

Univerzita Hradec Králové
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Téma obsese ve filmech Darrena Aronofskyho

Bakalářská práce

Autor: Alžběta Fleknová
Studijní program: B7507 Specializace v pedagogice
Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Výtvarná tvorba se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jan Suk

UNIVERZITA HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ

Pedagogická fakulta

Akademický rok: 2014/2015

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Alžběta Fleknová**
Osobní číslo: **P111620**
Studijní program: **UB7507 Specializace v pedagogice**
Studijní obory: **Výtvarná tvorba se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání**
Název tématu: **Téma obsese ve filmech Darrena Aronofskyho**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem bakalářské práce je zaměřit se na téma obsese jakožto opakujícího se prvku ve filmovém díle Darrena Aronofskyho, konkrétně na filmech Černá labuť, Fontána a Pi. Práce nejprve klasifikuje typologii obsese a výsledky promítne do druhé části, která hlouběji analyzuje vybrané filmy z autorova díla. Okrajově se práce také zaměří na specifickou Aronofskyho filmovou řeči.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Seznam odborné literatury:

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5. 5th ed.

Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013. Print.

Dillon, Steven. The Solaris Effect: Art and Artifice in Contemporary American Film. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006. Print.

Rachman, Stanley, and Padmal De Silva. Obsessive-compulsive disorder: The Facts. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

Wedding, Danny, Mary Ann Boyd, and Ryan M. Niemiec. Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology. 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe Publishing, 2009. Print.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Jan Suk

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

22. listopadu 2012

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

5. června 2015

L.S.

doc. PhDr. Pavel Vacek, Ph.D.
děkan

Mgr. Olga Vraštilová, M.A., Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

dne

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala (pod vedením vedoucího bakalářské práce) samostatně a uvedla jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne

.....

Anotace

FLEKNOVÁ, Alžběta. *Téma obsese ve filmech Darrena Aronofskyho*. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta, Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2015. 47 s. Bakalářská práce.

Cílem bakalářské práce je zaměřit se na téma obsese jakožto opakujícího se prvku ve filmovém díle Darrena Aronofskyho, konkrétně na filmech *Pí*, *Černá labuť* a *Fontána*. Práce nejprve představí režiséra a jeho pozici na poli americké filmové tvorby. Poté klasifikuje typologii obsese z hlediska hovorové řeči, psychologie a psychiatrie a výsledky promítne do druhé části, která nejprve stručně aplikuje teorii obese na vybrané hollywoodské filmy a poté analyzuje uvedené filmy z díla Darrena Aronofskyho. V jednotlivých filmech je vždy vybrána jedna postava, která je po představení daného díla z více hledisek analyzována. Okrajově se práce také zaměří na specifitu Aronofskyho filmové řeči a ostatní filmy z režisérovy tvorby, které nebyly zahrnuty v hlavní části.

Klíčová slova: Darren Aronofsky, film, obsese, OCD, Hollywood, psychologie

Annotation

FLEKNOVÁ, Alžběta. *Obsession as a Theme in the Films of Darren Aronofsky*. Hradec Králové: Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, 2015. 47 p. Bachelor's Thesis.

The thesis deals with the issue of obsession as a fundamental and recurring element in films of Darren Aronofsky, most particularly in the films *Pi*, *Black Swan* and *The Fountain*. The thesis firstly introduces the director Darren Aronofsky and his position in the field of contemporary American cinematography. The following chapter then classifies the typology of obsession and its meaning it has in both everyday language and psychology or psychiatry. The findings are firstly applied on four selected Hollywood films and further they are used in the second part, which analyzes the films from Darren Aronofsky's oeuvre. From each film, there is one character chosen to be analyzed from more points of view. The thesis briefly analyzes the other films of this director as well as considers his specific film language.

Keywords: Darren Aronofsky, film, obsession, OCD, Hollywood, psychology

Poděkování

Ráda bych poděkovala vedoucímu mé bakalářské práce Mgr. Janu Sukovi za trpělivost a cenné rady. Zároveň bych ráda poděkovala své rodině a přátelům za podporu během psaní této práce.

Contents

Introduction	9
1 Darren Aronofsky	10
1.1 Studies and Career.....	10
1.2 Complete Filmography.....	11
1.3 The Film Language of Darren Aronofsky.....	13
2 Obsession	15
2.1 Obsession in Everyday Language.....	15
2.2 Dualistic Model of Passion.....	16
2.3 Obsession as a Medical Term.....	17
2.3.1 Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.....	18
2.3.2 Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder.....	20
2.3.3 Summary.....	21
3 Obsession in Hollywood Cinematography	22
3.1 <i>Vertigo</i>	22
3.2 <i>Zodiac</i>	23
3.3 <i>The Aviator</i>	24
3.4 <i>The Odd Couple</i>	25
4 Obsession as a Theme in the Films of Darren Aronofsky	26
4.1 Obsession in <i>Pi</i>	26
4.1.1 Synopsis.....	27
4.1.2 Analysis.....	29
4.2 Obsession in <i>Black Swan</i>	30
4.2.1 Synopsis.....	32
4.2.2 Analysis.....	33
4.3 Obsession in <i>The Fountain</i>	36
4.3.1 Synopsis.....	37
4.3.2 Analysis.....	38
4.3 Obsession as a Theme in <i>Requiem for a Dream, The Wrestler</i> and <i>Noah</i>	40
Conclusion	43
Bibliography	45

Introduction

The topic of this thesis was chosen according to the author's long time interest in all films of Darren Aronofsky – one of the most acclaimed, yet controversial American directors of this time. Darren Aronofsky's complete filmography currently comprises six feature films which are remarkably various in all aspects. With each new film, the director comes with something new, quite unexpected, and usually intense. In his films, we can see characters who suffer from various pains, bleed, hallucinate, destroy themselves with diet, pills, drugs, endure extreme physical pain, harm themselves, lose dignity or control about themselves. On the other hand, we also see characters that have great skills or talents - a genius mathematician, a neuroscientist, professional wrestler, devoted ballerina, or even Noah as a biblical character in the film of the same name shows some talent and devotion. However, there is often something self-destructive behind the characters' passions and talents.

What might be both the driving power to success as well as self-destruction is obsession. It is something that the director is often being associated with in various critical reviews. The main aims of this thesis are finding out if obsession is something that thematically connects all of the director's films. Furthermore, the thesis will try to explain the role of obsession in the film character's stories. After introducing the director himself, his oeuvre and the specific film language, the word obsession will be described in both the colloquial meaning and the meaning it has in psychology or psychiatry, as both can be found in connection to the director. The following chapter will briefly touch the topic of obsession in Hollywood cinematography in general and will reflect all the gathered theory in four chosen Hollywood films. The theory of obsession will then be applied on the filmography of Darren Aronofsky. However, the main focus will be put on the three following films: *Pi*, *Black Swan* and *The Fountain*. These three films were chosen for their great diversity in topics and offer a polemic on the theme of obsession as a connecting and recurring element of all Aronofsky's films. In the end, the other three films: *Requiem for a Dream*, *The Wrestler* and *Noah*, will be briefly analyzed as well.

1 Darren Aronofsky

Darren Aronofsky, born on 12th of February 1969, is an American director, screenwriter, film producer and a founder of the production company Protozoa Pictures. His current filmography consists of four short student's films and six feature films: *Pi* (1998), *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), *The Fountain* (2006), *The Wrestler* (2008), *Black Swan* (2010) and *Noah* (2014). Aronofsky received several awards and even more nominations including a prestigious Academy Award nomination in 2011 for the Best Achievement in Directing with his film *Black Swan*.

1.1 Studies and Career

Darren Aronofsky was born and raised in Brooklyn by his Jewish parents, Abraham and Charlotte Aronofsky. He describes his young-self as a "TV junkie"¹ and from all the interviews he has given, it can be summed up that he did not like only hip-hop music and painting graffiti, but also black-and-white photography, classic film and writing.

After graduating from Edward R. Murrow high school, he trained with The School of Field Studies in Kenya and Alaska.² From 1987, he attended Harvard University where he studied social anthropology. However, it did not turn out to be what he wanted to do. Sharing a room with an animation student, Aronofsky became more interested in visual arts. Therefore, he took a chance to take drawing classes and as he says in one of his interviews, it changed the way he looked at the world.³ From that reason, he later applied to sculpture and filmmaking classes, at the time still not knowing which one he prefers more. However, he was accepted to the filmmaking class and that can be seen as the beginning of this director's career.⁴

¹ An Interview with Darren Aronofsky. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. URL: <http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview20.html>

² Darren Aronofsky – Biography. In: *European Graduate School EGS*. [online]. URL: <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/darren-aronofsky/biography/>

³ Darren Aronofsky: Reel Life, Real Stories. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPjKpfIM6bo>

⁴ *Ibid.*

After graduating from Harvard in 1991, Aronofsky studied at the American Film Institute Conservatory where he received his Master of Fine Arts degree in directing. Besides the degree, he also received the Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Medal, the same as for example David Lynch did in 1991. The Alumni medal "celebrates the recipient's extraordinary creative talents and artistic achievements."⁵ However, it took a few more years for Aronofsky to make *Pi*, the first feature film, mostly because money was a concern. Aronofsky chose his friend Sean Gullette to star in the main role and asked for hundred dollars donations from his family and friends, promising one hundred fifty dollars in return.⁶ It turned out to be a good idea and a success that pushed the director to continue in his career of an independent Hollywood filmmaker.

