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Milestone #2
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Portraying Schizophrenia in *Shine*

Treating serious mental illness has long been a central concern in psychiatric medical field, and several Hollywood films portray real or imaginary characters with such disorders as schizophrenia. Naturally enough, Hollywood seldom gets it right when depicting mental illness onscreen. Schizophrenia, a serious mental illness, affects about one percent of the world population, which has been identified as one of the ten most serious diseases by the World Health Organization (Ed. and Darity 344). Generally, this type of patient isolates their thoughts from reality, and they lack the ability to express themselves. On the other hand, we can learn some other factors that can affect people's mental state from the movie *Shine*. The main character, David Helfgott, is a genius pianist with schizophrenia showing his talent in life. This film is based on a true story of a real Australian pianist who has been suffering from this disease, recovered and went back to stage performing music (Maslin). According to a film review by Janet Maslin, the way the director Scott Hicks shoot the film was more with an acute and sensitive style than being concerned with the actual realities of schizophrenia (Maslin). While the portrayal of schizophrenia in the character of David Helfgott in *Shine* is inspiring and ends happily, based on several scholarly sources, I will argue the real prognosis and treatment of schizophrenia is often far less optimistic.

Works Cited

Maslin, Janet. "FILM REVIEW;:" *Prodigy With as Many Scars as Gifts* 22 November 1996:

n.pag *LexisNexis Academic*. Web. 20 October 2011.

This film review provides some ideas of David Helfgott's pitable and inspiring life as a genius pianist with mental illness based on true story. It also mentions how his father's overbearing sternness plays a big role in David's life. The information will help me write about how music and schizophrenia affect his life.

"Schizophrenia." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Ed. William A. Darity, Jr.

2nd ed. Vol. 7. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008. 344-346. *Gale Virtual*

Reference Library. Web. 19 Oct. 2011.

This encyclopedia article discusses about the symptoms and treatments of schizophrenia. It also talks about social and economic factors in different countries which are related to the numbers of this disease. I will use the information as evidence to show readers schizophrenia is much more complex than the movie shows.

Shine. Dir. Scott Hicks. Perf. Geoffrey Rush, Sonia Todd, and Armin Mueller-Stahl. New Line

Home Video, 1997. DVD.

The film portrays David Helfgott, an intelligent pianist's inspiring life with schizophrenia. It contains three scenes with emotional climax which are main milestones in his life. I will use the information to compare the differences between schizophrenia in real life and in the film.