



THE REPRESENTATION OF OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE PERSONALITY DISORDER ACROSS THE CHARACTERS IN THE ANTHOLOGY FILM THE HOUSE (2022)

Caesar Danuarta¹⁾, Putri Ayiendra Dinanti²⁾

¹⁾ English Department, Faculty of Business and Social Science, Universitas Dian Nusantara, Bekasi, Indonesia
Email: caesardanuarta@gmail.com

²⁾ English Department, Faculty of Business and Social Science, Universitas Dian Nusantara, Bekasi, Indonesia
Email: putri.ayiendra.dinanti@dosen.undira.ac.id

Abstract

Films have become an important medium for representing psychological disorders, enabling audiences to gain a deeper understanding of mental health through fictional characters. Integrating psychological perspectives into film analysis also strengthens the interdisciplinary relationship between psychology, literature, and cinema. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) through the three main characters in the stop-motion animated anthology film *The House* (2022). This study employed a qualitative descriptive method using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as the analytical framework. The primary data were obtained from the film, while supporting data were collected from books, journal articles, and psychological references related to OCPD. Data were gathered through repeated viewing, observation, and categorization of scenes, dialogues, and character actions based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria. The findings reveal that Raymond, the Developer, and Rosa collectively represent four OCPD symptoms: preoccupation with details, perfectionism that interferes with task completion, excessive devotion to work and productivity, and rigidity and stubbornness. Rather than portraying the disorder through a single character, the film distributes these symptoms across multiple narratives, illustrating a distinctive representation of OCPD in an anthology film. This study contributes to a more critical and empathetic understanding of psychological disorders in literary and cinematic studies.

Keywords: Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder, DSM-5, anthology film, animation, *The House*.

Abstrak

Film telah menjadi media penting untuk merepresentasikan gangguan psikologis, yang memungkinkan penonton memperoleh pemahaman lebih mendalam mengenai kesehatan mental melalui karakter-karakter fiksi. Integrasi perspektif psikologis ke dalam analisis film juga memperkuat hubungan lintas disiplin antara psikologi, sastra, dan sinema. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi *Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder* (OCPD) melalui tiga karakter utama dalam film antologi animasi *stop-motion* berjudul *The House* (2022). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) sebagai kerangka analisis. Data primer diperoleh dari film tersebut, sedangkan data pendukung dikumpulkan dari buku, artikel jurnal, dan referensi psikologis terkait OCPD. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kegiatan menonton berulang kali, observasi, serta kategorisasi adegan, dialog, dan tindakan karakter berdasarkan kriteria diagnostik DSM-5. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Raymond, sang Pengembang (*the Developer*), dan Rosa secara kolektif merepresentasikan empat gejala OCPD: preokupasi terhadap detail, perfeksionisme yang menghambat penyelesaian tugas, dedikasi berlebihan terhadap pekerjaan dan produktivitas, serta kekakuan dan sikap keras kepala. Alih-alih menggambarkan gangguan tersebut melalui satu karakter tunggal, film ini mendistribusikan gejala-gejala tersebut ke dalam berbagai narasi, sehingga menampilkan representasi OCPD yang khas dalam sebuah film antologi. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih kritis dan empatik mengenai gangguan psikologis dalam kajian sastra dan sinema.

Kata Kunci: Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder, DSM-5, film antologi, animasi, *The House*.



INTRODUCTION

Films have long served not only as entertainment but also as a powerful medium for representing social realities, cultural values, and psychological experiences. Through narrative, visual imagery, dialogue, and characterization, films allow audiences to understand complex human behaviors and emotional conflicts from different perspectives. As Monaco argues, film combines multiple artistic elements to communicate ideas and evoke emotional responses, making it an effective medium for portraying psychological issues (Monaco, 2009). Consequently, the representation of mental disorders in films has become an increasingly important topic in literary and film studies because it encourages audiences to develop a deeper understanding of human behavior and mental health.

An anthology film is a type of film composed of multiple short segments connected through a shared theme or narrative concept, creating a unified work. As explained by Deshpande, this format enables filmmakers to experiment with diverse storytelling styles and narrative techniques while maintaining an overarching thematic or emotional connection among the individual stories (Deshpande, 2021). Grant further argues that the fragmented narrative structure of anthology films offers audiences multiple perspectives, resulting in a richer and more layered cinematic experience. Therefore, anthology films represent a distinctive storytelling form that combines narrative diversity with thematic coherence, encouraging creative innovation in filmmaking (Grant, 2007).

One film that offers an interesting portrayal of these psychological characteristics is *The House* (2022), a stop-motion animated anthology film released by Netflix. The film consists of three interconnected stories linked by a mysterious house, with each chapter presenting different protagonists whose lives become increasingly dominated by obsession, perfectionism, and excessive attachment to the house. The film focuses on three distinct characters, each featured in a different narrative segment. The first segment, “*And Heard Within, A Lie Is Spun*,” centers on Raymond, while the second, “*Then Lost Is Truth That Can't Be Won*,”

highlights The Developer, and the final segment, “*Listen Again and Seek the Sun*,” focuses on Rosa. Although each narrative focuses on different characters and settings, the recurring behavioral patterns suggest the representation of obsessive-compulsive personality traits. Rather than presenting psychological disorders through explicit clinical diagnosis, the film conveys them symbolically through characters’ behaviors, decisions, and interpersonal relationships.

