

The Complete Letters of
SIGMUND FREUD

to

WILHELM FLIESS

1887 – 1904

Translated and Edited by
Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson



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to me by Anna Freud — namely, that Freud, with his theory of the neuroses, had believed himself privileged and happy as a bride. Those days were now over and he had to return to his earlier ordinary status; he had made no discovery. *Kalle* is a slang word that can also be used for a prostitute instead of a bride.

September 27, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

Back home after a perfect trip (twelve hours of sleep in an isolation cell), completely without work, refreshed, stimulated, and full of new ideas, I begin with something entirely superfluous — namely, once again expressing the pleasure evoked in me, as old participant and new uncle, by your work, your state of health, your wife, and your child. As for me, I praise the happy decision, to which I have held fast since midsummer, to visit you at your home in Berlin.

My children have not yet returned. I found Martha with a harmless migraine, the first since Bolzano (August 20/21 – September 27; for the collector). A new review¹ of I. C. ["Infantile Cerebral Paralysis"] in Wernicke's *Zeitschrift* taught me what beautiful, valuable books I am in the habit of writing.

Most cordial greetings, thanks, and soon more from your

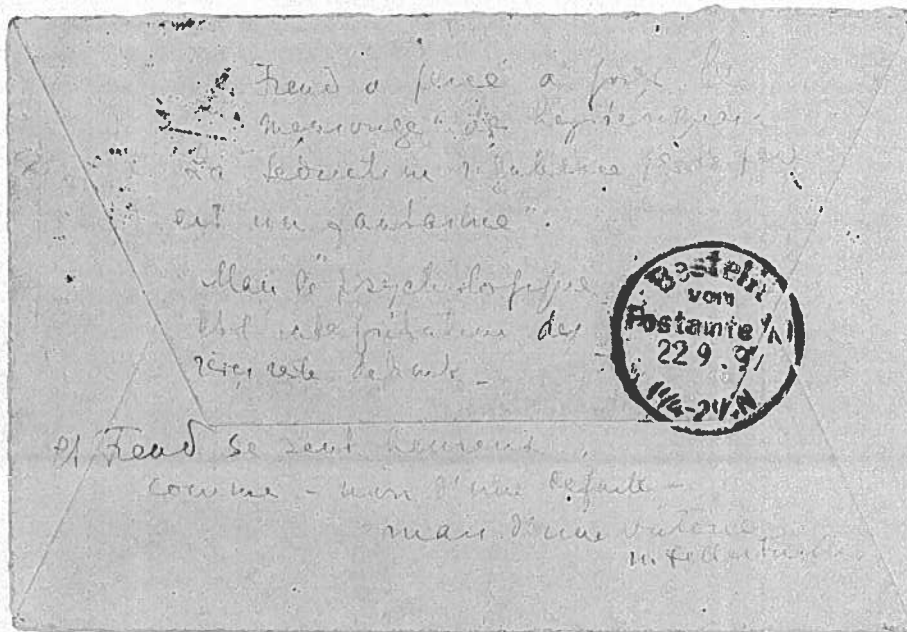
Sigm.

1. The reference is to a long review by a Herr Mann of Breslau, published in the *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie* (not the *Zeitschrift*, as Freud wrote). It is an extremely positive review, containing among many other praises, "The focal point of this book and its main contribution that cannot be valued highly enough . . . consist in its unsurpassingly clear and comprehensive presentation and critical appreciation of the entire clinical and anatomical material."

October 3, 1897

My dear Wilhelm,

My visit has had the advantage of acquainting me with the framework of your current work in its entirety, so that you can relate further details to me. You must not expect a response to everything, and with regard to some of my responses you will not, I hope, fail to take into account that your work is strange to me and my judgment weak. Nevertheless, each time I am grateful to you for every little item that you unselfishly let come my way. For example, your com-



ments on the relationship between infection and conception in mother and daughter seemed to me highly significant because these can after all be explained only by a condition in the eternal life of the protoplasm and not by one in the life of the individual — that is, because they must be dependent on absolute time and not on lifetime. It then occurred to me that this is after all not necessary if the infection in the mother accords with a time period given by the formula $A \times 28$ plus $B \times 23$, and the conception of the daughter by a similar expression, so that the difference between the two must again yield a similar formula without there having to exist a special relationship between infection here and conception there. Whether this is nonsense I cannot tell. To do this I would need to know your "timely disposition."