1.2 Complete Filmography

In 1998, Aronofsky's first feature film was released. It was *Pi* – a modern black-and-white sci-fi thriller centering a genius mathematician getting close to a discovery of his life. Besides the screenplay, Aronofsky also wrote the text for a graphic novel illustrated by Edward Ross Flynn called *Pi: The Book of Ants*. The illustrator stated that at the time Aronofsky was working on both the comic book and the film, he was not sure of what would be his success – graphic novel writing or filmmaking.⁷ Obviously, it was filmmaking because *Pi*, among other prizes, won the Directing Award right after its premiere on Sundance Festival.

The following film, *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) is based on a novel of the same name written by Hubert Selby Jr., which Aronofsky successfully brought on the screen. In 2001, the film won American Film Institute Award for Movie of the Year and starring Ellen Burstyn was nominated for Oscar. *Requiem for a Dream* is a

⁵ Frankin J. Schaffner Award. In: *American Film Institute* [online]. URL: <http://www.afi.com/Conservatory/alumni/schaffneraward.aspx>

⁶ Walker, Tim. Darren Arronofsky: Hollywood's most ambitious director. In: *Independent* [online]. URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/darren-aronofsky-hollywoods-most-ambitious-director-2185191.html>

⁷ Flynn, Edward Ross. *Pi – The Book of Ants* [online]. URL: <https://archive.org/details/Pi-TheBookOfAnts>

unique piece among "drug films." It portrays four different characters on their way to self-destruction and getting far from making their dreams come true.

The year 2006 with *The Fountain* brought attention to the director again, in both negative and positive way. As a narrative consisting of three stories divided by centuries, *The Fountain* was difficult to create. Originally, it was planned to be a high budget spectacular art film starring Brad Pitt in the main role. However, Brad Pitt resigned just before the filming was supposed to begin and the production was cancelled.⁸ Regardless, Aronofsky did not give up and started working on a lower budget version with Rachel Weisz and Hugh Jackman in the main roles. Concerning both the topic and the visuals, *The Fountain* is very different to his previous films and perhaps for its complexity, it is one of the films that people either truly admire or reject.

A difference in getting controversial reviews came in 2008 with Mickey Rourke getting back on the screen, starring in *The Wrestler* as Randy Robinson, or "The Ram". This film was mostly a success. It won AFI awards for Movie of The Year and received several nominations. In addition, Mickey Rourke won a Golden Globe in 2009 for the best performance in drama. The film provides an interesting insight into a world of one retired wrestler who once was a professional, now trying to come to terms with his difficult life situation.

From wrestling ring, Aronofsky moved to the stage and especially the backstage of ballet. In 2010, he came with another remarkable film in his career and it was *Black Swan*. Again, it won the AFI Awards for the Movie of the Year in 2011 and Natalie Portman won the Oscar for her leading role. It is a story of a young ballerina performing a double role in the *Swan Lake*. For someone who has seen all Aronofsky's films, it can now appear that a little piece of something from the previous films meets in the *Black Swan* – madness from *Pi*, the topic of drugs and sex from *Requiem for a Dream*, mortality from *The Fountain*, devotion and also the body pain from *The Wrestler*.

⁸ Walker, Tim. Darren Aronofsky: Hollywood's most ambitious director. In: *Independent.co.uk* [online]. URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/darren-aronofsky-hollywoods-most-ambitious-director-2185191.html>

In 2014, Aronofsky came with something completely different again, a high budget epic film with Russell Crowe in the leading role – it was *Noah*, one of the most discussed films of the year. As an adaptation of the biblical story, it caused heated discussions and even a boycott by certain Christian and Muslim groups.⁹ According to Aronofsky, it is a re-invented biblical epic for a twenty-first century spectator, therefore the non-believers can enjoy it as a good action film, but also there is nothing contradictory to the original story in Bible.¹⁰ Despite its high budget, elaborate visual effects, famous actors and a powerful story, *Noah* seems to be Aronofsky's least favorite film with zero wins so far.

According to various sources, Aronofsky's next project might be a film adaptation of a book by Charles Graeber - *The Good Nurse*, a real story of a serial killer. However, this announcement can still be changed.

1.3 The Film Language of Darren Aronofsky

From the filmography description, it seems that there is no dominating film genre and that thematically the films are also different. Concerning the style, the films are not very similar either. However, there are some recurring visual and sound elements or specific film techniques for which the director can be recognized. Beginning with *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*, both the films were limited by a low budget and being the director's earliest works, these two films probably share the most similarities in their style. Despite the fact that they are both unique, there were some similar film techniques used, from which at least one should be mentioned and it is the hip-hop montage, a term that Aronofsky created himself and it was used in both films when portraying the drug or pill abuse. Aronofsky said: "We call it the 'hip hop montages', and I think it comes from growing up in Brooklyn in the 80's listening to hip hop music. There's been hip hop art, graffiti, hip hop music, rap, and hip hop dance, but there hasn't been any films that used hip hop techniques to help

⁹ Sasson, Gahl Eden. Noah Boycott. In: *The Huffington Post* [online]. URL: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gahl-eden-sasson/noah-boycott_b_5059478.html

¹⁰ Darren Aronofsky on controversial film "Noah". In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyDODfOIGu0>

tell story. We use quick images and sounds to help push the narrative forward."¹¹ This hip-hop montage surprisingly appears again in *Noah*. However, when trying to see some other stylistic similarities, they are not easy to be traced. When trying to compare the films, Aronofsky's oeuvre could be divided to three pairs of films. First, it is *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*. Second could be *The Fountain* and *Noah* as they both begin with citing words from the *Genesis* and also share similar visual effects and both probably required a lot of studio work on the settings. Moreover, the third could be *The Wrestler* and *Black Swan* for being slightly thematically similar and concerning the film techniques, using a lot of close-ups on the main characters' bodies.

However, there is one connecting element in all the films and it is the music composed by Clint Mansell, the author of all the soundtracks. The collaboration with Clint Mansell can be seen as a trademark. It is something what Aronofsky's films can be recognized for and what creates their specific feeling. Music seems to play an important part in all of his films. In addition, some actors appeared in his films more than once. It is Sean Gullette who appeared in both *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*, Ellen Burstyn in *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Fountain*, Jennifer Connelly starring in *Requiem for a Dream* and in *Noah* and also Mark Margolis appearing in all *Pi*, *Requiem for a Dream*, *The Wrestler* and also *Black Swan*. Another frequent collaboration is the one with cinematographer Matthew Libatique who worked together with Aronofsky on all his feature films except *The Wrestler*.¹²

Furthermore, Aronofsky is always doing what he wants, despite being turned down by actors, production companies, or investors. He deals with difficult topics such as religion, addictions, mortality, and others. However, behind each story, there is also something personal. As Aronofsky says, a director should work with his own personal stories, without trying to figure out what everyone likes¹³, and this opinion definitely reflects in his work.

¹¹ Feature Interview: Darren Aronofsky. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. URL: <http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview12.html>

¹² Matthew Libatique [online]. URL: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0508732/?ref_=ttfc_fc_cr14

¹³ Darren Aronofsky: Reel Life, Real Stories. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPjKpfIM6bo>

2 Obsession

When reading interviews with Darren Aronofsky or any reviews, both made by journalists and spectators, there is a word being mentioned quite often and it is obsession. Most often it is *obsession*, *obsessed*, but also *obsessive-compulsive* and concerning one film, there is also *obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder* mentioned. The word obsession seems to be used more and more often in language in general. However, in different contexts the word has different meanings, which should not be confused. The purpose of this chapter is creating an overview of this phenomenon both in culture and everyday language as well as in psychiatry.

In the subsequent chapter, the theory of obsession will be applied on four selected Hollywood films. That chapter will show that obsession in its different contexts is quite a popular theme for filmmakers, especially in the everyday language meaning of the word but sometimes also in the context of psychopathology which can be not only entertaining but also educational.

2.1 Obsession in Everyday Language

We live in a culture that wants its love affairs obsessive, its artists obsessed, its genius fixated, its music driven, its athletes devoted. We're told that without the intensity provided by an obsession things are only done by halves. Our standards need to be extreme, our outcomes intense.¹⁴

In everyday language, the word obsession is used quite liberally, but generally when speaking of a strong enthusiasm or preoccupation. However, when someone is called obsessed, the preoccupation or the enthusiasm is somehow excessive. We can see people who are excessively interested in shopping, food, appearance, fashion, in another person, a hobby, scientific research... It can be anything that dominates in one's mind and becomes the main interest. Being obsessed means wanting one thing more than anything else and most of the time, energy and effort is put into that particular thing or activity.

