

## **Obsessions: A Screenplay On Obsessive Compulsive Disorders Impact On Relationships**

**Putri Patricia Pattiselanno<sup>1</sup>, Ribut Basuki<sup>2</sup>**

English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University, Siwalankerto  
121-131, Surabaya 60236, INDONESIA

E-mail: a11200071@john.petra.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, rbasuki@petra.ac.id<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

This creative work explores Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and its impact on relationships, challenging misconceptions and highlighting its complexity. OCD, characterized by intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviors, significantly affects individuals' well-being and interpersonal dynamics. Despite its prevalence, OCD often faces trivialization, portrayed as quirks rather than a debilitating mental illness. Through Ethan and Ophelia's narrative, this screenplay aims to raise awareness about OCD's effects on relationships. Ethan's struggle underscores challenges faced by individuals and their loved ones, emphasizing the importance of understanding mental health issues and seeking evidence-based treatments like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT focuses on modifying maladaptive thinking and behavior patterns through techniques such as recognizing cognitive distortions and developing coping skills. By blending romance and suspense, this work seeks to emotionally engage the audience and foster a compassionate approach to mental health.

**Keywords:** awareness, mental health, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, relationships, screenplay, stigma

### **INTRODUCTION**

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a complex, widely misunderstood mental health condition that significantly impacts individuals' lives globally. In Indonesia, OCD research is primarily case-based, lacking comprehensive epidemiological data (Supriyanto, n.d.). OCD involves uncontrollable, repetitive thoughts and behaviors, profoundly affecting individuals' well-being and daily functioning (Mind, 2023; Akyurek et al., 2019). It manifests as a persistent struggle with intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviors, often exacerbated by external stressors. Recognizing its debilitating nature and seeking professional help is crucial for effective management (Ramasamy et al., 2013; Akyurek et al., 2019).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has emerged as an effective treatment for OCD. It focuses on modifying maladaptive thinking and behavior patterns, emphasizing collaboration between therapist and patient (American Psychological Association, 2017). The impact of OCD extends beyond the individual, significantly affecting both familial and romantic relationships. It creates stress and emotional tension, disrupting communication and precipitating conflicts. In Indonesia, OCD cases are infrequently discussed, highlighting the need for increased awareness (Dermawan, 2024; Supriyanto, n.d.).

A case study of subject AE illustrates the real-world impact of OCD, demonstrating how compulsive behaviors can significantly disrupt daily life (Amalia, 2019). However, barriers to seeking professional help persist, including societal stigma and comorbid conditions. While public figures discussing their OCD struggles have increased awareness, this has also led to self-diagnosis without professional consultation (Simone, 2024; Angelina & Lestari, 2022).

This creative work explores how OCD negatively impacts relationships while examining management techniques. It focuses on Ethan's OCD, characterized by aggressive obsessions and symmetry compulsions, affecting his relationship with his girlfriend. The work demonstrates the

effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in Ethan's recovery process, emphasizing thought restructuring and behavior modification.

The significance lies in addressing the normalization of inappropriate behavior in young relationships. It aims to raise awareness among the younger generation about not normalizing relationships with partners who have untreated mental conditions, encouraging disengagement from harmful situations and seeking professional help.

Targeting individuals aged 16 to 30, the screenplay provides insights into OCD's impact on relationships and serves as a platform for those caught between love and obsession. It also aims to educate parents about observing their children's mental health and taking their concerns seriously. This creative effort promotes awareness and caution in relationship choices among young Indonesians, emphasizing the importance of mental health in romantic partnerships.

In the context of Indonesian media, while news stories about relationship-related issues are common, few cinematic narratives address these critical topics. The success of films like "Like & Share" (Noer, 2022) demonstrates the potential for screenplays addressing these issues to attract interest and raise awareness. This creative work aims to make a positive impact through storytelling, offering both entertainment and valuable lessons for young Indonesians to apply in their daily lives.

