

Catalogue Description

267. Freud, Sigmund. Autograph letter signed ("S. Freud"), in German, on Freud's stationery imprinted ("Prof. Dr. Freud"), 3 pages (6 ¾ x 5 ¼ in.; 171 x 133 mm.), Vienna, 25 August 1905 to Otto Rank; light soiling.

Perhaps Freud's first letter to his future apprentice, Otto Rank, who was still a promising 21-year-old student who had not yet made Freud's acquaintance.

Freud writes in full, translated from German: *If under different circumstances a younger writer has sent a manuscript to an older one and the latter has not answered for a while, then usually a bourgeois tragedy develops between the two which usually ends with a discord. Such is probably not the case between Mr. O. Rank and myself. The nature of my preconditions implies that there cannot be any doubt about my interest in his work and other qualities of his work can only increase this interest. If nevertheless I have not written, but waited for your foreseeable inquiry, then the reason for my behavior is the vacation mood on my part and by the not simple nature of the object to be judged on the other hand. I would like to make the following suggestion to you. I will return the manuscript to you tomorrow which during my trip in September I would like to see in your care anyway, and I would like to ask you to let me have the latter again at the end of September (I will return to Vienna during the last week of September). For better receptivity and equipped with a convex glass which now I cannot miss any more I will then study it and ask you after wards to grant me a few evenings to discuss it with you. I have gained a sufficiently high opinion of your capabilities in order to wish to make your personal acquaintance and it will be much easier to communicate to you my mixture of recognition and misgivings. If you agree with that, then please let me know on a postcard which confirms receipt of the manuscript.*

An Austrian psychologist dissatisfied with hypnosis as a treatment for hysterical patients, Freud developed a treatment based upon "free association" and dream analysis, better known as Psychoanalysis. His revolutionary and controversial theories of human behavior, emphasizing subconscious mental processes and the enduring influence of infantile sexuality, marked him as one of the greatest innovators in the field of psychiatry.

After graduating from the University of Vienna in 1912, Otto Rank served as Freud's secretary and protégé for twenty years. Freud considered Rank's theory of the genesis of neurosis unorthodox and the two parted company in 1924. Eventually moving to the United States, Rank resided in Philadelphia after 1936. He is best known for his suggestion that the psychological trauma of birth is the basis of later anxiety neurosis, and for his application of psychoanalysis to artistic creativity. In this letter, Freud

apologizes for not having responded sooner to Rank's submission of a manuscript, and welcomes the opportunity to meet him in the near future. The first portion of the letter is written in the third person, though it is quite clear from the letter's full content that indeed the correspondent is Rank himself.