (Creed 1986, p. 63).

The significance of performance as ‘ritual’ is paramount in the movie. Historically, it has been the role of religion to ‘purify the abject’ (Kristeva 1982, cited in Creed 1986, p. 53). But with its fragmentation the task of purification now rests completely with ‘that catharsis par excellence called art’ (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 53). The ritualistic element of Nina’s performance of the Black Swan becomes a means by which contact with the abject is renewed to facilitate its expulsion (Creed, p. 45). As the home of artistic catharsis it is a primal space where all defilement is purified, allowing the subject to finally satisfy its infantile desire for wholeness. This is first and foremost ‘a desire for non-differentiation’; in her final performance Nina embodies both the feminine and masculine but is constrained by neither (Creed, 1986, p. 63). Rather, she exists in absence. She no longer fears the loss of boundaries for she is the embodiment of it.

Nina now exists in Kristeva's (1982, cited in Creed, 1993, p. 164) the 'thetic'; this is the space where the 'semiotic', commonly associated with the maternal figure, and the 'symbolic' which is linked to the paternal, meet before they separate. This representation of the womb in the creative domain challenges traditional cultural discourses in which it is still seen as an object of horror (Creed 1993, p. 56). Here, its function as a 'portal' for reaching our Lacanian desire for omnipotence, which is as primal and inescapable as the power of the womb itself, is acknowledged and revered in Nina's apotheosis.

The return to the mother/womb denotes the ultimate purification of the abject; Nina fades away on a high, on the orgasm of death, as she looks up at the stage lights ascending into the heavens content. It is her final release. She is back into her White Swan outfit, resembling the pure innocent Nina we had encountered in the beginning of the movie as if nothing had changed, thus coming full circle. She exclaims: 'I felt it – perfect – I was perfect...', and fades away. Stage as the eternal womb is the only place Nina, Swan Queen, is truly safe and preserved, and it is there that she must die. It is arguably the only way to retain this state of perfection, circumventing re-instatement into abjection. She is fully expelled, clean. She has spat herself out and been turned inside out (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1986, p. 47). In the archaic stage-mother's womb Nina is finally redeemed – as a woman, an artist, and (symbolic) mother.

Death becomes her – the flight of the Swan and the rise of the monstrous sublime

Nina as a heroine defines her becoming-into a woman and consummate performer in terms of her final demise on stage. The term 'being-towards-death' is encountered in Martin Heidegger's (1962, cited in Trites 2000, p. 159) *Being and Time*; this 'represents the moment of maturation in which the subject defines himself [sic] in terms of his [sic] own death, in terms of his [sic] own not being'. As a variation to Heidegger's theorem the key premise in *Black Swan* is *sexual-becoming-towards-death*. Her journey has been defined by those 'little deaths' – the death of the inner child, the maternal subject, the Homoerotic Other and finally, her own (James, 2006, p. 25). To be the Black Swan means to no longer fear – for she *becomes* fear – but on the contrary to flirt unashamedly with death, if not becoming, like other horror subjects, a forbearer of death herself.

Nina's sexual-becoming-into-death is understood by viewing the monstrous as a means of breaking with the constraints of social convention. What horror figures such as the vampire have in common is that through monstrosity they attain a degree of liberation from

forms of oppression, whether they are societal, sexual, class and so forth. These characters are not chosen by chance for transformation – they are often already engulfed by a sense of desperation. Mina, for example, begs Dracula to turn her into a vampire and end her mortal suffering (*Dracula*, 1992); it is the ‘fin-de-siecle’, and degeneration, moral and physical diseases are rampant (Le Rider, 1993). The bite of the vampire is a promise of a life beyond the mundane, into the extraordinary. Through death this monstrous figure is reborn and rises from the ashes of its former finite perishable self.

Black Swan joins *Dracula* (Stoker 1897) amidst a body of narratives in which monstrosity is used to explore the anxieties of their time; Nina is already broken before she embarks on this journey, an unassertive young woman suffering from self-doubt, self-mutilation and possibly an eating disorder. These are stresses not uncommon of contemporary performers and young women overall (Howard 2009; Polinska 2000). Contact with the Monstrous Other reminds horror subjects how empty the ordinary world is and unsettles the boundaries of the known, thrusting them into the realm of the queer. ‘Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant ... It is an identity without an essence’ (Halperin 1997, p. 62).