¹⁴ DAVIS, Lennard J. *Obsession: A History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 5

The online accessible Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary gives the following definitions of obsession:

1. [uncountable] the state in which a person's mind is completely filled with thoughts of one particular thing or person in a way that is not normal
2. [countable] a person or thing that somebody thinks about too much¹⁵

It seems that the word could have both positive and negative meaning, depending on what is in the centre of this great interest but most often the word has a negative meaning. Such obsession can be something that dominates in one's mind to the point that the obsessed person cares less or almost gives up on other areas of life for the thing or person they are obsessed with. In both the positive and negative meaning of the word, a person who is called obsessed usually does not see the obsession as something unwanted or unacceptable.¹⁶ That makes a significant difference to what obsession means in psychiatry in the context of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

2.2 Dualistic Model of Passion

Another situation in which the word obsessed is often commonly used is when we describe someone being constantly engaged in a particular activity. A more scholarly explanation to this can be found in psychology in the description of the dualistic model of passion. This study was done by professor Robert J. Vallerand and a group of authors who suggested that there are two types of passion – harmonious passion and obsessive passion. According to that research, passion in general can be defined as a strong inclination towards something that an individual likes and values and therefore wants to put time and energy into such activity. Harmonious passion can be defined as the healthy one. With harmonious passion, people are in control of themselves, they choose to engage in the activity that they like and can stop when they want to. If they feel like it has a negative effect on their life, they can take a

¹⁵ Obsession (noun). *Oxford Dictionaries* [online]. URL: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/obsession>

¹⁶ RACHMAN, Stanley and Padmal DE SILVA. *Obsessive-compulsive disorder: The Facts*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 5

break. Obsessive passion on the other hand means that people cannot help themselves to engage in the activity, which can cause conflicts between doing the activity and other tasks. There is an internal pressure that pushes the person to engage in the activity, which can lead one to losing balance in life.¹⁷ The contrast of harmonious passion and obsessive passion can be seen in this example: "Consider two passionate joggers who injure themselves. The one who has harmonious passion about running will take time off and heal. The other who has obsessive passion will keep running and likely make the injury worse."¹⁸ Robert J. Vallerand summarizes his theory as that: "When you engage in an activity out of harmonious passion, you experience psychological well being. If you do it out of obsessive passion, you do not."¹⁹

2.3 Obsession as a Medical Term

Another context in which the term obsession appears is in psychiatry and particular mental disorders. The medical term obsession refers to a specific kind of thoughts, images, ideas or urges (or their combination) which form against one's will and they are unwanted, unwelcomed, intrusive, and usually of an aggressive, sexual, or blasphemous content.²⁰ Having some kind of such thoughts, which come and go on their own, is something that most people experience. However, if it is obsession in its medical sense, it differs in its length, frequency and the impact it has on the affected individual's well being. A person having real obsessions usually tries to ignore or suppress them or tries to neutralize them with another thought or action.²¹ Such actions are called compulsions.

¹⁷ VALLERAND, Robert J. et al. Les Passions de l'Ame: On Obsessive and Harmonious Passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. (Vol. 85, No. 4). DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.85.4.756

¹⁸ Peterson, Christopher. Passion and Positive Psychology. In: *Psychology Today* [online]. URL: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-good-life/201001/passion-and-positive-psychology>

¹⁹ Prof Robert Vallerand 'Making a Difference in people's lives' at Mind & Its Potential 2012. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kulUtpOKyiQ>

²⁰ RACHMAN, Stanley and Padmal DE SILVA. *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (The Facts)*. p. 5-6

²¹ American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. 5th ed. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 238

2.3.1 Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Speaking of obsession in psychiatry, it is better to use and describe the whole term, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder or the abbreviation – OCD. In 1980, OCD was for the first time clearly defined in the third edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) under the category of Anxiety Disorders.²² However, the research continues and there are some upgrades made with each new publication of DSM. The last significant change came with publishing the fifth edition of DSM in 2013, where OCD is no longer listed under the Anxiety Disorders but dominates to a new group called Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders. In addition to OCD, disorders such as body dysmorphic disorder, trichotillomania, skin-picking disorder, hoarding disorder, excoriation disorder, substance/medication-induced obsessive-compulsive and related disorder and others are now included in this group.²³ As the title suggest, this new categorization was made after finding evidence that some mental problems or disorders are related to one another and share the obsessive-compulsive features. The diagnostic criteria for OCD in DSM-V are presence of obsessions, compulsions or both. The obsessions and compulsions are time consuming or cause significant distress. The symptoms are not caused by any substance or other mental conditions and they are not better explained by another mental disorder.²⁴

Both of the following definitions of obsessions and compulsions are taken from the already mentioned DSM-V, which is an important and internationally accepted document published by the American Psychiatric Association. The manual is a standard among mental health professionals and therefore the main source of credible information in this work. According to DSM-V:

Obsessions are defined by: recurrent and persistent thoughts, urges, or impulses that are experienced, at some time during the disturbance, as intrusive and unwanted, and that in most individuals cause marked anxiety or distress. The individual attempts to ignore or suppress such thoughts, urges, or images, or to neutralize them with some other thought or action (i.e., by performing a compulsion).

²² STEKETEE, Gail. *The Oxford Handbook of Obsessive Compulsive and Spectrum Disorders*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.16

²³ DSM-V, p. 238

²⁴ DSM-V, p. 237

Compulsions are defined by: repetitive behaviors (e.g., hand washing, ordering, checking) or mental acts (e.g., praying, counting, repeating words silently) that the individual feels driven to perform in response to an obsession or according to rules that must be applied rigidly. The behaviors or mental acts are aimed at preventing or reducing anxiety or distress, or preventing some dreaded event or situation; however, these behaviors or mental acts are not connected in a realistic way with what they are designed to neutralize or prevent, or are clearly excessive.²⁵

However, experiencing something that resembles the described symptoms does not yet mean that one suffers from OCD. To be diagnosed with OCD, the obsessions and compulsions must be time-consuming; it means they take more than one hour a day, or cause significant distress and impairment to an individual.²⁶ There are many types of obsessive thoughts, images or impulses that can appear within OCD but all of them cause a feeling that they have some kind of control over one's mind and they can not be switched off.²⁷

Although the content of obsessions and compulsions is various, some patterns or the most common themes can be found. As mentioned above, obsessions can have aggressive, sexual or blasphemous content. Other common obsessions are obsession with symmetry, contamination or harm. The compulsive behavior can be divided into three main categories – cleaning, checking and counting.²⁸

OCD can manifest in many different ways and the severity can be different at any individual. There is not only one certain answer to what exactly causes the disorder. Scientists still debate about whether it is caused by neurobiological factors, environmental influences or both. Many say that it is also genetic and runs in families. There are various studies which describe the causes of OCD from medical point of view but these studies are not necessary for this type of work. What is

²⁵ DSM-V, p. 237

²⁶ DSM-V, p. 238

²⁷ Federman, Russ. Is There Such a Thing as a Bipolar OCD Disorder? The connection between bipolar disorder and obsessive compulsive symptoms. In: *Psychology Today* [online]. URL: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/bipolar-you/201110/is-there-such-thing-bipolar-ocd-disorder>

²⁸ DSM-V, p. 239

essential in these studies is that the cause of OCD is related to some chemical imbalance in brain and can have both causes – biological and psychological. When it comes to treating OCD, medication should not be the only treatment. It can be used along with behavioral therapy or counseling. Some obsessions can be overcome by facing them and trying to not perform the compulsions. However, this usually cannot be done without a professional help.

2.3.2 Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

For a better understanding of obsession in psychiatry, another mental disorder should be mentioned and clearly set apart from OCD. OCPD, as the title suggests, belongs to another group of mental disorders – the personality disorders. Another disorders belonging to this group are for example borderline personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder and others. For all personality disorders, it is typical that they are long-lasting, stable, affect one's behavior as whole and cause distress or impairment.²⁹ According to DSM-V, "The essential feature of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder is a preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and mental and interpersonal control, at the expense of flexibility, openness, and efficiency. This pattern begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts."³⁰ In other words, the characteristic symptoms of OCPD are rigidity, inflexibility and need for rules or schedules. OCPD patients can find it hard to relax and stop being preoccupied with work or another activity. They can also be preoccupied with details or inflexible when it comes to their personal beliefs.³¹

A lot of people are devoted to their work, are organized, perfectionist, or very conscientious and do not have OCPD because these characteristics do not cause them

²⁹ DSM-V, p. 645

³⁰ DSM-V, p. 679

³¹ ABRAMOWITZ, Jonathan S., MCKAY, Dean, TAYLOR, Steven. *Clinical Handbook of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Related Problems*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, p. 316

any significant distress or impairment.³² On the other hand, people actually having OCPD often do not seek out a treatment as well until they feel that the symptoms significantly interfere or otherwise affect their life.³³ Usually it is the threat of losing a job or relationship due to their behavior that forces these people to search for help.³⁴ Whereas the one suffering from this personality disorder feels righteous and comfortable, the others around might not feel the same. OCPD can have a significant impact on interpersonal relationships and can cause conflicts in more areas of one's life.

2.3.3 Summary

From what was described in the chapters above, it is obvious that obsession in different contexts has very different meanings and it should be always distinguished. What applies to all of the meanings is the negative sense the word has and the lack of control that an individual can have over that problem. It applies especially for the obsessions in OCD but also for the obsessive passion or obsession in any other sense we commonly use.

What appears in films or art in general is usually the obsession in sense of preoccupation or a strong interest. However, the theory of obsessive passion can be applied as well and some films deal even with the theme of obsessions in psychiatry, which will be described on examples in the following chapter.

³² ABRAMOWITZ, Jonathan S., MCKAY, Dean, TAYLOR, Steven. *Clinical Handbook of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Related Problems*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, p. 316

³³ Grohol, John M. Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder Symptoms. In: *PsychCentral* [online]. URL: <http://psychcentral.com/disorders/obsessive-compulsive-personality-disorder-symptoms/>

³⁴ VAN NOPPEN, Barbara. *OCPD Fact Sheet*. Available from: <http://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/OCPD-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

3 Obsession in Hollywood Cinematography

The aim of this chapter is not tracing all the elements of obsession in film but focusing on some of the most famous, good quality considered American films in which the psychological depiction of characters appears to be one of the main themes. All the theory that was summed up in the previous chapters will now be applied in the researched films.

The American film production has a great social impact worldwide. As the authors of a book called *Movies and Mental Illness* say, "Film has become a pervasive and omnipresent part of our society, and yet people often have little conscious awareness of the profound influence the medium exerts."³⁵ This can be applied on any topics occurring in films, not only human psychology or psychopathology. Films definitely influence the public perception of some topics, in this case it can be the understanding of the word obsession (and what people can be obsessed with) and also recognizing OCD and OCPD. Only four films were picked and ordered by how the theory was explained – from obsession in everyday language through obsessive passion to OCD and OCPD.