There is still very little happening to me externally, but internally something very interesting. For the last four days my self-analysis, which I consider indispensable for the clarification of the whole problem, has continued in dreams and has presented me with the most valuable elucidations and clues. At certain points I have the feeling of being at the end, and so far I have always known where the next dream-night would continue. To put it in writing is more difficult than anything else for me; it also would take me too far afield. I can only indicate that the old man plays no active part in my case, but that no doubt I drew an inference by analogy from myself onto him; that in my case the "prime originator" was an ugly, elderly, but clever woman, who told me a great deal about God Almighty and hell and who instilled in me a high opinion of my own capacities; that later (between two and two and a half years) my libido toward *matrem* was awakened, namely, on the occasion of a journey with her from Leipzig to Vienna, during which we must have spent the night together and there must have been an opportunity of seeing her *nudam* (you inferred the consequences of this for your son long ago, as a remark revealed to me); that I greeted my one-year-younger brother (who died after a few months) with adverse wishes and genuine childhood jealousy; and that his death left the germ of [self-]reproaches in me. I have also long known the companion of my misdeeds between the ages of one and two years; it is my nephew, a year older than myself, who is now living in Manchester and who visited us in Vienna when I was fourteen years old. The two of us seem occasionally to have behaved cruelly to my niece, who was a year younger. This nephew and this younger brother have determined, then, what is neurotic, but also what is intense, in all my friendships. You yourself have seen my travel anxiety at its height.

I have not yet grasped anything at all of the scenes themselves which lie at the bottom of the story. If they come [to light] and I succeed in resolving my own hysteria, then I shall be grateful to the memory of the old woman who provided me at such an early age with the means for living and going on living. As you see, the old liking is breaking through again today. I cannot convey to you any idea of the intellectual beauty of this work.

The children will return tomorrow morning. Business is still very poor. I fear that if it gets better, it might present an obstacle to my self-analysis. My insight that the difficulties in treatment are due to the fact that in the end one is laying bare the patient's evil inclinations, his will to remain ill, is becoming stronger and clearer. We shall see what happens.

I cordially greet you and your little family, and hope to receive soon again some crumbs from your table.

Your
Sigm.

October 4. The children arrived. The fine weather is gone. Today's dream has, under the strangest disguises, produced the following: she was my teacher in sexual matters and complained because I was clumsy and unable to do anything.

(Neurotic impotence always comes about in this way. The fear of not being able to do anything at all in school thus obtains its sexual substratum.) At the same time I saw the skull of a small animal and in the dream I thought "pig," but in the analysis I associated it with your wish two years ago that I might find, as Goethe once did, a skull on the Lido to enlighten me. But I did not find it. So [I was] a "little blockhead" [literally, a sheep's head]. The whole dream was full of the most mortifying allusions to my present impotence as a therapist. Perhaps this is where the inclination to believe in the incurability of hysteria begins. Moreover, she washed me in reddish water in which she had previously washed herself. (The interpretation is not difficult; I find nothing like this in the chain of my memories; so I regard it as a genuine ancient discovery.) And she made me steal *zehners* (ten-kreuzer coins)² to give them to her. There is a long chain from these first silver *zehners* to the heap of paper ten-florin notes which I saw in the dream as Martha's weekly housekeeping money. The dream could be summed up as "bad treatment." Just as the old woman got money from me for her bad treatment, so today I get money for the bad treatment of my patients. A special part was played by Mrs. Q., whose remark you

reported to me: that I should not take anything from her, as she was the wife of a colleague (he of course made it a condition that I should).

A harsh critic might say of all this that it was retrogressively fantasied instead of progressively determined.³ The *experimenta crucis* must decide against him. The reddish water would indeed seem to be of that kind. Where do all patients get the horrible perverse details which often are as remote from their experience⁴ as from their knowledge?

1. According to Sajner (1968), the woman's name is Monika Zajic. Cf. Krüll (1979, p. 144). Sajner informs me, in a personal communication, that he has not been able to ascertain any particulars about this woman. When Freud says she was "elderly," it is not clear if he is speaking as a child or as an adult. Anna Freud told me she thought Zajic may have been in her forties.

2. A zehner is a coin of little value.

3. *Nach vorne* means that the early experiences play a crucial role in determining the present. By *experimenta crucis* Freud no doubt refers to the recovery of memories not available to consciousness.

4. *Erleben* must refer to conscious experience. Freud seems to be saying that the dream revealed a lost memory by providing him with a detail that was not part of his knowledge, nor was it a fantasy. In this rhetorical question he implies that such details speak for the authenticity of the memory; they are recovered, not invented.

October 15, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

My self-analysis is in fact the most essential thing I have at present and promises to become of the greatest value to me if it reaches its end. In the middle of it, it suddenly ceased for three days, during which I had the feeling of being tied up inside (which patients complain of so much), and I was really disconsolate until I found that these same three days (twenty-eight days ago) were the bearers of identical somatic phenomena. Actually only two bad days with a remission in between. From this one should draw the conclusion that the female period is not conducive to work. Punctually on the fourth day, it started again. Naturally, the pause also had another determinant—the resistance to something surprisingly new. Since then I have been once again intensely preoccupied [with it], mentally fresh, though afflicted with all sorts of minor disturbances that come from the content of the analysis.