The subject that is initiated and transformed transcends into an alternate consciousness far removed from socially prescribed ways of being. Most significantly, all these subjects are now being-into-death. They are outsiders, renegades, ‘freaks’, therefore, their existence is defined by their *non being* in the fringes of society; the Black Swan is also like a shadow, a haunting image, a dream. They have stared into the ‘abyss’ of the womb and emerged more powerful than one could imagine (Lacan, 1978, cited in Creed, p. 60). The desire to become the monstrous then represents a need to be ‘reborn’ and transcend the pain of the normative, ready to burst at the seams and come undone at the slightest trigger.

As her final climax, death is the ultimate state of elevation. This rethinking of the monstrous-feminine in the movie as a symbol of emancipation is heightened by its simultaneous representation in the form of a ballerina and a swan – ‘wings’ as a signifier of freedom is inherent in their symbolism, both in the swan for obvious reasons, and the ballerina in her extending arms, floating motions and leaps on stage, resembling the act of flying. Birds in dreams arguably reflect the deep human need to soar in our waking moments; Levinas (1969, cited in Hamblet, 2009, p. 22-23) asserts that ‘freedom is an unequivocal value, without which life is not worth living.

It is the *modus operandi* of conscious existence'. Nina's journey started with such a dream and the Black Swan's calling to awaken her dormant creative, sexual and life energy through the command of the ballerina's movements. But there is a deeper connection between the swan, specifically in relation to death in mythology – the swan exemplifies the presence of not only courage, but also celebration in the face of death:

... when these birds feel that the time has come for them to die, they sing more loudly and sweetly than they have sung in all their lives before ... the swans [do not] sing because they are sad ... [they] sing because they know the good things that await them in the unseen world (Socrates, cited in Hamblet 2009,p.22).

Nina as the Black Swan 'sings' her most brilliant 'song' in her final moments – only this song needs no words to convey its brilliance. Her movements are fearless, faultless, beckoning the onlooker to delve in the awe of the unseen mysteries of life and death; for freedom can be found in the end of all things as it can in their beginning. Nina is bleeding to death, and yet she has never felt more alive, denoting yet again the presence of blood as a conflation of both '*the cessation of life and vitality*' (Kristeva, 1982, cited in Creed, 1993, p.82). In her final scenes, we witness Nina spreading her wings in the shadows, present yet absent at the same time. In that moment she is weightless, shaking off any external entities that invaded her 'female interiority', and in death flies away closing off her full accessibility (Brinkema 2006, p. 153). In her becoming-towards-death, Nina enters the realm of other horror subjects in the 'erasure of the conventional and integral self', giving rise to the status of her monstrous-feminine as an emblem of deliverance and the sublime (Craft, 1984, p. 107; Burke, 1757, cited in Botting, 1996, p. 39).

Conclusion

Nina is Braidotti's (2002, p. 12) quintessential 'subject-in-process, ... mutant, [and] the other of the Other'. Her life and death are defined by it – in life she is 'shocked into maturity' in a series of rites of passage both on and off the stage, representing above all the pursuit of the 'art' of being a woman (Bjerre 2007, p. 735). But it is in her 'not being' that Nina defines herself and gains ultimate power by encapsulating and eternally preserving a moment of true perfection.

The significance of her death lies not in the defeat of the monstrous-feminine and powerlessness, but in its representation of pure elevation. Desiring the monstrous reflects the desire for transcendence – *Black Swan* as queer cinema encapsulates the apotheosis of the monstrous-feminine, illuminating its brilliant layers and status as an object of abject horror and erotic desire.

Queer horror becomes a powerful space in which the confluence of performance, creativity and sex demonstrate the ‘art of being’, the rethinking of the Monstrous Other as a symbol of liberation beyond the abject and the queering of normative structures (Fromm 1992). The interfusion of the classic images of ‘soft’ femininity present in the swan and ballerina with the monstrous, leads to a unique creation of a monstrous sublime. Upon becoming the Black Swan and death, Nina finally finds a voice which has been silenced all her life and sings her ‘swan song’, immortalising her image as a creature of bewildering fascination.



Figure 9: Nina's swan song and deliverance in the ‘stage/womb’

Source: Saito (2010, p. 1 of 8)

Clip 5: Watch ‘Transformation – Nina Sayers [Black Swan]’

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUQA42niMqY&feature=related>

Source: Whispersunreal (2011)

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