

Saint Agnes's Asylum for the Deranged
near Weddley
Herefordshire

Friday, 18th October, 1929

Dear Sir,

I apologise for this unsolicited correspondence, but pray that you will do me the favour of reading it through and considering its request. This letter comes to you as the author of the paper "Basic Anxiety and Ontological Insecurity" which, if I may say so, I much admired, particularly your analysis of the work of Dr. Karen Horney. I am a consulting doctor at St. Agnes' Asylum in Herefordshire and am seeking an expert opinion on how to proceed in the matter of an inmate's case. If I may prevail upon you, these are an outline of the facts.

Patent 'W' is a young man from a good line who, holding no employ, spent much of his time before admission in private study. In the autumn of 1926 a terrible incident occurred and W's father and sister were left murdered. W, much troubled, was committed to this asylum shortly thereafter upon the application of his brother and the diagnosis of the family physician.

W is suffering from extended bouts of Scotophobia that give him temporary but intense anxiety. This has proved treatable with medication and I am of the happy opinion that I may recommend his release when his period of mandatory confinement comes to an end this November. Here the problem arises: W's brother has been urging me to recommend his continued residence. I am surprised at our playing opposite roles in this not uncommon disagreement, and I find the stance of the family unusually rigid. I am unceasingly at a loss to understand a motive.

I am hopeful that you will consent to an interview with me on this matter. Again, I regret this communication without our previous introduction, but my closest colleagues have not the patience for Psycho-Analysis that I believe to be the way to examine such cases. There are some unusual aspects here and perhaps this might be an interesting study for you.

I shall be visiting London for a few days beginning the 28th October. I shall be staying at the Great Western Hotel. Please contact me there should you be willing to meet. You are of course very welcome to bring a colleague or assistant should you so wish.

Your obliged and obedient servant,

Charles Highsmith