3.1 *Vertigo*

Tracing the elements of obsession in classic American film, there is one significant work of Alfred Hitchcock from 1958 and it is *Vertigo*. The film is a mysterious psychological thriller with romantic involution. The obsession appearing in this film is not the pathological one, although it shows that obsession as an extreme interest can appear to be quite unhealthy as well. Although the plot is interesting and quite complicated, it will be omitted as it is not essential for the study of obsession.

The main character Scottie Ferguson meets a woman named Madeline with whom he falls in love with. However, a tragedy happens and he believes she is dead. After her "death", Scottie meets a woman named Judy who seems to share a lot of

³⁵ WEDDING, Danny, Mary Ann BOYD, and Ryan M. NIEMIEC. *Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Hogrefe Publishing, 2010, p. 2

similarities with the woman he lost and desperately tries to meet her and spend some time with her. He follows her around until he finds her hotel room and asks her to talk to him, committing that she reminds him of his lost love. He does not seem to be attracted nor interested in Judy as a person. He only asks her to be more like Madeline and then he could love her. He buys her the exact same clothes as Madeline was wearing, makes her dye her hair the same color and do make-up the same way as Madeline did. He is not happy until the transformation is complete. In the end, Scottie takes Judy to the same place where Madeline "died" and forces her to try to replay the incident so that he gets a second chance to save her. They get up to the tower with open bow windows where Judy accidentally falls down and dies.

What we see in this film is an obsessive love or perhaps it is rather an obsession with restoring the past, it might be both. The whole story of *Vertigo* is quite complex and this description serves only as an example. However, there can be more on this topic traced in the oeuvre of Alfred Hitchcock.

3.2 Zodiac

David Fincher's *Zodiac* from 1997 is a film inspired by the case which happened in 1970's in California. There was a series of murders and no traces leading to the killer. The film is based on a real story of a real character and author – Robert Graysmith.

In the film, Robert Graysmith is as a young cartoonist who joins the investigators because of his fascination with this case since it has begun appearing in newspapers. We can see him becoming obsessed with the case to the point that he identifies himself with the role of a detective and his primal interest or passion becomes an all time consuming obsession. Even after the case is officially closed as unsolved, he continues investigating on his own. He collects all information related to the serial killer and starts writing a book about the case. He gradually loses interest in all other areas of life. He gives up on his job and his wife leaves him and takes their children away with her.

Zodiac is a good example of how an interest can turn into obsession. Obsession in a sense of a strong interest which can lead one to giving up on other things in life but succeed in another. The study of obsessive passion could be applied in this case as well. In the beginning, Robert joined the investigation out of passion which probably became obsessive, to the point that he could not stop engaging in the activity even though it did not make him feel well. A similar kind of obsession as we can see in *Zodiac* is something that will appear again when analyzing Darren Aronofsky's main characters.

3.3 *The Aviator*

This film directed by Martin Scorsese in 2004 seems to be a very accurate and interesting portrayal of an untreated OCD and its development from mild to severe symptoms. It is based on a real story of Howard Hughes Jr., a famous American director, aviator and an entrepreneur who made it to be a billionaire. The film depicts his career rise and also shows the OCD as one of his lifetime struggles. The obsession that Howard Hughes was suffering from was primarily obsession with germs and dirt in general which caused his compulsions – excessive hand washing and other repetitive behaviors.

The film opens with a scene where little Howard is being washed in a bath by his mother while they are spelling the word quarantine together and she tells him he is not safe from disease. It suggests the roots of the disorder might come from his childhood and upbringing. Next time a spectator sees Howard is in his twenties and the story of his interesting career begins. Additionally, the first symptoms of OCD start to appear. Howard does not like raw meat, crumbs and other dirt or sources of bacterium. His steering wheel in a helicopter is covered in cellophane because of all the germs that people can carry around on their hands, as he says. Soon we can hear him committing himself to his girlfriend about ideas that he has about things that may not really be there and that he is afraid he is losing his mind. It seems that the more stressed Howard is, the worse the symptoms of OCD are. He is washing his hands always with his own soap, once to the point that he has bleeding wounds on his hands. Then not knowing how to touch a knob with his clean hands, he better

waits until someone enters the bathroom and then he sneaks out. He finds himself doing or saying things he can not stop and obviously it feels frustrating. The list of OCD symptoms appearing in the film could go on, but the most typical have just been mentioned. This film is not only entertaining but also educational. For someone who does not know about the disorder it can serve as a great example. However, OCD is not once mentioned in the film. It is because at the time of Howard Hughes' life, the disorder was not known as it is now and there was no effective treatment to it. His OCD was therefore left unchecked and untreated.

3.4 *The Odd Couple*

Finding a film that clearly depicts an Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder is not very easy. This one was chosen by authors of a book called *Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology*. *The Odd Couple*, directed by Gene Sacks and released in 1968, is a black comedy about two contrasting male characters Oscar and Felix who end up living together.

Felix is a compulsive cleaner and needs to have everything perfect. He spends most of his time lining up everything, cleaning up and checking if everything is alright. He is also checking the air conditioner wherever they are. He says that he has breathing problems due to it. When he is shopping, he is checking if the meat is really fresh and if the fruit is ripe and counts how much they save if they eat home and not out. Furthermore, he seems to be feeling uncomfortable around people and can not really loose himself for a while and have fun with them. Nonetheless, he does not seem to have problems with his behavior and rigid personality. He shows no resistance to it and simply is doing what seems normal to him, although he is aware of that it can annoy people around him - it even was the main reason why his wife divorced him and why he came to live with Oscar. Therefore, he asks Oscar to tell him if his behavior makes him angry but then he actually can not take the critique when it comes to it. In the end, Oscar can not stand Felix anymore and asks him to move out. It should be considered that the film is a comedy, therefore the conflict between Oscar and Felix is depicted in a rather funny way. However, it seems to be a good portrayal of all the typical symptoms of OCPD.

4 Obsession as a Theme in the Films of Darren Aronofsky

Three films of Darren Aronofsky are analyzed in this chapter – *Pi*, *Black Swan* and *The Fountain*. These three films are different not only in their topics but also in the depiction of obsession. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the films and attempt to apply the theory of obsession which was described above, whether it is the obsession in everyday language sense without further psychological analyzing, obsessive passion or signs of OCD and related disorders. The other aim is also finding out what the director wanted to portray and respond to what often appears in various film reviews.

The chapter begins with *Pi* with the main character Max Cohen who seems to be a perfect example of being obsessed in the sense of being extremely preoccupied with one thing and his world revolves only around that thing. Concerning the character of Nina Sayers from *Black Swan*, the chapter is given more space as there are more opinions which need be taken into consideration and also the theory of obsessive passion can be applied and described again. *The Fountain* was chosen to be the last film to be analyzed as the theme of obsession is not that obvious and strong in the film and the same can be said about the other films which description will follow in the last subchapter.

Each of the analyzed films is introduced with some background information and the inspiration that the director had for making these films. Knowing what the director meant to depict seems to be essential for making less subjective assumptions.

4.1 Obsession in *Pi*

As it was mentioned already, *Pi* is Darren Aronofsky's first feature film, released in 1998. It is a sci-fi thriller starring Sean Gullette in the lead role, recorded on a black-and-white reversal film. As an inspiration for this debut, Aronofsky mentions a Japanese director Shinya Tsukamoto and the cyberpunk genre which is

basically about human bodies being transformed through technology into machines.³⁶ In case of *Pi*, the cyberpunk is not based on special effects nor the human and machine blending but was an inspiration for the visual side of the film, music and the main character's behaviour.³⁷ As Aronofsky says about the main character, "He has become like a machine and is basically a robot running a giant supercomputer in his apartment, who has to reach out and find his humanity."³⁸ Besides mathematics and the cyberpunk ideas, the film deals with topics of religion and losing touch with nature. It portrays the archetypal mad scientist and his obsession with searching for what he needs to find.

4.1.1 Synopsis

Max Cohen (Sean Gullette) is a genius mathematician who sums up his theory in three points. "First: mathematics is the language of nature, two: everything around us can be represented and understood through numbers, three: if you graph the numbers of any system, patterns emerge. Therefore there must be patterns everywhere, including the stock market."³⁹ Since childhood, Max suffers from recurrent severe headaches, which are so strong that he needs to take a lot of medication – both pills and injections. Still he ends up with regular nosebleeds and headache attacks. He lives in a China Town apartment in New York City only with his supercomputer named Euclid, spending days working on calculations. In the beginning of the film, Euclid prints out a result of a 216 digit number and then crashes. Max is trying to find out what happened and repair it but only ends up smashing some parts of it on the floor.

Max is often visiting Sol Robeson (Mark Margolis), his friend and mentor with whom he discusses his research. His other social contacts are only random encounters in the apartment building with his neighbor Devi and a little girl named Jenna. He is also going out for a coffee, where he once meets Lenny Meyer (Ben

³⁶ DILLON, Steven. *The Solaris Effect: Art and Artifice in Contemporary American Film*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006, p. 49

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Pi Interview. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. URL: <http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview29.html>

³⁹ Extracted from the film.

Shenkman), a Hasidic Jew who also does a mathematical research on Torah and becomes interested in what Max is trying to find out. Max is also constantly being called by Marcy Dawson from Wall Street who is interested in his research for financial reasons. Marcy with a group of agents insist on meeting Max and offer a powerful new computer chip that he needs to be able to repair Euclid. Max still does not want to help them but takes the chip in exchange of just a part of his result. However, Euclid crashes again but again shows a result of the 216 digit number. Max tries to write the number down and passes out, probably from another episode of his striking headaches.

When he later discusses this result with Sol Robeson, he is being told that Sol was close to a similar result once. He suggests Max to take a break and be careful because there is no easy path to such result he wants to find. Also, it is not sure if it is the headaches or the mixture of strong doses of medication, but when the pain strikes, Max goes paranoid and it is hard to recognize what is really happening to him and what is his delusion or hallucination. As the research feels like getting closer to the result, his headaches are getting more and more severe and it gradually drives him to madness.

