

## LETTER TO FRITZ WITTELS - (1924)

You have given me a Christmas present which is very largely occupied with my own personality. The failure to send a word of thanks for such a gift would be an act of rudeness only to be accounted for by very peculiar motives. Fortunately no such motives exist in this case. Your book is by no means hostile; it is not unduly indiscreet; and it manifests the serious interest in the topic which was to be anticipated in so able a writer as yourself.

I need hardly say that I neither expected nor desired the publication of such a book. It seems to me that the public has no concern with my personality, and can learn nothing from an account of it, so long as my case (for manifold reasons) cannot be expounded without any reserves whatever. But you have thought otherwise. Your own detachment from me, which you consider an advantage, entails serious drawbacks none the less. You know too little of the object of study, and you have not been able to avoid the danger of straining the facts a little in your analytic endeavours. Moreover, I am inclined to think that your adoption of Stekel's standpoint, and the fact that you contemplate the object of study from his outlook, cannot but have impaired the accuracy of your discernment.

In some respects, I think there are positive distortions, and I believe these to be the outcome of a preconceived notion of yours. You think that a great man must have such and such merits and defects, and must display certain extreme characteristics; and you hold that I belong to the category of great men. That is why you ascribe to me all sorts of qualities many of which are mutually conflicting. Much of general interest might be said on this matter, but unfortunately your relationship to Stekel precludes further attempts on my part to clear up the misunderstanding.

On the other hand, I am glad to acknowledge that your shrewdness has enabled you to detect some things which are well known to myself. For instance, you are right in inferring that I have often been compelled to make détours when following my own path. You are right, too, in thinking that I have no use for other people's ideas when they are presented to me at an inopportune moment. (Still, as regards the latter point, I think you might have defended me from the accusation that I am repudiating ideas when I am merely unable for the time being to pass judgement on them or to elaborate them.) But I am delighted to find that you do me full justice in the matter of my relations with Adler....

I realize that you may have occasion to revise your text in view of a second edition. With an eye to this possibility, I enclose a list of suggested emendations. These are based on trustworthy data, and are quite independent of my own prepossessions. Some of them relate to matters of trifling importance, but some of them will perhaps lead you to reverse or modify certain inferences. The fact that I send you these corrections is a token that I value your work though I cannot wholly approve it.