My practice, uncannily, still leaves me a great deal of free time. The whole thing is all the more valuable for my purposes, since I

have succeeded in finding a few real points of reference for the story. I asked my mother whether she still remembered the nurse. "Of course," she said, "an elderly person, very clever, she was always carrying you off to some church; when you returned home you preached and told us all about God Almighty. During my confinement with Anna (two and a half years younger), it was discovered that she was a thief, and all the shiny new kreuzers and zehners and all the toys that had been given to you were found in her possession. Your brother Philipp himself fetched the policeman; she then was given ten months in prison." Now look at how this confirms the conclusions of my dream interpretation. It was easy for me to explain the only possible mistake. I wrote to you that she induced me to steal zehners and give them to her. In truth, the dream meant that she stole them herself. For the dream picture was a memory of my taking money from the mother of a doctor—that is, wrongfully. The correct interpretation is: I = she, and the mother of the doctor equals my mother. So far was I from knowing she was a thief that I made a wrong interpretation.

I also inquired about the doctor we had had in Freiberg because one dream concentrated a good deal of resentment on him. In the analysis of the dream figure behind which he was concealed, I also thought of a Professor von Kraus, my history teacher in high school. He did not seem to fit in at all, because my relationship with him was indifferent or even comfortable. My mother then told me that the doctor in my childhood had only one eye, and of all my teachers Professor Kraus was the only one with the same defect! The conclusive force of these coincidences might be weakened by the objection that on some occasion in my later childhood, I had heard that the nurse was a thief and then apparently had forgotten it until it finally emerged in the dream. I myself believe that that is so. But I have another, entirely irrefutable and amusing proof. I said to myself that if the old woman disappeared from my life so suddenly, it must be possible to demonstrate the impression this made on me. Where is it then? Thereupon a scene occurred to me which in the course of twenty-five years has occasionally emerged in my conscious memory without my understanding it. My mother was nowhere to be found; I was crying in despair. My brother Philipp (twenty years older than I) unlocked a wardrobe [*Kasten*]¹ for me, and when I did not find my mother inside it either, I cried even more until, slender and beautiful, she came in through the door. What can this mean? Why did my brother unlock the wardrobe for me, knowing that my mother was not in it and that thereby he could not calm me down? Now I suddenly understand it. I had asked him to do it. When I

missed my mother, I was afraid she had vanished from me, just as the old woman had a short time before. So I must have heard that the old woman had been locked up and therefore must have believed that my mother had been locked up too—or rather, had been “boxed up” [*eingekastelt*]—for my brother Philipp, who is now sixty-three years old, to this very day is still fond of using such puns. The fact that I turned to him in particular proves that I was well aware of his share in the disappearance of the nurse.

Since then I have got much further, but have not yet reached any real point of rest. It is so difficult and would carry us so far afield to communicate what I have not yet finished that I hope you will excuse me from it and content yourself with the knowledge of those elements that are certain. If the analysis fulfills what I expect of it, I shall work on it systematically and then put it before you. So far I have found nothing completely new, [just] all the complications to which I have become accustomed. It is by no means easy. Being totally honest with oneself is a good exercise. A single idea of general value dawned on me. I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood, even if not so early as in children who have been made hysterical. (Similar to the invention of parentage [family romance] in paranoia—heroes, founders of religion). If this is so, we can understand the gripping power of *Oedipus Rex*, in spite of all the objections that reason raises against the presupposition of fate; and we can understand why the later “drama of fate” was bound to fail so miserably. Our feelings rise against any arbitrary individual compulsion, such as is presupposed in *Die Ahnfrau*² and the like; but the Greek legend seizes upon a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he senses its existence within himself. Everyone in the audience was once a budding Oedipus in fantasy and each recoils in horror from the dream fulfillment here transplanted into reality, with the full quantity of repression which separates his infantile state from his present one.

Fleetingly the thought passed through my head that the same thing might be at the bottom of *Hamlet* as well. I am not thinking of Shakespeare’s conscious intention, but believe, rather, that a real event stimulated the poet to his representation, in that his unconscious understood the unconscious of his hero. How does Hamlet the hysteric justify his words, “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all”? How does he explain his irresolution in avenging his father by the murder of his uncle—the same man who sends his courtiers to their death without a scruple and who is positively

precipitate in murdering Laertes?³ How better than through the torment he suffers from the obscure memory that he himself had contemplated the same deed against his father out of passion for his mother, and—“use every man after his desert, and who should ‘scape whipping?’” His conscience is his unconscious sense of guilt. And is not his sexual alienation in his conversation with Ophelia typically hysterical? And his rejection of the instinct that seeks to beget children? And, finally, his transferral of the deed from his own father to Ophelia’s? And does he not in the end, in the same marvelous way as my hysterical patients, bring down punishment on himself by suffering the same fate as his father of being poisoned by the same rival?