One day, Marcy Dawson and her agents follow Max on the street and try to corner him with a gun pointed to his head, forcing him to tell them the number. He is lucky that Lenny is around, takes him to his car and drives away. Max is all confused and probably having another headache attack at the moment. He is taken to a synagogue where the Jewish sect meets. They believe Max holds a result that they need as well. They believe that the number represents the name of God. Somehow, Max gets out from there and goes to visit his friend Sol again but finds out that he is dead. The only thing left after Sol was a board game arranged to a shape of a spiral and a piece of paper with a number. Max then goes back to his apartment and has a very strong headache attack. He is delirious, destroys Euclid and then passes out while having visions. When he wakes up, he burns all the results, goes to a bathroom and drills a hole into his head with a drilling machine.

The final scene shows Max sitting on a bench in a park. The little girl named Jenna comes and wants Max to count 748 divided by 238 for her.⁴⁰ He says he does not know, looks up to the skies and on the trembling leaves of a tree and smiles.

4.1.2 Analysis

Max can be without a doubt called obsessed in sense of being extremely focused on just one thing – the pattern he wants to find. In the beginning, there is suggested that he has been working on this project for past ten years which shows a great devotion. Moreover, it does not seem that his motivation to find that pattern is his own enrichment. It seems that he is just trying to fulfill this obsessive need to understand it and find it. From the beginning, Max seems to be occupied only with his research and he projects his ideas into everything. When having a coffee, he sees a spiral in it. He sees spirals in a cigarette smoke or in a sample he puts under a microscope. He is speaking to spectators through his diary where he points out only the news concerning his calculations or headaches. He is also isolating himself from other people, which in the film is enhanced by the camera moves when Max is locking or unlocking his door, walking down the streets or when he is sitting by his computer and hearing sounds of his neighbors having intercourse.

The film does not seem to try to depict any particular mental disorder, however, paranoia is often mentioned. It is not clear if it is caused by the physical symptoms (headaches) or if he really suffers from the disorder. Concerning obsession in the psychiatric meaning, there can be some statements found suggesting a connection to OCD: "This film is told from Max's perspective. His search has turned him into obsessive-compulsive paranoiac..."⁴¹, "Its lucid and frenetic editing denotes a break from hysteria to calm, and encapsulate Max's obsessive compulsive disorder..."⁴². Some other similar statements can be found as well, mainly made by bloggers or reviewers. One could object that these statements do not come from

⁴⁰ The result would be the number known as Pi.

⁴¹ HURBIS-CHERRIER, Mick. *Voice & Vision: A Creative Approach to Narrative Film and DV Production*. 2nd ed. Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2013, p. 187

⁴² McEntee, John. Darren Aronofsky Retrospective Part 1-π (Pi). In: *Sound on Sight* [online]. URL: <http://www.soundonsight.org/darren-aronofsky-retrospective-part-1-pi/>

reliable sources. However, people interested in films read mostly on the internet, write about them on the internet, and might come to a wrong conclusion. Suggesting that film can bring one to a better understanding of human psychology or psychopathology, it seems right to clarify this. The film character from *Pi* does not show any typical symptoms that were described in the theory of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. The only thing that could bring one to this conclusion is how Max locks and unlocks the door. In closer examination of the character, it is more obvious that it is caused by his need to avoid people in the apartment building staircase and that he is used to live in this isolation. It can be also related to a social anxiety. Max's obsession with the theory that everything in nature can be explained through numbers leads him to constant work on proving this. It might resemble the OCD pattern of an obsession causing compulsion – in case of Max it is this thought or set of values causing a reaction – his constant work on proving his ideas. However, it does not resemble the disorder and therefore, there should not be used the word obsessive-compulsive.

The main character's obsession has its exact dictionary meaning, where the mind is completely filled with thoughts of one particular thing. It is not clear if it is his obsession or the headaches that causes this character's fall. From the director's point of view it is more of a metaphor. Max is getting close to finding a pattern in the world based on chaos. As Aronofsky said: "The idea is the Icarus myth. If you fly too high to the sun, you get burnt. It's Prometheus, if you steal fire from the gods, they send giant birds to come out and eat your liver. It's that typical Faustian journey, a retelling of this old mythology for the digital, cyberworld age."⁴³ Despite Max "gets burnt", the ending of this film is actually not unhappy as we see Max sitting outside with a subtle smile, looking like he is free from his genius mind and the obsession.

4.2 Obsession in *Black Swan*

The film *Black Swan* premiered in 2010. It is a drama with elements of thriller, horror and mystery. Aronofsky's obvious inspiration for the film was

⁴³ Darren Aronofsky - The writer/director of *Pi* discusses the limits of filmmaking and human knowledge. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. URL: <http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview21.html>

Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* but initially it was also Dostoyevsky's book *The Double* and its idea of someone taking over one's identity.⁴⁴ He was also inspired from the past when his sister Patti was dancing ballet.⁴⁵ *Black Swan* was meant to show both sides of ballet – there is the beautiful and fragile side that the audience can see but there is also a lot of hard work, competition, stress and pain behind it. A spectator is taken into the world of ballet by the main character Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman).

The character of Nina caught attention of many people interested in psychology, including professionals and their studies bring a mix of opinions, only to prove how perception of one film can differ at each individual. The director's attitude is that he sees a film as a fairy-tale and despite people want to explain and understand things, the magic is in the different perception that people have and in the discussions they can lead after seeing a film.⁴⁶ Based on the accessible information, he was not trying to make a film about obsessive-compulsive disorder. However, he leaves that upon the spectators to come to their own conclusion.

To avoid subjectivity on maximum, the first approach will be based on Nina's character and her possible OCD or OCD related disorders. This will be based on a research that was made by Danielle Vanier and H. Russell Searight from Lake Superior State University that comes to a similar conclusion as Natalie Portman who studied psychology at Harvard and says about her film character: "It was absolutely a case of obsessive-compulsive behaviour. The scratching and the anorexia and bulimia are forms of OCD."⁴⁷ This suggested diagnosis will be compared to what can be seen in the film and to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V). The aim is not to argue with the research or that statement but to consider if the film shows enough to be given as an example of portraying a mental disorder as it was done in the chapter of Hollywood films. After that, a second point of view will be offered and that is applying the theory of obsessive passion on the character

⁴⁴ Whipp, Glenn. 'Black Swan' director Darren Aronofsky likes a challenge. In: *Los Angeles Times* [online]. URL: <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/09/news/la-en-aronofsky-20101209>

⁴⁵ Friend, Tad. Heavy Weather 2: Darren Aronofsky Gets Biblical. In: *New Yorker* [online]. URL: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/03/17/heavy-weather-2>

⁴⁶ DP/30: Black Swan, director Darren Aronofsky. In: *Youtube*. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Pcatg01iUs>

⁴⁷ Radish, Christina. Natalie Portman & Director Darren Aronofsky Interview BLACK SWAN. In: *Collider* [online]. URL: <http://collider.com/natalie-portman-darren-aronofsky-interview-black-swan/>

of Nina as she seems to be an appropriate example of an individual with an unhealthy passion.

4.2.1 Synopsis

The film opens with Nina (Natalie Portman) waking up, practising in her room and telling her mother Erica (Barbara Hershey) about a dream she had last night about herself dancing the prologue of the *Swan Lake*. The other day she comes to the ballet company getting to know that the lead dancer Beth (Winona Ryder) is leaving and the director Thomas (Vincent Cassel) needs a new dancer to be in the lead. He is making an audition for a performance that will open the season - an adaptation of the *Swan Lake*. He is seeking for a dancer who can dance both parts – the seductive and powerful Black Swan as well as the innocent White Swan. Nina is among the girls that were chosen to participate in the following selection. On the rehearsal, she impresses Thomas with her adaptation of the White Swan but fails in dancing the Black Swan whereas a new soloist named Lily (Mila Kunis) seems to be perfect for that part. However, Nina is trying hard to convince Thomas that she can dance both roles and after their confrontation, the results are released and Nina is chosen to be the Swan Queen and she is presented as a new star of the opening season.

From that point it is all about Nina's devoted practising and trying to reach perfection in what she is doing. On the other hand, it is also about the journey through extreme stress, pressure, worsening mental health problems and delusions, all leading to a visual chaos for the spectator, but there are many symbols that one can read from. Nina is basically getting in touch with her darker side which is also symbolised in her relationship to Lily, who seems to be the exact opposite of her. It is not easy for such character as Nina to succeed in the competitive world of professional ballet. She is under pressure of the director, her mother and also under the pressure of her own expectations. She gradually loses her mind and touch with reality and feels like becoming more and more like the Black Swan. In the end, she is dancing both of the roles perfectly and opens the season with a huge success.

However, as the Swan dies in the play, Nina falls down with a bleeding wound on her body as well.

4.2.2 Analysis

Before there were changes made in the DSM-V in 2013 in the categorization of OCD, there had been discussions led on which disorders should belong to the group of OCD and related disorders. Probably as a reaction to that, there was a research done by already mentioned D. Vanier and H.R. Searight on the Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorder in *Black Swan*, suggesting that Nina's eating disorder, scratching, self-harm and delusion all belong to this spectrum.⁴⁸

Concerning OCD, Nina definitely has a sense for ritualistic behaviour, which is seen in the scenes where she prepares and puts on her ballet shoes or how she lines up her make-up on a desk. However, these scenes alone do not suggest an OCD. Also, concerning the anorexia or bulimia, Nina does not show any dissatisfaction with her body as it is typical for anorexia, nor she does vomit after eating as it is typical for bulimia. The spectator can only see her being very thin and eating a grapefruit for breakfast and refusing to eat a cake. She is also vomiting but not after eating, but after rehearsing or being stressed out. This behaviour better seems to be a result of the pressure on ballet dancers and their bodies. They have to look perfect and be skinny and such pressure can definitely become a problem and result in an eating disorder. However, this film might suggest it but does not really focus on it. Moreover, in DSM-V, eating disorders are set apart from the chapter of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders.

