

The Complete Letters of
SIGMUND FREUD

— to —

WILHELM FLIESS

1887 – 1904

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The Belknap Press of
Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and
London, England
1985

tember and, as to writing about it, you can only give some indications in outline form. So it will have to wait for our next congress, at which you shall make the first attempt to teach the new science in context to someone who — quite seriously — “is completely stupid and has forgotten everything.” If I am not in too bad shape next fall, if the worries about income and analyses do not totally rob me of my inner exaltation, this congress must be long enough to permit the Herr Teacher to take a headache break between his lectures.

What I am doing here? I am getting a little bored in Aussee, where I know all the walks rather well. I cannot do without material altogether. I have set myself the task of building a bridge between my germinating metapsychology and that contained in the literature and have therefore immersed myself in the study of Lipps,¹ who I suspect has the clearest mind among present-day philosophical writers. So far things are going rather well with regard to comprehension and application to my own hypotheses. Naturally, this is a period of few explanations. I am becoming ever more doubtful about the work on hysteria; its value seems smaller, as though I had left out several major factors, and I really dread having to take it up again.

I have at last understood a small point that I had surmised to be so for some time. You know how one can forget a name and substitute part of another one for it; you could swear it was correct, although invariably it turns out to be wrong. That happened to me recently with the name of the poet who wrote *Andreas Hofer* (“Zu Mantua in Banden”). It must be something with an *au* — Lindau, Feldau. Of course, the man’s name is *Julius Mosen*; the “Julius” had not slipped my memory. Now, I was able to prove (1) that I had repressed the name *Mosen* because of certain connections; (2) that infantile material played a part in this repression; (3) that the substitute names that were pushed into the foreground were formed, like symptoms, from both groups of material. The analysis of it turned out to be complete, with no gaps left; unfortunately, I cannot expose it to the public anymore than my big dream. With regard to forgetting, we experienced something like it in Berlin (Emil Hamerschlag).

Farewell. How long until Paulinchen makes her appearance?

Your
Sigm.

1. In his copy of *Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens* (Bonn: Max Cohen, 1883) by Theodor Lipps (1851–1914), Freud double-marked this line on p. 146: “Wir nehmen vielmehr an, dass unbewusste Vorgänge allen bewussten zu Grunde liegen und sie

begleiten” (We would rather assume that unconscious processes lie at the root of all conscious ones and accompany them). At the top of the page he underlined the heading: “Wirkungen unbewusster Erregungen im Traume” (The effects of unconscious feelings in dreams).

Aussee, August 31, 1898

Dear Wilhelm,

At noon today I leave with Martha for the Adriatic; whether we shall stay in Ragusa, Grado, or somewhere else will be decided on the way. “The way to gain riches,” according to an apparently eccentric but wise saying, “is to sell your last shirt.” The secret of this restlessness is hysteria. In the inactivity here and in the absence of any fascinating novelty, the whole business has come to weigh heavily on my soul. My work now appears to me to have far less value, and my disorientation to be complete; time — another entire year has gone by without any tangible progress in the theory — seems incommensurate with what the problem demands. Moreover, it is the work on the success of which I have staked my livelihood. True, the results have been good, but perhaps only indirectly, as though I had applied the lever in a direction that indeed yields to the line of cleavage of the stuff;¹ what the latter is, however, I do not yet know. So I am running away from myself to gather as much energy and objectivity as is possible, because, indeed, I cannot let the work go.