One psychological condition that is portrayed through *The House* (2022) characters is Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder. OCPD is a personality disorder characterized by persistent perfectionism, excessive preoccupation with order and control, rigidity, and an overwhelming devotion to productivity that often interferes with interpersonal relationships and daily functioning. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), individuals with OCPD commonly demonstrate symptoms such as excessive attention to details, perfectionism that prevents task completion, excessive devotion to work, reluctance to delegate responsibilities, and rigidity or stubbornness (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). On the other hand, the DSM-5 identifies eight diagnostic criteria for OCPD. The results of this study indicate that only four of the eight DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCPD are portrayed in *The House* (2022). Specifically, the film depicts a persistent preoccupation with details, rules, and organization; perfectionism that hinders the completion of tasks; an excessive commitment to work and productivity at the expense of leisure activities and interpersonal relationships; and rigid as well as stubborn behavior.

Several previous studies have examined psychological disorders in films and literary adaptations. Savitri in 2023 analyzed the representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) in *Behind Her Eyes* (2021), finding that the main character exhibited perfectionism, rigidity, and obsessive behaviors that reflected OCPD characteristics. Mukti in 2021 investigated the obsessive pursuit of perfection in *Black Swan* (2010), demonstrating



that excessive perfectionism contributed to severe psychological disturbances experienced by the protagonist. Similarly, Afifa and Kurnia in 2018 examined psychological problems portrayed in the Fifty Shades films and identified obsessive-compulsive personality traits as one of the psychological conditions represented through the main character. These studies demonstrate that films provide an effective medium for exploring psychological disorders through characterization and narrative development.

Despite these contributions, previous studies have primarily focused on individual protagonists or conventional narrative films. Studies examining the representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) in anthology films remain limited. Moreover, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study has specifically analyzed *The House* (2022) based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria to investigate how OCPD symptoms are collectively represented across multiple interconnected narratives. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of OCPD in *The House* (2022) by examining how four DSM-5 symptoms are collectively portrayed through the behaviors of Raymond, the Developer, and Rosa. This study contributes to psychology, literature, and film studies by expanding discussions on the representation of personality disorders in anthology films while promoting a more critical and empathetic understanding of mental health through cinematic narratives.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to examine the representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) in the anthology film *The House* (2022). The primary data consisted of scenes, dialogues, and character behaviors of the three main characters, while secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). Data were collected through repeated viewing of the film, and relevant scenes and

dialogues were documented using screenshots and research notes. The collected data were then classified according to the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria and analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis to identify and interpret the representation of OCPD symptoms in the film.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Symptoms of Over Preoccupation with Details

The findings indicate that the character demonstrates the first symptom outlined in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCPD. This symptom refers to an excessive focus on details, rules, order, and organization to the extent that the main purpose of an activity is overlooked. Individuals prioritize precision and structure over completing the task effectively.



Figure 1 Rosa's Obsessive Concern with Defects in the *Floorboards* (Minute 01:04:46)

In this scene, Rosa demonstrates the first symptom of OCPD through her excessive focus on details. She begins by renovating her house with wallpaper to improve its appearance. However, when the wallpaper does not stick properly, she shifts her attention to collecting rent from a tenant. During this, she notices a damaged section of the wooden floor and immediately decides to address the problem, recording it in her notes. Rather than returning to her initial task, Rosa becomes occupied with a new issue, causing her to lose sight of her original objective. This behavior reflects the OCPD symptom of excessive preoccupation with details, which interferes with completing the primary task.

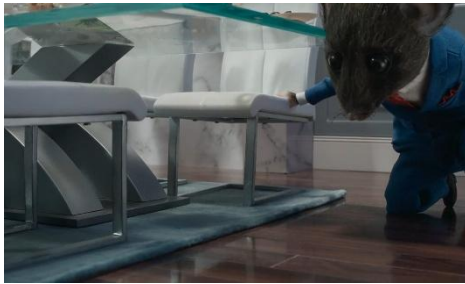


Figure 2 *The Developer's Preoccupation with the Cockroach Infestation (Minute 47:45)*

The Developer also exhibited this symptom of OCPD in the second segment of *The House*. His main objective was to promote and sell the house to potential buyers. However, his attention was diverted after a cockroach was noticed inside the house. Instead of continuing the presentation, he became preoccupied with locating and eliminating the cockroach. As a result, the primary objective of promoting the house was neglected because excessive attention was given to a minor detail. This behavior reflected the OCPD symptom in which excessive preoccupation with details interfered with the main purpose of the activity.

The Symptom of Perfectionism Hindering Task Completion

The analysis identified that the character demonstrates the second symptom outlined in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCPD. This symptom describes maladaptive perfectionism in which unrealistically high standards prevent individuals from completing tasks.