However, what was mentioned in both the research and Natalie Portman's statement is the scratching. There were two kinds of self-harm portrayed in the film – Nina was repeatedly pulling out pieces of her skin, mostly on fingers, or scratching her back. Only the scratching will be taken into consideration as it was seen also by

⁴⁸ VANIER, Danielle, SEARIGHT, Russell H. *Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorder in Darren Aronofsky's Black Swan*. Sault Sainte Marie, MI, 2012. Available at: <http://researchpub.org/journal/aps/number/vol1-no2/vol1-no2-1.pdf>

Nina's mother, therefore it was not one of the hallucinations or delusions that Nina was having. The problem that Nina could have is excoriation (or skin-picking) disorder, one of those from Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders in DSM-V.

When the mother discovers the lesions on Nina's back, it is obvious from her reaction that Nina has already been coping with this when she was younger. Her mother also says it is from the stress, mentioning it is too much for her. It seems to be something Nina does not do being fully aware of it. It is said that: "people may pick in an attempt to cope with negative emotions (e.g. anxiety, sadness, anger) and/or in response to feelings of mounting stress and tension."⁴⁹ It is something that goes well for Nina. However, even though it is also stated in DSM-V that this disorder is more common at people suffering from OCD⁵⁰, Nina does not seem to show enough symptoms to be given as an example of suffering from obsession in the psychiatric meaning.

However, Nina seems to be a good example of obsessively passionate individual. Ballet can definitely be called her passion as she invests time and energy into it and it is a part of her identity - she is a professional ballet dancer. The fact she does that professionally slightly changes the attitude to the activity – one has to be good at that and is constantly under a pressure of the director, audience and competition among the dancers. It all affects Nina's behaviour. However, what Robert J. Vallerand summarized in his presentation about the obsessive passion seems to define Nina's passion very well. According to that summary, obsessive passion is characterized by a strong desire to engage in an activity that eventually comes to control the person. Furthermore, the person cannot help him or herself – the passion must run its course, which often creates conflict with other activities the person has. All in all, the obsessive passion leads to negative emotional consequences and rigid persistence.⁵¹ The author also mentions that professional athletes or dancers often develop this obsessive passion which shows up for example

⁴⁹ FAMA, Jeanne M. *Skin Picking Disorder Fact Sheet*. Available from: <http://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Skin-Picking-Disorder-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

⁵⁰ DSM-V, p. 256

⁵¹ Prof Robert Vallerand 'Making a difference in people's lives' at Mind & Its Potential 2012. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kulUtpOKyiQ>

in continuing with the activity despite wounds or injuries and other problems.⁵² It is something that Nina does as well. On the other hand, the passion does not have only negative outcome – she is a professional dancer at a prestigious ballet company and being chosen to be the one who opens the season is definitely a success. In this case of professional dancers, but also musicians, athletes or artists, the activity they engage in and that leads to the outcome is also according to Robert J. Vallerand called "deliberate practice".⁵³ And for deliberate practice, both obsessive and harmonious passion is needed, but often the individual turns to one side or another. In case of the film character Nina, probably by being chosen to be the lead dancer, she developed this obsessive passion for becoming perfect in her craft.

What a common spectator without any background in psychology can see is Nina becoming obsessed with being perfect in her role. The word perfect or perfection is used many times throughout the film, including the final scene of Nina dying on the stage after her amazing performance. The last thing she whispers is "I was perfect." Also, in the beginning, when Beth is leaving her office in anger, Nina sneaks in and steals some of Beth's belongings including a lipstick, nail-file and earrings. She then uses the lipstick when coming to convince Thomas about being the right one for the role, wears the earrings regularly and uses the nail-file as well. When Nina feels her role is threatened by Lily and she feels that Thomas is trying to replace her, she goes straight to the hospital where Beth ended up after a car accident. She is putting all the belongings she stole on her bedside but Beth catches her. When being confronted why did she stole the things, Nina says she was just trying to be perfect like her. As Beth was the former lead dancer, which means being the best in the company, the spectator can see Nina's desire to be better, to be perfect as she says.

What follows is perhaps one of Nina's delusion – Beth takes the nail-file and starts stabbing herself with it while yelling that she is not perfect. Then her face turns out to be the one of Nina and Nina finds herself holding the nail-file in her own bloody hand. It is one of the hallucinations or delusions that haunt the main character

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Prof Robert Vallerand 'Making a difference in people's lives' at Mind & Its Potential 2012. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kulUtp0KyIQ>

right from the beginning – seeing her other self. It happens in various situations and it might be confusing for the spectator. Perhaps the main purpose of all these delusions is the symbolic in them – she is seeing her doppelganger, the evil one, the grown-up one or the Black Swan.

There is also the aspect of Nina's relationship with her mother whose life seems to revolve only around her daughter. In the film, there is suggested that she gave up on her own career of a ballet dancer because of pregnancy. It might be one of the reasons why now she is so fixated and controlling towards Nina. She is calling her all the time, tries to keep her at home, makes her breakfast, puts her to sleep and basically treats her like a child. This is something that would definitely affect Nina as a person as well. This film of Darren Aronofsky is probably the most complex concerning the psychology of the main character and can be seen from more than one perspective and some of the different perspectives were suggested in this analysis. The film character shows symptoms of many mental disorders and that is probably what caused the discussion among psychologists and psychiatrists. However, if all what we can see on the screen was seen as a symptom of a disorder, it would not make sense as all the possible disorders do not appear all together. It is more about being able to read in the symbols.

What can be well applied on this film is the theory of obsessive passion. It was done without taking the other symptoms of mental illnesses into consideration and focusing only on Nina as a passionate professional and her "sane" behaviour. As it was described above, her passion became obsessive and she was losing balance in her life. Last but not least, we can see the same idea behind the character which was mentioned by the director in *Pi* – the Icarus myth.

4.3 Obsession in *The Fountain*

The Fountain was released in 2006 after six years of work as the third feature film of Darren Aronofsky, starring Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz in the lead roles. Concerning the genre, Aronofsky combines elements of historical movie, sci-fi and a contemporary drama. After *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*, Aronofsky came up with something more difficult – a story which connects past, presence and the future.

For its uniqueness, *The Fountain* is seen as masterpiece and a cult film by some spectators whereas some see it as a film that tries to tie too much together and bring a strong message but fails in that. No matter the critics, the film reached a special place among the contemporary dramas. It is remarkable for its aesthetics and the soundtrack by Clint Mansell. Darren Aronofsky also wrote a graphic novel to this film, illustrated by Kent Williams. He recorded a commentary on making this film as well, talking about his ideas and the experience with creating the film.⁵⁴ One of the main sources of personal inspiration for the director might have been the fact that both his parents were diagnosed with cancer around the time he was creating the film.⁵⁵

4.3.1 Synopsis

There are three stories within three time periods in *The Fountain*. One of a neuroscientist trying to find a cure for his wife Izzy another of a conquistador searching for the Tree of Life to save his queen Isabella and the third one of a space traveller trying to reach a star named Xibalba. All of the stories are about the cycle of life, search for immortality in some sense and also about love and the pain of losing someone.

It might not be the only right explanation of the film, but the three stories seem to be connected by a book that Izzy is working on. She says she is writing a book called *The Fountain*, about the way to Xibalba, a star in the skies surrounded by nebula. She writes about the conquistador as well and the last chapter is supposed to be finished by Tommy in the future. The last story is then the one of the space traveller, being alone in the universe, trying to reach Xibalba and meet Izzy again. These stories are inosculating all together with Tommy and Izzy's present reality.

⁵⁴ The Fountain - Darren Aronofsky Director's Commentary Remastered. In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aeCUFvZFY>

⁵⁵ Idov, Michael. Pi in the Sky. In: *New York Magazine* [online]. URL: <http://nymag.com/movies/features/24368/>

4.3.2 Analysis

As in the previously analyzed films, there is the theme of obsession in *The Fountain* as well. Although just in the meaning of infatuation, preoccupation, and for the most part - a strong driving power. Compared to *Pi* or *Black Swan*, there is nothing pathological in this film. No hallucinating, no delusion or paranoia, no physical pain and no pathology in the obsession either. However, the pain is there again, in form of the grief from losing a loved one.

The analysis will be based mostly on the main storyline – the one from the presence, about Tommy and Izzy Creo, as the other two stories are only inosculating in that line and bring a similar message. In its core, this main storyline is a love story of a husband trying to find a cure for his wife and of her coping with her own mortality. It can be assumed that the illness is in its final stage and Tommy being obviously under a pressure of time that is running out, is searching for the medical break-through very devotedly, in other words obsessively. This obsession is characterized mainly by his low attention to other things in life except the one – finding a cure for the cancer.

Their storyline begins when Izzy comes and asks Tommy to take a walk with her when the first snow is falling. He rejects with saying he has got too much work and leaves her walk alone. Even at work, he is recommended to take a few days off and stay home so that he can spend a little time with Izzy. His response shows the reason for his work-obsessed behaviour: "I am here for her.", he says. Instead of dealing with the situation, Tommy constantly works on his project, on finding the way how to cure his wife from the incurable illness. It shows well in a scene when Izzy wants him to see her book for the first time. However, he receives a phone call from work and decides to leave immediately without giving it a look. He is driving to the laboratory at night to see the results of their scientific experiment on a chimpanzee with brain tumour. It brought some general success but not personally for Tommy – the tumour stayed unchanged.