## **Theory and Methodology**

This study is grounded in the theoretical conceptualization of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) as proposed by Salkovskis (1985). OCD, formerly known as scrupulosity before the 20th century, is characterized by the presence of distressing thoughts coupled with compulsive repetitive behaviors or mental acts aimed at alleviating the associated anxiety. Salkovskis posits that the disturbance and distress caused by obsessions are intrinsically linked to aspects highly valued by the individual. The theoretical underpinnings of this research acknowledge the heterogeneity of OCD symptoms, varying in type and severity across individuals. This variability manifests in time-consuming behaviors that disrupt routines and potentially lead to social isolation. The study adopts a multifaceted approach to OCD, recognizing its impact on cognitive processes, behavioral patterns, and social interactions.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) serves as a key theoretical construct in this research, employing a structured approach to treatment that focuses on altering maladaptive thinking and behavioral patterns (Salkovskis, 1985). The therapeutic process typically involves recognition of distorted cognitions, reevaluation of thoughts in light of reality, collaborative development of problem-solving skills, and building confidence in coping abilities. This theoretical framework incorporates exposure and response prevention (ERP) as a crucial component, whereby individuals intentionally confront anxiety-provoking stimuli and resist compulsive responses. The integration of in-session and out-of-session exercises aims to foster enduring change through the development of robust coping skills.

OCD is conceptualized as a chronic disorder characterized by uncontrolled, repetitive thoughts (obsessions) and behaviors (compulsions). This study adopts Dermawan's (2024) definition of OCD as an anxiety disorder marked by excessive preoccupation with recurring thoughts and repetitive behaviors, consuming substantial time (exceeding one hour daily) and resulting in significant distress or functional impairment. The etiology of OCD is understood through a multifactorial lens, encompassing genetic predisposition, neurobiological factors including alterations in the frontal cortex and subcortical structures, PANDAS syndrome, and childhood trauma (Cleveland Clinic, 2022). This research focuses on three specific manifestations of OCD: aggressive obsessions, obsession with symmetry or exactness, and hoarding. These subtypes are explored within the context of their impact on interpersonal relationships and daily functioning.

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The methodology of this study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating both primary and secondary research methodologies. The primary research component involves a comprehensive literature review, encompassing peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and academic publications on OCD. This systematic review aims to establish a robust theoretical foundation and identify current gaps in the literature. Secondary research methodologies include case study analysis of individuals with OCD, particularly focusing on their experiences within the Indonesian sociocultural context, content analysis of online resources and media representations of OCD, and examination of clinical reports and treatment outcomes. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, a rigorous source verification process was implemented. All sources were critically evaluated for their academic credibility, methodological rigor, and relevance to the research objectives.

The creative component of this research adopts a general-to-specific framework for the screenwriting process. This methodological approach encompasses topic selection based on personal interest and societal significance, genre determination to establish a realistic narrative framework, ideation and premise development through structured brainstorming sessions, systematic idea distillation and narrative construction, character development, creation of loglines, step outlines, and pitches, synopsis development, and screenplay drafting and revision. This methodological framework ensures a comprehensive and academically rigorous approach to exploring OCD through creative narrative, bridging the gap between scientific understanding and public awareness.

## **CONCEPT OF THE CREATIVE WORK**

The present study employs a romantic suspense genre for the screenplay, characterized by the simultaneous development of a romantic relationship and a suspenseful plot. This genre presents a balance between emotional engagement and thrilling tension, requiring a seamless integration of romance and suspense elements (Tilly, 2021). The protagonists typically face external threats or challenges that heighten the stakes and deepen their emotional connection, emphasizing both character development and plot twists. The ultimate resolution often combines the fulfillment of the romantic relationship with the resolution of the suspense, providing a satisfying and cohesive conclusion (Tilly, 2021).

The screenplay draws inspiration from the Indonesian film "Posesif," directed by Gina S. Noer (2017), which explores psychological drama within an unhealthy relationship between two college students. Similar to "Posesif," this work delves into the consequences faced by main characters when failing to address significant challenges. However, the primary distinction lies in the nature of the protagonist's struggle; while "Posesif" focuses on balancing family traditions with personal desires, this work centers on a concealed mental condition, specifically Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

The narrative structure incorporates elements of dramatic and situational irony to enhance audience engagement and character complexity. Dramatic irony arises when a character lacks essential information affecting the storyline, while situational irony occurs when a character's actions lead to the opposite of their intended result (Malewitz, 2019). These ironic elements are particularly evident in the climactic scenes involving the deuteragonist, Ophelia, and her decision to leave the protagonist, Ethan.

The screenplay adheres to established conventions of the romantic suspense genre while incorporating unique elements. The protagonists, Ethan and Ophelia, navigate complex emotional landscapes against the backdrop of Batam, Singapore, and Japan. The narrative spans seven years, from 2020 to 2027, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the characters' relationship and personal growth. The

central conflict revolves around Ethan's struggle with OCD and its impact on his relationship with Ophelia, creating a blend of romantic development and psychological tension.

By combining elements of romance and suspense with a focus on mental health awareness, this creative work aims to provide insight into the intricate interplay of psychological challenges within romantic contexts. Ultimately, it seeks to foster understanding and empathy among viewers while underscoring the importance of mental health awareness in relationships.