Figure 3 *The Developer's Perfectionism in the House Renovation Process (Minute 39:36)*

The Developer's behavior in this scene reflects perfectionism that interferes with task completion. Although his main goal is to renovate the house for sale, he becomes excessively focused on eliminating the cockroaches to achieve his ideal standard of cleanliness and perfection. As a result, he spends considerable time dealing with the infestation instead of completing the renovation. His excessive concern with perfection distracts him from the primary objective and delays the task. This behavior reflects the OCPD symptom in which perfectionism interferes with effective task completion.



Figure 4 *Rosa's Perfectionistic Standards in Renovating Her Dream House (Minute 01:18:49)*

Rosa's behavior reflected perfectionism that interfered with task completion. She continued renovating the house despite the floodwater entering the building, remaining focused on achieving her ideal home. Rather than addressing the flood, she became concerned with minor flaws, such as the dirty water from the faucet, without recognizing that it was caused by the flooding. As a result, her attention shifted from the main problem to insignificant details. This behavior reflected the OCPD symptom in which perfectionism interfered with effective problem-solving and task completion.

The Symptom of Excessive Devotion To Work

The analysis revealed that the character demonstrates the third symptom outlined in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCPD. This symptom is characterized by excessive dedication to work and productivity at the expense of leisure activities and interpersonal relationships.



Figure 5 *Raymond Prioritizes Productivity Over Family*
Time (minute 25:46)

Raymond's behavior reflected excessive devotion to work and productivity, one of the symptoms of OCPD. He was shown carrying various items around his newly luxurious house while ignoring his children's calls for help. Although they said they were lost and hungry, his attention remained focused on house-related tasks. As a result, his family responsibilities were neglected. This behavior reflected the OCPD symptom of excessive devotion to work and productivity at the expense of interpersonal relationships.



Figure 6 *The Developer's Dedication to Work Until Late at Night (Minute 35:23)*

The Developer's behavior reflected excessive devotion to work and productivity. He devoted most of his time to renovating the house, often working late into the night while neglecting his relationship with his partner. Their conversations centered on his workload and the house rather than their personal relationship. In another scene, he emphasized the effort he had invested in the project and stated, *"I will never ever again call you darling again"* (Minute 51:43), indicating the deterioration of their relationship. These behaviors reflected the OCPD symptom

of excessive devotion to work and productivity at the expense of interpersonal relationships.

The Symptom of Rigidity and Stubbornness in Personal Acts

The researcher identified that the character demonstrates the eighth symptom outlined in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCPD. This symptom refers to inflexible thinking and an unwillingness to compromise or accept alternative viewpoints. Individuals insist on their own methods and resist changes or suggestions from others.



Figure 7 *Rosa Shows Stubbornness in Responding to Others' Opinions (Minute 01:21:17)*

Rigidity and stubbornness were reflected in Rosa's behavior during her conversation with her friend. When advice was offered, it was immediately rejected with the response, *"Stop talking, you lunatic. You ruined everything."* Her reaction indicated an unwillingness to accept a different perspective, as the suggestion was perceived as a threat to her plans rather than constructive feedback. This behavior reflected the OCPD symptom of rigidity and stubbornness.



Figure 8 *Raymond Responding to His Child with Rigid*
(Minute 19:29)



Rigidity and stubbornness were reflected in Raymond's behavior during this scene. After his daughter, Mabel, commented that his outfit looked foolish, Raymond immediately demanded an apology instead of accepting her opinion. His response indicated an inflexible attitude toward views that differed from his own, as her remark was perceived as a challenge to his authority rather than an innocent observation. This behavior reflected the OCPD symptom of rigidity and stubbornness.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the representation of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD) in *The House* (2022) is constructed collectively through the three main characters rather than embodied by a single individual. The analysis identifies four OCPD symptoms based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria: preoccupation with details, perfectionism that interferes with task completion, excessive devotion to work and productivity, and rigidity and stubbornness. These symptoms are distributed across Raymond, the Developer, and Rosa, reflecting different manifestations of OCPD throughout the anthology. Among these symptoms, excessive devotion to work and productivity emerges as the most prominent, as it is consistently portrayed by all three characters and significantly influences their interpersonal relationships and behavior.

REFERENCES

- Afifa, P. R., & Kurnia, D. M. (2018). The psychological problems in sexual deviation of Christian Grey in *Fifty Shades* movies. *Pioneer*, 10(1), 27–39.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychiatric Association.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Deshpande, S. (2021). *Anthology film: The future is now—Film-producer as creative director*.
- Edition, F. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). American Psychiatric Association.
- Grant, B. K. (2007). *Film genre: From iconography to ideology*. Wallflower Press.
- Monaco, J. (2009). *How to read a film: Movies, media, and beyond*. Oxford University Press.
- Mukti, O. W., & Thoyibi, M. (2021). *Obsession for perfection reflected in Black Swan movie: A psychoanalytic perspective* (Undergraduate thesis). Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.
- Savitri, L. G. (2023). *Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder of Rob Hoyle as the male character in Behind Her Eyes (2021) novel adaptation to limited series* (Undergraduate thesis). Diponegoro University.