Another important scene seems to be the one set in a museum where Izzy is trying to explain the Mayan concept of death to Tommy. He does not seem to be interested and is about to walk away with disapproval when suddenly Izzy collapses

and ends up in a hospital with a seizure. Tommy is still refusing the reality and tells Izzy that he is close to a break-through in his medical research, just needs some time. In this scene, Izzy shows her acceptance of death which she feels that can not be avoided whereas Tommy goes straight to the laboratory again.

The break-through in his research comes soon after Izzy's seizure. The disease in the chimpanzee seems to be cured. Tommy is running to tell Izzy only to see her being unsuccessfully resuscitated. He is desperately trying to bring her back to life even when being told it is too late. It almost looks like he is trying to breath in some of his life into her body.

Even when the funeral comes, Tommy still tries to deny the reality and cannot come to terms with it. A spectator can see him leaving in the middle of the ceremony, while saying: "Death is a disease. It is like any other. And there is a cure, a cure. And I will find it." Tommy clearly was extremely devoted and it can be said obsessed with his research and finding the cure for Izzy. However, in his case it could have been all caused by another strong driving power – love. He did not want to accept Izzy's death and because of his profession, he saw his chance in finding a cure for her and that is why he could not give up on it and simply accept her death.

However, all the three stories connected together show it is not just about Tommy and Izzy. It has been there and will be there – the obsession with the idea of immortality throughout ages. In the ancient times, people were trying to do magic or find some essence of life that would make them immortal. Nowadays, people try to stop diseases and at least live longer. The end of the film shows that it is not possible to break the cycle of life but there is a form of eternity already and it is in the continuity of life. In the end, Tommy having a sudden memory of Izzy runs away from work to her grave and puts a chestnut in the soil. Showing an acceptance and fulfilling the idea appearing throughout the whole film – one life passing away gives life to another and this circle cannot be broken despite people have been obsessed with trying to find a way how to do that for centuries.

4.3 Obsession as a Theme in *Requiem for a Dream*, *The Wrestler* and *Noah*

The films that were not included in the main analysis are *Requiem for a Dream*, *The Wrestler* and *Noah*. In all these films, the obsession does not seem to be a dominating topic and if there are some obsessive traits found, they are not pathological.

Beginning with *Requiem for a Dream*, all the characters have dreams that they can not achieve. There is Marion wanting to be a fashion designer, Tyron who wants to make money and be loved and Harry who wishes to please his girlfriend Marion, but also his mother Sara (Ellen Burstyn) and Tyron. Despite they all want something a lot, they do not try to succeed in the right way. Instead, they become dealers and drug addicts and their lives soon revolve only around drugs and how to get them. Sara Goldfarb seems to be the only one who can be called obsessed, at least before she becomes addicted. However, she is addicted even before she starts taking pills and develops a physical addiction to them - she is addicted to watching television. When she gets a phone call with an invitation to her favourite TV show, she sees a chance of her life in it and becomes obsessed with the idea of appearing there in her red dress. As she cannot fit into that red dress, she decides to lose some weight and chooses the path that seems to be the easiest – taking pills instead of changing eating habits. This path she chooses is not leading anywhere good, as well as the path of the other characters in this film. In case of Sara, it can be said that the obsession turned her to being an addict as she wanted to fit in the dress so much that she does not care about the unhealthy way she chooses to do that.

Concerning *Requiem for a Dream* and the psychiatric obsession, there was one interview where Darren Aronofsky was asked about the repetition pattern in the film and his answer was that the story is about obsession and obsession is often about repetition. The interviewer then suggested it is like the people with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder to which the director replied: "Exactly, which basically all addicts are."⁵⁶ It is true that addiction can be similar to the OCD symptoms – an addict has thoughts of the substance that can be similar to obsessions and a

⁵⁶ 11 minutes with the stylistic wunderkind behind Pi and Requiem For A Dream. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. URL: <http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview22.html>

compulsive need to take it, but addiction and OCD are two very different things. It is true there exists a dual diagnosis of OCD and addiction. However, the characters in the film do not show any typical symptoms from which could be said they suffer from OCD, therefore it was not closely analyzed. But again, it is one of the statements that raise questions about the topic of obsession in Darren Aronofsky's films.

The Wrestler again deals only with the obsession in everyday language and it is not the main theme in this film. It is a drama about Randy "the Ram" Robinson, once a famous professional wrestler, now getting old, working at a counter in a grocery store and wrestling only for small audience in dirty halls. He does that until he gets a heart attack after one of the shows and is told by a doctor that his body can not take this anymore. It is a whole new reality that seems hard for Randy to accept. A spectator gets a sense of that his life has always revolved around wrestling and the lifestyle connected to that. He lives in a mobile home, has no stable relationship and no family as he gave up on his daughter a long time ago. The end of his wrestling career could be a new chance for him to settle down and re-arrange his life. However, he can not really cease from his old ways. Randy is definitely not obsessed in the way that for example Max from *Pi* or Nina from *Black Swan*. He does not show this all-time consuming devotion or inability to do something else for a moment. But in a long run, he is also unable to stop wrestling. An answer to why he does that despite his health condition does not seem to be an obsession but the fact that he does not know how to lead a different life. He tries to reunite with his daughter but fails in that and is rejected by her in the end. He tries to get closer to a stripper name Cassidy but fails in that as well. Until that point, Randy does not really seem to be a character who should be called obsessed, but the ending reveals some obsessive traits. He is going back to the ring and despite his health condition and despite the fact that Cassidy tells him not to go to the ring. He rejects his chance for another life and chooses to wrestle. His obsessive need for applause is stronger than anything else. The ring is a place where once he was successful, and people still call his name and cheer on him, and that is something he misses in his life. Even when he obviously feels bad during the fight, he does not stop. One can not see the ending but it is quite obvious that in case of Randy, his obsession leads him to self-destruction.

In *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Wrestler*, there still can be the theme of obsession traced. However, a question comes with *Noah*. The film character of Noah is still seen as obsessed by some reviewers and as the film is sometimes compared to *The Fountain*, so is the character: "at the heart of both movies are men who are single-mindedly obsessed, to the point that their monomania has the chance to reroute human history."⁵⁷ However, saying that the character is obsessed with building the arch and saving all the animals seems rather simplifying. Noah is following the words of God who speaks to him in his visions. He is not doing all the things out of his inner interest or obsession in any of the described sense. He is very devoted to God and he does everything to follow his words. In contrast to that, he shows feelings for his family in the end and chooses to save them instead of doing what God asked him to do – free the world from the human race completely. That does not seem to be an obsessive behaviour, even though the character really shows a great devotion or enthusiasm and no one can stop him from doing what he feels is right. The story behind *Noah* is maybe more obsessive than the character itself as the director has been interested in the biblical character since seventh grade when he wrote a poem about Noah and won a contest with it.⁵⁸ It was his dream to put it on the screen since he made *Pi* and despite all the controversy, he created the film in the way he wanted.

Concerning the director's attitude, he was once confronted by interviewers about the theme of obsession in all of his films and asked if he is obsessed with obsession to which his response was the following: "I'm not good with that self-analysis sort of thing. I just try to tell stories, and I guess I push them in that direction, but I don't think about why that is. I'm usually in the character's head, trying to follow some form of their psychology."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Taylor, Drew. Darren Aronofsky Strikes Again: Here Are Five Ways Noah Is Just Like 'The Fountain'. In: *Indiewire* [online]. URL: <http://www.indiewire.com/article/darren-aronofsky-strikes-again-here-are-5-ways-noah-is-just-like-the-fountain>

⁵⁸ Director Darren Aronofsky on controversial new film "Noah". In: *Youtube* [online]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyDODfOIGu0>

⁵⁹ Anderson, John. The Many Worlds of Darren Aronofsky. In: *Dga.org* [online]. URL: <http://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/1304-Fall-2013/Darren-Aronofsky.aspx>

Conclusion

The thesis reached its assigned aims. It first focused on the director Darren Aronofsky, his studies and his career of a director. Each of his six feature films was introduced and briefly described. The following chapter also touched the topic of his directing style and similarities that can be found in his films. From these chapters, it can be assumed that Darren Aronofsky is a well-educated director – not only in his field, but also in anthropology. Before he starts working on a film, he always study the matter and adds his personal attitude and experience to it. That makes his films elaborate but also realistic. Each of his films is very different and the only recurring element in all of them seems to be the music composed by Clint Mansell.

After introducing Darren Aronofsky, the thesis focused on explaining the word obsession in its different contexts. First it was obsession in everyday language, secondly it was obsessive passion and last but not least, the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder. These descriptions then served mainly for showing how film can be used as a medium for better understanding of certain human behaviour or psychopathology. This was reflected in the four selected Hollywood films – *Vertigo*, *Zodiac*, *The Aviator* and *The Odd Couple*. Moreover, the theory was then applied on the three films of Darren Aronofsky – *Pi*, *Black Swan* and *The Fountain*. The films were analysed in this order because *Pi* shows the dictionary meaning of obsession well, whereas *Black Swan* shows also the signs of obsessive passion and even OCD. *The Fountain* was mentioned as the last because the theme of obsession is not that strong in this film and the same can be said about the rest of Darren Aronofsky's films, which were also briefly analyzed in the last subchapter.

From the analysis and description of all the films of Darren Aronofsky, it can be assumed that the obsession in everyday language meaning is something that really connects the characters, probably except for Noah, but it is better to leave this open to a discussion. However, a difference can be seen in what causes the obsessive behaviour. For example the character of Max from *Pi* develops his obsession out of his own interest whereas Tommy from *The Fountain* becomes obsessed because of what is happening in his life. Nina becomes obsessed with being perfect not only to

please herself but also the audience, her mother and the director. Despite there appear the terms such as obsessive-compulsive, OCD or Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorder in some articles about the director, Darren Aronofsky's films do not seem to be suitable to be given as examples of these particular mental disorders. Not that the traits of these mental disorders cannot be found, but in closer examination, they usually have more of a symbolic function. However, a character that probably could have OCD if being taken out from the film and closely examined is Nina Sayers from *Black Swan*.