The genre codes and conventions of romantic suspense are integral to this screenplay's structure and narrative development. In terms of characters, while traditional romantic suspense often features a female protagonist grappling with love and a resistant male hero (Tilly, 2021), this work primarily adopts Ethan's point of view as he struggles with OCD. Both Ethan and Ophelia serve as main characters, supported by a cast of family members, friends, teachers, and community members.

The setting plays a crucial role in establishing both the romantic atmosphere and suspenseful elements. Unlike the typical small town or rural area often used in romantic suspense, this screenplay unfolds across Batam, Singapore, and Japan. These locations were chosen for their novelty in Indonesian cinema and their potential to enhance the romantic journey of Ethan and Ophelia. Specific settings include the characters' homes, schools, cafes, parks, and bars, creating a diverse backdrop for the unfolding drama.

Regarding the temporal setting, the story spans from 2020 to 2027, a departure from the more condensed timeframes often seen in romantic suspense. This extended period allows for a deep exploration of the characters' development and the evolution of their relationship against the backdrop of increasing mental health awareness in society.

The events in the screenplay adhere to the genre convention of intertwining the central love story with suspenseful elements. However, instead of a traditional external villain, the primary source of conflict stems from Ethan's internal struggle with OCD and its impact on his relationship with Ophelia. This approach maintains the genre's emphasis on emotional satisfaction and optimistic endings while offering a unique perspective on psychological suspense within a romantic context.

By adhering to these genre codes and conventions while introducing novel elements, this screenplay aims to offer a fresh take on romantic suspense that resonates with contemporary audiences and highlights important mental health issues.

## **Theme**

The creative work centers on the theme of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and its detrimental impact on personal relationships, particularly romantic ones. Through the narrative of Ethan, a young man grappling with OCD, and his relationship with Ophelia, the screenplay seeks to illuminate the complexities and challenges posed by OCD. The story underscores the significance of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in managing and mitigating OCD symptoms. By exploring Ethan's journey towards recovery and the strain his condition places on his relationship, the work aims to raise awareness about OCD, advocate for mental health support, and encourage individuals to seek professional help. Additionally, the screenplay aspires to educate the younger generation about recognizing and addressing unhealthy relationship dynamics, thereby fostering a more compassionate and informed society.

## **Plot**

The premise of this creative work is that Ethan, a handsome, arrogant boy, realizes the importance

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of addressing his mental health before pursuing a serious relationship. This creative work will illustrate how neglected mental health can adversely affect personal relationships by portraying the pain, symptoms, and societal pressures associated with having OCD in a context where mental illnesses are often ridiculed and considered taboo. Ultimately, the protagonist will undergo self-healing and find happiness in a new environment.

To maintain the flow of the story, the pitch is provided below.

- a. As a transfer student, Ethan falls in love with Ophelia and wants to make her his girlfriend.
- b. However, slapped with the realization that he has OCD, Ethan's romantic life turns out to be less idyllic than he had envisioned, and he even ruins his academic life, prompting his parents to send him for treatment and therapy.
- c. Finally, after his expectations of leading a normal life shatter in the face of reality and Ophelia's rejection, Ethan slowly learns to accept himself and embraces therapy for his mental health.

In summary, Ethan's journey from a romantic idealist to a person confronting his mental health challenges illustrates how OCD can disrupt relationships and highlights the importance of therapy and self-acceptance in the path to recovery.

## **Characters**

### Main Characters:

Ethan Lawalata, a 23-year-old Ambonese only child, is known for his thick eyebrows, stylish shoulder-length black hair, and commanding presence. With a refined taste in jazz and classical music, he is admired by women and envied by some men. Despite his charm and confidence, Ethan unknowingly struggles with a mental illness that began in elementary school and worsened in high school.

Ophelia Manganan, a 21-year-old Toraja firstborn, is recognized for her long black hair, endearing dimples, and gentle demeanor. Majoring in Information Systems, she balances her love for classical music and basketball with a reserved yet brave personality. Her charm and strength are reflected in her academic dedication and personal pursuits.

### Side Characters:

Richard Lawalata, a 62-year-old patriarch of the Lawalata family, is known for his silver hair, wisdom, and strong presence. Married to Elizabeth for 25 years, he is a supportive father to Ethan, embodying a legacy of stability and dedication through his work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit.

Elizabeth Lawalata, a 52-year-old matriarch, is characterized by her serene smile and elegant presence. As Ethan's mother, she creates a tranquil home environment and finds joy in gardening. Her 25-year marriage to Richard reflects a deep and enduring love.

