OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS

Obsessional neurosis, unlike hysteria, does not have the status of an independent clinical structure. Within the theory of neurosis as developed first by Sigmund Freud and then by Jacques Lacan, it is spoken of as a dialect of the hysterical neuroses. In addition, obsessional neurosis can often be, as Lacan pointed out, clinically mistaken for a psychosis. The study of obsessional neurosis in the works of Freud and Lacan will therefore involve:

- assessment of its status as a clinical category;
- the question of its theoretical and clinical differentiation from hysteria on the one hand and the psychoses on the other;
- the specificity of its mechanisms of symptom formation and characteristic modes of defence against the real of the drive; the real of sexual jouissance;
- the distinctive character of the obsessional fantasy and its role in maintaining the obsessional subject’s subjective position in the face of the real;
- the aims and ends of the analytic treatment of an obsessional neurosis.

LECTURERS: Dr Peter Ellingsen and Ursula Paton

READING

FREUD, Sigmund:

(1909d) Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis. SE 10: 153
(1912-13) Totem and Taboo (Essay II, Sections 2 & 3(c), and Essay III, Sections 3 & 4). SE 13: ix
(1918b [1914]) From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (Sections II, VI, VII, IX). SE 17: 3.
(1916-17[1915-1917]) Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (Lectures XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXII). SE 16:
(1926d [1925]) Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (Chapters 5 & 6). SE 20
(1924e) The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis. SE 19: 183
(1924b [1923]) Neurosis and Psychosis. SE 19:149
(1894a) The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence (Section II). SE 3: 43
(1895c [1894]) Obsessions and Phobias: Their Psychical Mechanism and their Aetiology. SE 3: 71
(1896b) Some Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence (Section II). SE 3: 159
(1907b) Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices. SE 9: 117
(1908b) Character and Anal Erotism. SE 9:169
The Disposition to Obsessional Neurosis (1913j). SE 12:313
(1916b) A Mythological Parallel to a Visual Obsession. SE 14: 337
(1916d) Some Character-Types Met With in Psycho-Analytic Work. SE 14: 310
(1917c) On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Erotism. SE 17: 127

**LACAN, Jacques:**

(1979 [1953]) The Neurotic’s Individual Myth. The *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 48 (3), 405-25

There are numerous discussions of obsessional neurosis throughout Lacan’s **SEMINARS**. See especially the Seminars and sessions marked below:

Seminar 1: 7 July 1954;  
Seminar 2: 11 May 1955 and 8 June 1955;  
Seminar 3: 8 February, 21 March, 31 May, 20 June 1956;  
Seminar 4: 28 November, 19 December 1956 & 26 June 1957;  
Seminar 5: 14, 21 May, 4, 11, 18, 25 June, & 2 July 1958;  
Seminar 6: 26 November 1958, 21 January, 18 March, 8, 15, 22 April, 10, 17 June 1959  
Seminar 7: 9 December 1959   
Seminar 8: 15 March, 19, 26 April, 14 June 1961  
Seminar 10: 28 November, 19 December 1962, 16 January, 12, 19 26, June, 3 July 1963,  
Seminar 16: 21 May, 18 June 1969  
Seminar 18: 9, 16 June 1971  
Seminar 22: 18 February 1975

**Further Reading**