I have kept my interest focused so exclusively on the analysis that I have not yet even attempted to try out, instead of my hypothesis that in every instance repression starts from the feminine aspect and is directed against the male one, the opposite hypothesis proposed by you. I shall, however, tackle it sometime. Unfortunately, I barely participate in your work and progress. In this one respect I am better off than you are. What I can tell you about mental frontiers [*Seelenende*] of this world finds in you an understanding critic, and what you can tell me about its celestial frontiers [*Sternenende*] evokes only unproductive amazement in me.

With cordial greetings to you, your dear wife, and my new nephew,

Your
Sigm.

1. *Kasten* (box) in Austria is equivalent to *Schrank* and means a wardrobe or closet. The same story occurs in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.

2. *Die Ahnfrau* was F. Grillparzer’s first published play (1817). It concerns brother-sister incest and parricide.

3. Actually, Hamlet murders Polonius, not Laertes.

Vienna, October 27, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

It seems that I cannot “await” your answer. You certainly cannot offer the explanation for your silence that you have been whirled back with an elemental force to times when reading and writing were bothersome chores for you, as happened to me on Sunday when I wanted to celebrate your not-yet-fortieth birthday with a

letter — but I hope it was something just as harmless. As for myself, I have nothing to tell you about except analysis, which I think will be the most interesting thing about me for you as well. Business is hopelessly bad; in general, by the way, right up to the top of the profession, and so I live only for the "inner work." I am gripped and pulled through ancient times² in quick association of thoughts; my moods change like the landscapes seen by a traveler from a train; and as the great poet, using his privilege to ennoble (sublimate), puts it:

Und manche liebe Schatten steigen auf,
Gleich einer alten, halbverklungenen Sage,
Kommt erste Lieb' und Freundschaft mit herauf.³

And also first fright and discord. Many a sad secret of life is here followed back to its first roots; many a pride and privilege are made aware of their humble origins. All of what I experienced with my patients, as a third [person] I find again here — days when I drag myself about dejected because I have understood nothing of the dream, of the fantasy, of the mood of the day; and then again days when a flash of lightning illuminates the interrelations and lets me understand the past as a preparation for the present. I am beginning to perceive in the determining factors large, general, framing motives, as I should like to call them, and other motives, fill-ins, which vary according to the individual's experiences. At the same time several, though not yet all, doubts about my conception of neurosis are being resolved. An idea about resistance has enabled me to put back on course all those cases of mine that had gone somewhat astray, so that they are now proceeding satisfactorily. Resistance, which finally brings the [analytic] work to a halt, is nothing other than the child's former character, the degenerative character, which developed or would have developed as a result of those experiences that one finds as a conscious memory in the so-called degenerative cases, but which here is overlaid by the development of repression. I dig it out by my work; it struggles; and the person who initially was such a good, noble human being becomes mean, untruthful, or obstinate, a malingerer — until I tell him so and thus make it possible for him to overcome this character. In this way resistance has become something actual and tangible to me, and I wish that instead of the concept of repression I already had what lies concealed behind it as well.

This infantile character develops during the period of "longing," after the child has been removed from sexual experiences. Longing is the main character trait of hysteria, just as actual anesthesia (even

though only potential) is its main symptom. During this same period of longing fantasies are formed and masturbation is (regularly?) practiced, which then yields to repression. If it does not yield, then no hysteria develops either; the discharge of sexual excitation for the most part removes the possibility of hysteria. It has become clear to me that various compulsive movements represent a substitute for the discontinued movements of masturbation.

Enough for today; details another time when I have heard good and new things from you. That there is nothing wrong I fortunately know from Oscar and Melanie — who perhaps have already learned something new while I am writing, perhaps not yet.

With the most cordial greetings to you, wife, and child,

Your
Sigm.

1. "Auswarten," an Austrian colloquialism.
2. Reading uncertain; probably *alte Zeiten*, or possibly *alle Zeiten* (all times).
3. From the Dedication in Goethe's *Faust*:

And the shades of loved ones appear;
With them, like an old, half-forgotten myth,
First love and friendship.

October 31, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

I am so glad to have a letter from you again (the third since Berlin) that I have banished all thoughts of retaliation. And that something whole is shaping itself for you, and biological types are beginning to appear, as well as your parallel between birth and falling ill — all that seems enchanting to me and to hold out a promise of much more in the very near future.

Your nephew — allegedly called Georg, for I have not yet spoken to his father — is all Rie: long, lean, with all the features of the paternal family, not yet masked by baby fat. You must know as much, or more than I, about the details of his birth. Rumor has it that you knew date and sex in advance. I was reassured to learn that her temperature is 36.4[°C] today. On account of my first lecture (eleven students) I could not go there last night; they may, by the way, have been grateful for my not visiting them at that time.

