

1. Freud uses the English, presumably a joking reference to Heinrich Gomperz' real name.
2. Schröter suggests Sebastian Levy, a Berlin physician and friend of Fliess (see Fliess's *Ablauf des Lebens*, p. 77). The reading could also be "Leb. Löwy."

Vienna, December 9, 1899
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

My thirst for personal data about you is somewhat assuaged by your recent presence here. So I feel free to turn to scientific matters.

I may recently have succeeded in gaining a first glimpse of something new. The problem confronting me is that of the "choice of neurosis." When does a person become hysterical instead of paranoid? In my first crude attempt, made at a time when I was still trying to take the citadel by force, I thought it depended on the age at which the sexual trauma occurred — the person's age at the time of the experience. That I gave up long ago; but then I was left without a clue until a few days ago, when I saw a connection with the sexual theory.

The lowest of the sexual strata is autoerotism, which dispenses with any psychosexual aim and seeks only locally gratifying sensations. It is then succeeded by alloerotism (homo- or heteroerotism), but certainly continues to exist as an undercurrent. Hysteria (and its variant, obsessional neurosis) is alloerotic, since its main path is identification with the loved one. Paranoia again dissolves the identification, reestablishes all the loved ones of childhood who have been abandoned (compare the discussion of exhibitionistic dreams), and dissolves the ego itself into extraneous persons. So I have come to regard paranoia as a forward surge of the autoerotic current, as a return to a former state. The perversion formation corresponding to it would be the so-called idiopathic insanity. The special relations between autoerotism and the original "ego" would throw a clear light on the nature of this neurosis. At this point the thread breaks off again.

Two of my patients have almost simultaneously come up with [self-]reproaches following the nursing and death of their parents and have shown me that my dreams about this were typical. The reproach is in every instance bound to attach itself to revenge, spiteful glee, taking satisfaction in the ill person's excretory difficulties (urine and stools). Truly a neglected corner of psychic life.

L. is progressing, but will probably remain a slow worker. However, I see no reason to fear that failure will occur at some point.

December 14. It is rare, indeed, that you should have written before I did. The bleakness of the last few days prevented me from finishing. A Christmastime during which one must refrain from buying things rather dampens one's mood. We are well aware that Vienna is not the right place for us. Discretion required my not taking you away from your family too much. The older claim was opposed by the more intimate one. So my saying good-bye at the station served only as a symbol.

Your news of the dozen readers in Berlin pleases me greatly. I must have some readers here as well; the time is not yet ripe for followers. There is too much that is new and unbelievable, and too little strict proof. I did not even succeed in convincing my philosopher, though he was providing me with the most brilliant confirmatory material. Intelligence is always weak, and it is easy for a philosopher to transform inner resistance into logical refutation.

Once again there is the prospect of a new case in the immediate future. Except for my cold, health reigns among us. I shall write again before he/she arrives at your home.

Most cordial greetings to all of you.

Your
Sigm.

Vienna, December 21, 1899
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

One more cordial greeting before Christmas, usually one of our times for a congress. I am not without *one* happy prospect. You are familiar with my dream which obstinately promises the end of E.'s treatment (among the absurd dreams), and you can well imagine how important this one persistent patient has become to me. It now appears that the dream will be fulfilled. I cautiously say "appears," but I am really quite certain. Buried deep beneath all his fantasies, we found a scene from his primal period (before twenty-two months) which meets all the requirements and in which all the remaining puzzles converge. It is everything at the same time — sexual, innocent, natural, and the rest. I scarcely dare believe it yet. It is as if Schliemann had once more excavated Troy, which had

The Complete Letters of
SIGMUND FREUD

— to —

WILHELM FLIESS

1887 – 1904

Translated and Edited by
Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson



The Belknap Press of
Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and
London, England

1985