In the end, it does not seem to be the obsession itself that leads the characters to self-destruction. It is the goal they want to reach which seems to be impossible and therefore they can not succeed. Max from *Pi* wanted to find the underlying pattern of the stock market, Nina from *Black Swan* wanted to be perfect, Tommy Creo from *The Fountain* wanted to cure a deadly tumour, Ram from *The Wrestler* wanted to be the best wrestler despite his health condition and age. Sara Goldfarb from *Requiem for a Dream* wanted to fit in a dress she used to wear when she was young and lose weight as fast as possible. They all develop an obsessive behaviour when it comes to reaching their goal – they focus only on that goal and other things fall apart. Therefore it is not only the obsession that connects the characters in some way but also the nature of their goals – they are impossible to reach.

When writing this thesis, the author faced two main problems. First it was the new area of psychopathology, secondly it was finding reliable sources. Trying to open an undocumented area was not easy and as the director is still active and his production is developing, there can be very few literary sources found about his film production. However, there are many interviews and articles available, and a lot of them were taken into consideration.

The thesis could be further continued in the way of more in-depth analysis of the director's film language and focus on some other recurring elements, not only the obsession.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Black Swan [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2010.

The Fountain [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2006.

Noah [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Paramount Pictures, 2014.

Pi [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Artisan Entertainment, 1998.

Requiem for a Dream [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Artisan Entertainment, 2000.

The Wrestler [film]. Directed by Darren ARONOFSKY. USA: Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2008.

Secondary Sources

ABRAMOWITZ, Jonathan S., MCKAY, Dean, TAYLOR, Steven. *Clinical Handbook of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Related Problems*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, 304 p. ISBN 0-8018-8697-X.

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. 5th ed. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013, 947 p. ISBN 978-089-0425-558.

Anderson, John. The Many Worlds of Darren Aronofsky. In: *Directors Guild of America* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2015-05-05]. <<http://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/1304-Fall-2013/Darren-Aronofsky.aspx>>

An Interview with Darren Aronofsky: Interview conducted by Ruby Rich from Inview.Kqed.Org concerning Darren Aronofsky's "Requiem For A Dream" and "Pi" . In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. 11.02.2001 [cit. 2015-03-21]. <<http://aronofsky.tripod.com/interview20.html>>

Darren Aronofsky – Biography. In: *European Graduate School* [online]. [cit. 2015-03-03]. <<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/darren-aronofsky/biography>>

Darren Aronofsky - The writer/director of Pi discusses the limits of filmmaking and human knowledge: Interview about Aronofsky's "Pi" from Chit Chat Magazine. In:

Darren Aronofsky Online [online]. 1998 [cit. 2015-03-16].
<<http://aronofksy.tripod.com/interview21.html>>

Darren Aronofsky: Reel Life, Real Stories. In: *Youtube* [online]. 30.08.2011 [cit. 2015-03-25]. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPjKpflM6bo>>

DAVIS, Lennard J. *Obsession: A History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, 290 p. Paperback edition. ISBN 978-0-226-13784-1.

DILLON, Steven. *The Solaris Effect: Art and Artifice in Contemporary American Film*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006, 280 p. ISBN 0292713452.

Director Darren Aronofsky on controversial new film "Noah". In: *Youtube* [online]. 29.03.2014 [cit. 2015-05-05]. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyDODfOIGu0>>

DP/30: Black Swan, director Darren Aronofsky. In: *Youtube* [online]. 31.12.2010 [cit. 2015-03-03]. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Pcatg01iUs>>

11 minutes with the stylistic wunderkind behind Pi and Requiem For A Dream: Interview conducted by Spence D. from Formen.Ign.Com concerning Darren Aronofsky's "Requiem For A Dream". In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. 31.10.2000 [cit. 2015-04-29]. <<http://aronofksy.tripod.com/interview22.html>>

FAMA, Jeanne M. *Skin Picking Disorder Fact Sheet* [online]. 2010 [cit. 2015-03-26]. Available from <<https://iocdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Skin-Picking-Disorder-Fact-Sheet.pdf>>

Feature Interview - Darren Aronofsky: Interview about Aronofsky's "Pi", "Requiem For A Dream" and "Batman: Year One" from Netribution. In: *Darren Aronofsky Online* [online]. 2001 [cit. 2015-03-11].
<<http://aronofksy.tripod.com/interview12.html>>

Federman, Russ. Is There Such a Thing as Bipolar OCD Disorder? The connection between bipolar disorder and obsessive compulsive symptoms. In: *Psychology Today* [online]. 26.10.2011 [cit. 2015-03-02].
<<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/bipolar-you/201110/is-there-such-thing-bipolar-ocd-disorder>>

Flynn, Edward R. Pi – The Book of Ants. In: *Archive.org* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-25].
<<https://archive.org/details/Pi-TheBookOfAnts>>

The Fountain - Darren Aronofsky Director's Commentary Remastered. In: *Youtube* [online]. 10.10.2014 [cit. 2015-04-15]. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aeCUFvZFYk>>

Franklin J. Schaffner Award. *American Film Institute* [online]. 2015 [cit.2015-03-02]. <<http://www.afi.com/Conservatory/alumni/schaffneraward.aspx>>

Friend, Tad. Heavy Weather – Darren Aronofsky Gets Biblical. In: *New Yorker* [online]. 17.03.2014 [cit. 2015-03-23]. <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/03/17/heavy-weather-2>>

Grohol, John M. Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder Symptoms. In: *PsychCentral* [online]. 05.02.2014 [cit. 2015-02-20]. <<http://psychcentral.com/disorders/obsessive-compulsive-personality-disorder-symptoms/>>

HURBIS-CHERRIER, Mick. *Voice & Vision: A Creative Approach to Narrative Film and DV Production*. 2nd ed. Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2013, 600 p. ISBN 02-408-1158-5.

Idov, Michael. Pi in the Sky. In: *New York Magazine* [online]. 25.10.2007 [cit. 2015-03-18]. <<http://nymag.com/movies/features/24368/>>

Matthew Libatique. *Internet Movie Database* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-27]. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0508732/?ref_=ttfc_fc_cr14>

McEntee, John. Darren Aronofsky Retrospective Part 1– π (Pi). In: *Sound on Sight* [online]. 29.11.2010 [cit. 2015-03-18]. <<http://www.soundonsight.org/darren-aronofsky-retrospective-part-1-pi/>>

Obsession (noun). *Oxford Dictionaries* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-25]. <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/obsession>>

Peterson, Christopher. Passion and Positive Psychology. In: *Psychology Today* [online]. 07.01.2010 [cit. 2015-02-18]. <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-good-life/201001/passion-and-positive-psychology>>

Prof Robert Vallerand 'Making a difference in people's lives' at Mind & Its Potential 2012. In: *Youtube* [online]. 12.12. 2012 [cit. 2015-04-06]. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kulUtp0KyiQ>>

RACHMAN, Stanley, DE SILVA, Padmal. *Obsessive-compulsive disorder: The Facts*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 184 p. ISBN 01-995-6177-X.

Radish, Christina. Natalie Portman & Director Darren Aronofsky Interview BLACK SWAN. In: *Collider* [online]. 28.11.2010 [cit. 2015-03-28]. <<http://collider.com/natalie-portman-darren-aronofsky-interview-black-swan/>>

Sasson, Gahl Eden. Noah Boycott. In: *Huffington Post* [online]. 04.01.2014. Updated 06.01.2014 [cit. 2015-03-29]. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gahl-eden-sasson/noah-boycott_b_5059478.html>

STEKETEE, Gail. *The Oxford Handbook of Obsessive Compulsive and Spectrum Disorders*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 546 p. ISBN 0195376218.

Taylor, Drew. Darren Aronofsky Strikes Again: Here Are Five Ways Noah Is Just Like 'The Fountain'. In: *Indiewire* [online]. 2014 [cit. 2015-05-01]. <<http://www.indiewire.com/article/darren-aronofsky-strikes-again-here-are-5-ways-noah-is-just-like-the-fountain>>

VALLERAND, Robert J., Céline BLANCHARD, Geneviève A. MAGEAU, Richard KOESTNER, Catherine RATELLE, Maude LÉONARD, Marylène GAGNÉ, and Josée MARSOLAIS. Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* [online]. 2003, vol. 85, Issue 4 [cit. 2015-04-11]. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.85.4.756. Available at: <<http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r26710/LRCS/papers/126.pdf>>

VANIER, Danielle, SEARIGHT, Russell H. *Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorder in Darren Aronofsky's Black Swan* [online]. Sault Sainte Marie, MI, 2012 [cit. 2015-03-15]. Available at: <<http://researchpub.org/journal/aps/number/vol1-no2/vol1-no2-1.pdf>>

Walker, Tim. Darren Aronofsky: Hollywood's most ambitious director. In: *Independent.co.uk* [online]. 15.01.2015 [cit. 2015-03-06]. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/darren-aronofsky-hollywoods-most-ambitious-director-2185191.html>>

WEDDING, Danny, Mary Ann BOYD, and Ryan M. NIEMIEC. *Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Hogrefe Publishing, 2010, 352 p. ISBN 978-0-88937-371-6.

Whipp, Glenn. 'Black Swan' director Darren Aronofsky likes a challenge. In: *Los Angeles Times* [online]. 09.12.2010 [cit. 2015-03-23]. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/09/news/la-en-aronofsky-20101209>>