Dr. G.¹ is what you say about him and, above all, still unreliable in his character, ~~made of too poor family material~~. I have tried to meet in full my obligation as his teacher. He has learned a lot, under-

stands very easily, and progresses well. He makes it all too easy for himself to believe — throws himself into it heart and soul. In view of these pros and cons, I feel toward him as I would toward a wayward son. I wish him the best and must accept his disgrace as mine.

Business here is such that I expect we are facing very bad times, which has been the case in other fields for a long while. Since I have free time, I let myself be persuaded to take on two cases for treatment without a fee. Including myself, that makes three analyses that bring in nothing.

My analysis continues and remains my chief interest. Everything is still obscure, even the problems, but there is a comfortable feeling in it that one has only to reach into one's storerooms to take out what is needed at a particular time. The most disagreeable part of it is the moods, which often completely hide reality. Sexual excitement, too, is no longer of use for someone like me.² But I am still pursuing it happily. As regards results, just now there is once more a lull.

Do you believe that what children say in their sleep is part of dreaming? If so, I can present you with the very latest wish dream: Annerl, age 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. She had to starve one day in Aussee because she threw up in the morning, which was blamed on a meal of strawberries. During the following night she called out a whole menu in her sleep: "Strawberries, high berries, scrambled eggs, pudding." I may have already told you this.

Under the influence of analysis my cardiac symptoms are now very frequently replaced by gastrointestinal symptoms.

Forgive today's idle talk, which is only intended to stress the continuity of our correspondence.

Most cordially,

Your
Sigm.

1. He means Felix Gattel.

2. The German text reads, "Auch die sexuelle Erregung ist für einen wie ich nicht mehr zu brauchen." It may be that Freud is referring to sexual excitement in the context of his self-analysis. When he continues and says, "Ich bin aber noch immer freudig dabei," this is ambiguous and could refer either to sexuality (that he still takes pleasure in it) or, more likely, to the analysis.

Vienna, November 5, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

I have nothing to write really; this happens only during an hour when one could use dialogue and encouragement.

When I last wrote, I did not know anything about the details of Mela's confinement. Since then he [Oscar] has told me about them. I felt very sorry for him; he was terribly shaken and once again has assumed the air of false authority by means of which he silences what is neurotic in him. In the meantime he has become calmer, but the necessity of a laparotomy or of renouncing further offspring will no doubt cast a pall over his mood for some time. The young mother is said to be very cheerful and well now; naturally I have not yet seen her. I spoke briefly with Miss Marie, who is quite smitten with my new nephew — who, as I noticed, increasingly conquers even your cool paternal heart. It is interesting that the literature is now turning so much to the psychology of children. Today I received another book on the subject, by James Mark Baldwin.¹ So one always remains a child of his age, even in what one deems one's very own.

Incidentally, I shudder when I think of all the psychology I shall have to read up on the next few years. At the moment I can neither read nor think. I am completely exhausted by observation. My self-analysis once more is at a standstill; or, rather, it slowly trickles on without my understanding anything of the course it takes. In the other analyses my latest idea about resistance has continued to help me. Recently I had occasion to take up again an old and already published idea about the choice of neurosis, namely, that hysteria is connected with sexual passivity; obsessional neurosis, with activity. Otherwise, it goes slowly, very slowly. Since I can not do anything except analyze and am not fully occupied, I am bored in the evening. My lectures² are attended by eleven students who sit there with pencil and paper and hear damnably little that is positive. I play the part of a neuropathological yokel³ in front of them and comment on Beard, but my interest is elsewhere.

You said nothing about my interpretation of *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*. Since I have not told it to anyone else, because I can well imagine in advance the bewildered rejection, I should like to have a short comment on it from you. Last year you rejected many an idea of mine, with good reason.

Recently I was treated to a stimulating evening by my friend Emanuel Löwy, who is professor of archaeology in Rome. He is a scholar as solid as he is honest and a decent human being, who pays

me a visit every year and usually keeps me up until three in the morning. He is spending his fall vacation here where his family lives. Of his Rome . . .

November 10. I am tremendously glad about how you are faring — that your numbers are harmoniously fitting themselves together to form a structure. But I also envy you because once again I do not know at all where I am and am very bored with myself. I shall force myself to write the dream [book] in order to come out of it. The dates of the Bernays family (birthdates) are being put together for you. We are still waiting for a reply from Mama, who is in Merano. I fear some of them will be Jewish dates.

In Oscar something has torn apart as a result of the sad period of waiting. I fear he will now become a complete philistine and give up all hope of further offspring. But don't let him notice anything (in your case, a superfluous reminder).

I am quite seriously thinking of again exploiting you for a day; it works only when we talk, and I greatly miss the intellectual pleasure in understanding something new. With an eye to economy, I would like to know whether you plan to come here at Christmas?