Things are better in regard to psychology. I found the substance of my insights stated quite clearly in Lipps, perhaps rather more so than I would like. “The seeker often finds more than he wished to find!”² Consciousness is only a sense organ; all psychic content is only a representation; all psychic processes are unconscious. The correspondence [of our ideas] is close in details as well; perhaps the bifurcation from which my own new ideas can branch off will come later. So far I have worked my way through less than a third [of his book]. I stopped at “sound relationships.” This always vexed me because here I lack the most elementary knowledge, thanks to the atrophy of my acoustic sensibilities. The big news of the day, the czar’s manifesto, also touched me personally.³ Years ago I diagnosed that the young man — fortunately for us — suffers from obsessional ideas, is overly kind, and “unable to bear the sight of blood,” like Koko in the *Mikado*,⁴ who at the same time is the lord high executioner. Two people would be helped if he and I could be brought together: I’d go to Russia for a year, take away from him

just enough so that he no longer suffers, and leave him just enough so that he won't start a war. From then on we have three congresses a year, *exclusively* on Italian soil, and I treat all my patients for nothing. Incidentally, I believe that he, too, acts with mixed motives and that the egoistic side of the manifesto is the intention to gratify himself by securing the peaceful partition of China at this conference.

The most unforgettable thing about the manifesto is its revolutionary language. If such utterances on militarism appeared in editorials in a democratic paper, they would immediately be confiscated in Austria; and in Russia itself [the writer] would be sent to Siberia.

Cordial greetings to you, Ida, Robert, and Paulinchen, and I shall give you further news of our trip.

Your
Sigm.

1. The image is that of splitting wood or rock.
2. Freud uses the same expression in a previous letter, November 27, 1893. See note 5 to that letter.
3. See *Origins*, pp. 263–264n1.
4. The Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

Vienna, September 22, 1898

Dear Wilhelm,

It was no doubt time that I returned home, but I have been back barely three days and all the bad humor of Viennadom has already descended upon me. It is sheer misery to live here and no atmosphere in which the hope of completing something difficult can survive.

I wish you thought less of my masterly skills and I had you close by so that I could hear your criticisms more often. I am not at all in disagreement with you, not at all inclined to leave the psychology hanging in the air without an organic basis. But apart from this conviction I do not know how to go on, neither theoretically nor therapeutically, and therefore must behave as if only the psychological were under consideration. Why I cannot fit it together [the organic and the psychological] I have not even begun to fathom.

A second example of name forgetting resolved itself even more easily.¹ I could not find the name of the renowned painter who did the *Last Judgment* in Orvieto, the greatest I have seen so far. In

stead, Botticelli, Boltraffio occurred to me; but I was sure these were wrong. At last I found out the name, Signorelli, and immediately knew, on my own, the first name, Luca — as proof that it had been only a repression and not genuine forgetting. It is clear why Botticelli had moved into the foreground; only *Signor* was repressed; the Bo in both substituted names is explained by the memory responsible for the repression; it concerned something that happened in Bosnia and began with the words, "*Herr* [*Signor*, Sir], what can be done about it?" I lost the name of Signorelli during a short trip to Herzegovina, which I made from Ragusa with a lawyer from Berlin (Freyhau) with whom I got to talking about pictures. In the conversation, which aroused memories that evidently caused the repression, we talked about death and sexuality. The word *Trafio* is no doubt an echo of Trafoi, which I saw on the first trip! How can I make this credible to anyone?

I am still alone; the "household," for whom I already yearn very much, returns at the end of the month. A letter from Gattel, who seeks contact, urges me to come to Berlin because of a patient he is to treat. It is one of those halfway affairs that I might use as an excuse to see you (and the new daughter) again. But it cannot be reconciled with my medical dignity, and I must not provoke gods and men by further travels, but instead wait here patiently for the little sheep to gather.

I hope to hear from you soon how your daughter is behaving and — what interests me especially — how Robert is reacting to his sister. I have heard here that the mother is doing very well.

With the most cordial greetings,

Your
Sigm.

1. See S.E. 3:287–297 and S.E. 6:2–7.

Vienna, September 27, 1898

Dear Wilhelm,

Your letter exudes a truly contagious sense of well-being, which I feel you deserve. With Paulinchen and some work that is going well, you entirely forgot to write about your head, which, after all, also interests me. If I had suspected that in any way whatever you might value the opportunity offered me to go to Berlin with expenses partly paid, I would not have refused. I did not even know that you were informed about it. A situation where I could not stay with you,