

Freedom from the Self

A. Marble¹

¹ *Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society, Oslo, Norway*

Freedom from the Self is a paper that looks at the history of obsessive-compulsive disorder and a recent case history. It puts forth the thesis that obsessive-compulsive disorder is a particularly difficult form of self enslavement that has been described since the first century AD. Up to about the 1800's it was mostly the province of theologians, and their writings show great compassion during a period when witch hunts and the inquisition were also occurring (1400-1800 approximately).

From the 1800's on, it became the province of physicians and from the mid-1900's, psychologists introduced cognitive behavioural therapy which proved to be superior to standard psychotherapy in treating compulsive rituals. However, the interest in understanding the inner dynamics of the obsessive individual belongs in great part to psychoanalysis beginning with Freud. A more nuanced understanding is still important today. Many patients refuse or drop out of CBT and part of the reason may be that there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of the condition that psychodynamic therapy offers. It may be that the most effective treatment could be a combination treatment with a psychodynamic therapist and a CBT therapist.