With cordial greetings to you, wife, and child,

Your
Sigm.

P.S. Oli is becoming naughty, exuberant, is doing more poorly in school, and lost his first tooth (Feb. 19, 91).⁴

1. *Mental Development in the Child and the Race* (New York: Macmillan, 1895).

2. See note 3 to letter of January 17, 1897.

3. *Anfänge* has *Naturforscher*, a misreading for *Naturburschen*.

4. This was the birthday of Oliver Freud.

Vienna, November 14, 1897

Dear Wilhelm,

"It was on November 12, 1897; the sun was precisely in the eastern quarter; Mercury and Venus were in conjunction —." No, birth announcements no longer start like that. It was on November 12, a day dominated by a left-sided migraine, on the afternoon of which Martin sat down to write a new poem,* on the evening of which Oli lost his second tooth,† that, after the frightful labor pains of the last few weeks, I gave birth to a new piece of knowledge. Not entirely new, to tell the truth; it had repeatedly shown itself and withdrawn

again;‡ but this time it stayed and looked upon the light of day. Strangely enough, I have a presentiment of such events a good while beforehand. For instance, I wrote to you once in the summer that I was going to find the source of normal sexual repression (morality, shame, and so forth) and then for a long time failed to find it. Before the vacation trip I told you that the most important patient for me was myself; and then, after I came back from vacation, my self-analysis, of which there was at the time no sign, suddenly started. A few weeks ago came my wish that repression might be replaced by my knowledge of the essential thing lying behind it, and that is what I am concerned with now. I have often had a suspicion that something organic plays a part in repression; I was able once before to tell you that it was a question of the abandonment of former sexual zones, and I was able to add that I had been pleased at coming across a similar idea in Moll. (Privately I concede priority in the idea to no one; in my case the notion was linked to the changed part played by sensations of smell: upright walking, nose raised from the ground, at the same time a number of formerly interesting sensations attached to the earth becoming repulsive — by a process still unknown to me.) (He turns up his nose = he regards himself as something particularly noble.) Now, the zones which no longer produce a release of sexuality in normal and mature human beings must be the regions of the anus and of the mouth and throat. This is to be understood in two ways: first, that seeing and imagining these zones no longer produce an exciting effect, and second, that the internal sensations arising from them make no contribution to the libido, the way the sexual organs proper do. In animals these sexual zones continue in force in both respects; if this persists in human beings too, perversion results. We must assume that in infancy the release of sexuality is not yet so much localized as it is later, so that the zones which are later abandoned (and perhaps the whole surface of the body as well) also instigate something that is analogous to the later release of sexuality. The extinction of these initial sexual zones would have a counterpart in the atrophy of certain internal organs in the course of development. A release of sexuality (as you know, I have in mind a kind of secretion which is rightly felt as the internal state of the libido) comes about, then, not only (1) through a peripheral stimulus upon the sexual organs, or (2) through the internal excitations arising from those organs, but also (3) from ideas — that is, from memory traces — therefore also by the path of deferred action. (You are already familiar with this line of thought. If a child's genitals have been irritated by someone, years afterward the memory of this will produce by deferred action a release of sexual-

ity far stronger than at the time, because the decisive apparatus and the quota of secretion have increased in the meantime.) Thus, there exists a nonneurotic deferred action occurring normally, and this generates compulsion. (Our other memories operate ordinarily only because they have operated as experiences.) Deferred action of this kind occurs also in connection with a memory of excitations of the abandoned sexual zones. The outcome, however, is not a release of libido but of an unpleasure, an internal sensation analogous to disgust in the case of an object.

To put it crudely, the memory actually stinks just as in the present the object stinks; and in the same manner as we turn away our sense organ (the head and nose) in disgust, the preconscious and the sense of consciousness turn away from the memory. This is *repression*.

What, now, does normal repression furnish us with? Something which, free, can lead to anxiety; if psychically bound, to rejection — that is to say, the affective basis for a multitude of intellectual processes of development, such as morality, shame, and the like. Thus the whole of this arises at the expense of extinct (virtual) sexuality. From this we can see that, with the successive thrusts in development, the child is overlaid with piety, shame, and such things, and how the nonoccurrence of this extinction of the sexual zones can produce moral insanity¹ as a developmental inhibition. These thrusts of development probably have a different chronological arrangement in the male and female sexes. (Disgust appears earlier in little girls than in boys.) But the main distinction between the sexes emerges at the time of puberty, when girls are seized by a nonneurotic sexual repugnance and males by libido. For at that period a further sexual zone is (wholly or in part) extinguished in females which persists in males. I am thinking of the male genital zone, the region of the clitoris, in which during childhood sexual sensitivity is shown to be concentrated in girls as well. Hence the flood of shame which the female shows at that period — until the new, vaginal zone is awakened, spontaneously or by reflex action. Hence, too, perhaps the anesthesia of women, the part played by masturbation in children predisposed to hysteria, and the discontinuance of masturbation if hysteria results.