Abram Manganan, a 60-year-old Toraja gentleman, is distinguished by his salt-and-pepper beard and dignified demeanor. His 22-year marriage to Tika and his role as Ophelia's father showcase his wisdom, compassion, and refined appreciation for literature and the arts.

Tika Manganan, a 50-year-old Toraja woman, is known for her timeless beauty, gentle spirit, and elegant demeanor. Married to Abram for 22 years, she nurtures Ophelia with kindness and resilience, while her passion for art and culture enriches their family life.

Mr. Rosy Angrek, a 55-year-old Visual Communication Design teacher, is known for his stern demeanor and rare smiles. Despite his strict reputation, he values meaningful connections with students,

demonstrating a warm-hearted nature through his commitment to honest teaching.

Mr. Klaus, a 30-year-old Pancasila lecturer with a doctorate, is recognized for his athletic build, dashing appearance, and approachable teaching style. Popular among students for his relaxed yet authoritative approach, he blends intellect with charm.

Ricky, a 23-year-old art student and Ethan's new best friend, is tall and athletic with short brown hair. He aspires to be remembered like the famous painter Andrei Rublev and shares a taste for music with Ethan. He supports Ethan while avoiding discussions about his past.

Adelia Jophiel, a 23-year-old Information Systems student and Ophelia's childhood best friend, is known for her ever-changing brown hair and free-spirited personality. She excels academically but embraces a life of spontaneity, balancing her talents with a rebellious streak.

James, a 25-year-old Information Systems graduate, is known as the "Party King" for his energetic weekend gatherings and charismatic presence. His vibrant personality and social prowess make him the center of attention in any crowd.

Roger, a 55-year-old psychiatrist and Ophelia's uncle, is recognized for his tall stature, neat appearance, and charming demeanor. A skilled professional, he is known for his expertise in psychological cases and his empathetic approach to patient care.

Dr. Gunawan, a 60-year-old psychiatrist at RS Awal Bros Botania Batam, is known for his bald head, firm voice, and expertise in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for OCD. His understated appearance belies a reputation for excellence and reassurance in his field.

Jacob, a 30-year-old architect in Japan and Ophelia's husband, is distinguished by his tall physique, captivating smile, and neat black hair. Despite his demanding career, he remains a supportive and loving partner to Ophelia, balancing professional success with family life.

## **Conflict**

This section explores two primary conflicts in the creative work: *Man vs. Self* and *Man vs. Society*. The *Man vs. Self* conflict represents an internal struggle where the character's personal flaws lead to their downfall (Kantey, n.d.-a). In this work, the protagonist contends with a desire to be seen as normal despite recognizing the need for psychiatric help. The *Man vs. Society* conflict involves the character's external struggle with societal expectations and pressures (Kantey, n.d.-b). The narrative illustrates how societal judgment, particularly from a significant other, heightens the protagonist's anxiety and drives him into deeper isolation, exacerbating his mental health issues through online interactions and perceptions of mental illness.

## **CONCLUSION**

This thesis underscores the debilitating nature of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and its impact on relationships and personal well-being through a romantic suspense screenplay. By depicting the journey of Ethan, a young man dealing with OCD, the narrative explores the complex dynamics of romantic relationships affected by mental health challenges. The screenplay aims to raise awareness, encourage professional help, and challenge societal stigmas associated with mental illness. It strives to foster empathy, understanding, and open dialogue about mental health, ultimately seeking to inspire viewers to prioritize their mental well-being and seek support.

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This creative thesis has deepened my understanding of OCD and its effects on relationships. It has taught me the importance of thorough research and empathy in addressing mental health issues. The process highlighted how storytelling can be a powerful tool for raising awareness and fostering emotional connections with audiences on complex topics.

I plan to continue exploring mental health themes in future creative projects, aiming to promote awareness and understanding of psychological conditions. I intend to develop my skills in screenplay writing and filmmaking, potentially creating a feature film based on this thesis. Future efforts will include collaborating with mental health professionals and advocacy groups to ensure accuracy and reduce stigma.

For students and researchers, in-depth research and empathy are essential for addressing mental health topics. Engaging with a range of sources and seeking professional guidance can enhance the accuracy and impact of creative works. Educators and institutions should integrate mental health education into curricula and support projects that address these issues. Mental health advocates should use diverse platforms to promote understanding, reduce stigma, and encourage individuals to seek help. Through education, support, and collaboration, we can foster a more compassionate and informed society.

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