And now for the neuroses! Experiences in childhood which merely affect the genitals never produce neurosis in males (or masculine females), but only a compulsion to masturbate and libido. But since as a rule experiences in childhood have also affected the two other sexual zones, the possibility remains open for males, too, that libido awakening through deferred action may lead to repression and to neurosis. Insofar as memory has lighted upon an experi-

ence connected with the genitals, what it produces by deferred action is libido. Insofar as it has lighted upon an experience connected with the anus, mouth, and so on, it produces deferred *internal disgust*, and the final outcome is consequently that a quota of libido is not able, as is ordinarily the case, to force its way through to action or to translation into psychic terms, but is obliged to proceed in a *regressive* direction (as happens in dreams). Libido and disgust would seem to be associatively linked. We owe it to the former that the memory cannot lead to general unpleasure and the like, but that it finds a psychic use; and we owe it to the latter that this use furnishes nothing but symptoms instead of aim-directed ideas. The psychological side of this would not be hard to grasp; the organic factor in it is whether abandonment of the sexual zones takes place according to the masculine or feminine type of development or whether it takes place at all.

It is probable, then, that the choice of neurosis — the decision whether hysteria or obsessional neurosis or paranoia emerges — depends on the nature of the thrust (that is to say, its chronological placing) which enables repression to occur; that is, which transforms a source of internal pleasure into one of internal disgust.

This is where I have got to so far — with all the inherent obscurities. I have resolved, then, henceforth to regard as separate factors what causes libido and what causes anxiety. I have also given up the idea of explaining *libido* as the *masculine* factor and repression as the feminine one. These are, in any case, important decisions. The obscurity lies mainly in the nature of the change by which the internal sensation of need becomes the sensation of disgust. I need not draw your attention to other obscure points. The main value of the synthesis lies in its linking the neurotic process and the normal one. There is now a crying need, therefore, for a prompt elucidation of common neurasthenic anxiety.

My self-analysis remains interrupted. I have realized why I can analyze myself only with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (like an outsider). True self-analysis is impossible; otherwise there would be no [neurotic] illness. Since I am still contending with some kind of puzzle in my patients, this is bound to hold me up in my self-analysis as well.

*I was not supposed to know this. It seems his poetic tonsils have been cut.

†The first one was in fact pulled out on the evening of November 9 by the nurse; it might perhaps have lasted till the 10th.

‡Only tall fellows for Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse.²

1. "Moral insanity" in English in original.
2. Freud is referring to the Potsdam guard under Friedrich Wilhelm I, which was recruited wholly from giants.

November 15, 1897

Dear Wilhelm,

More frequently, such one-sided letters; they allow me to forget the distance. Therewith you are only doing what I have always done — writing about what you are engrossed in and leaving aside what you cannot react to. Our conversations used to be like that: each in turn began to speak of what he had to say and did not feel obliged to respond to what he had heard.

My capacity to participate fully in your results increases as they reach perfection, the more the law and idea [behind them] shine through. In the as-yet-uninterpreted numbers I as a layman could not find what appears so promising to you; in your present communication I even found some links to fantasies of my own with which at one time I had wanted to illuminate your discoveries (that 12 as a factor of 23 represents the factor 10 of 28, the former having the male character, the latter, the female one). As you will remember, I also started with the approximate identity of the product

$$12 \times 23 = 10 \times 28 \text{ (period of gestation),}$$

but did not, I admit, know what to do with the difference, which for you became the starting point for further solutions. You surely did not believe that I took those playful attempts seriously or expected you to do so, but I am pleased with the distant relation to your present results.

I can just about imagine the effort it took to let the facts of observation speak in the language of A and P;¹ I carefully suppress further hunches. Care has been taken to make sure that the communication of results will teach nothing to one in whom no indication of the preceding mental work has remained. I am full of hope that at our next meeting it will be easy for me to understand you.

If you cannot come to Vienna — I am still doing so poorly that I do not dare to take off more than one or one and a half days from work at Christmas, and you know that I am far from philistine parsimoniousness — then we could meet in Graz, Reichenau, or the like. But I hold back my proposals because I cannot, as on other occasions, meet you halfway and gladly await whether and what

you can manage to do. It will make life easier to be able to look forward to something so close.

I shall ask next time on which side M[elanie]'s tumor is. On my last visit Norbert vividly reminded me of Ramses II, who was found in *persona* several years ago. But he appears to be mentally alert, actively looks about, and still has time, after all, to improve his looks before a few female thrusts come over him.

All are well in my family. Mathilde has a short childhood, is growing rapidly, is becoming completely feminine in character and appearance, and also already shows the first signs of puberty. I enclose the birth dates of the family for you. You will not be able to use them. Thanks to the Jewish calendar, the dates for the birth of my mother, Martha, and Minna are uncertain. The women maintain that one cannot even expect definite Jewish dates from Mama in Merano and did not want to write to her, although I promised it to you. They are altogether unfavorably disposed toward anything that seeks to fathom the secrets of growth, toward your affairs as well as mine.

Now I would like to have a letter from you soon with equally good news about your work and your family. Fortunately I am no longer in the habit of asking how you yourself are.

Most cordially,

Your
Sigm.

1. Algebra and physics, or anatomy and physiology, or astronomy and physics. The first is probably correct, as shown by the letter of July 22, 1899.

November 18, 1897
IX., Berggasse 19

Dear Wilhelm,

Mela's tumor is on the right side; Fleischmann, I hear, believes that it can be removed vaginally.

This morning I had a pleasant feeling, as if I had succeeded in something important. But I don't know what it might be. It was in some way connected with the idea that one would have to begin the analysis of hysteria by uncovering the actual, operative motives for accepting the illness, some of which I do know. (For the illness becomes established only when the aberrant libido, having allied itself with such motives, has found, as it were, actual deployment.)

But it cannot be just that. I am telling you all that has happened because feelings of this sort after a time usually prove to have been right and because today has been a mildly accentuated day (tired head, particularly bad lecture).

Most cordial greetings.

Your
Sigm.

Vienna, December 3, 1897

Dear Wilhelm,

Last night your dear wife, radiant as always, visited us, bringing the short-lived illusion of all of us being happily together and taking it away again with her departure. Such interruptions of loneliness have a salutary effect by reminding us how difficult renunciation actually is and how wrong one is to get used to it.

December 5. A critical day prevented me from continuing. In honor of the dear visitor, a part of an explanation occurred to me, which she was to have taken back to you. Probably it was not an auspicious day, however; the new idea which occurred to me in my euphoria retreated, no longer pleased me, and is now waiting to be born again. Every now and then ideas dart through my head which promise to realize everything, apparently connecting the normal and the pathological, the sexual and the psychological problem, and then they are gone again and I make no effort to hold onto them because I indeed know that neither their disappearance nor their appearance in consciousness is the real expression of their fate. On such quiet days as yesterday and today, however, everything in me is very quiet, terribly lonely. I cannot talk about it to anyone, nor can I force myself to work, deliberately and voluntarily as other workers can. I must wait until something stirs in me and I become aware of it. And so I often dream whole days away.— All of this is only introductory to our meeting—in Breslau, as Ida proposed, if the train connections suit you. You do know that what happened in Prague proved I was right. When we decided on Prague last time, dreams played a big part. You did not want to come to Prague, and you still know why, and at the same time I dreamed that I was in Rome, walking about the streets, and feeling surprised at the large number of German street and shop signs. I awoke and immediately thought: so this was Prague (where such German signs, as is well

known, are called for). Thus the dream had fulfilled my wish to meet you in Rome rather than in Prague. My longing for Rome is, by the way, deeply neurotic. It is connected with my high school hero worship of the Semitic Hannibal, and this year in fact I did not reach Rome any more than he did from Lake Trasimeno. Since I have been studying the unconscious, I have become so interesting to myself. A pity that one always keeps one's mouth shut about the most intimate things.

Das Beste was Du weisst,
Darfst Du den *Buben* doch nicht sagen.¹

Breslau also plays a role in my childhood memories. At the age of three years I passed through the station when we moved from Freiberg to Leipzig, and the gas flames which I saw for the first time reminded me of spirits burning in hell. I know a little of the connections. My travel anxiety, now overcome, also is bound up with this. Today I am not good for anything. All I can still do is "*Feilen packen*,"² as the late Dubois Raymond put it.

Farewell, and let me soon have a sensible answer to this *meschugene*³ letter.

Your
Sigm.

Is it true that Robert has not been well?

1. Goethe, *Faust*, Part 1, scene 4, where the text reads, "Das Beste was Du wissen kannst." Here the meaning is "The best you know, you may not tell to boys."

2. Meaning of quotation unclear.

3. Yiddish for "crazy."

Vienna, December 12, 1897

Dear Wilhelm,

Only someone who knows he is in possession of the truth writes as you do. So I look forward with tremendous curiosity to Breslau and shall be all ears. I myself shall not bring anything along. I have gone through a desolate and foggy period and am now suffering painfully from [nasal] suppuration and occlusion; I hardly ever feel fresh. If this does not improve, I shall ask you to cauterize me in Breslau.

I envisage our Breslau trip, on my part, as follows: that I shall leave Saturday morning at 8:00 in order to arrive at 2:30. I don't believe a good night connection can be found. Moreover, traveling