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'The Sacredness of Love' or 'Relationship as Third': Otto Gross' Concepts of Relationship Today*

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ABSTRACT *The paper focuses on three different themes to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the early psychoanalyst, Otto Gross (1877–1920), which reverberates through a number of disciplines. With some of his ideas, Gross goes way beyond modernity and post-modernity towards a post-postmodern revolutionizing of both individual as well as collective – political – ways of understanding relating. These are being linked to cutting-edge discoveries in three realms: firstly, neurobiology and research into human behavioural as well as maturational processes; secondly an unusual understanding – albeit not entirely new – of political justice and, thirdly, philosophical-analytical theories of relating. Around the time of the recent millennium, completely new concepts and ideas were formulated which both fundamentally verify some of Gross' concepts and, of course, take them further. These current ideas are also linked with regard to a possible aim: in each instance, they focus on what Otto Gross some one hundred years ago first described as the transformation of the will to power between self and other – with the aim of freeing a capacity to love, a capacity to relate that Gross always understood simultaneously as* inter*personal as well as* intra*personal and intrapsychic. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

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INTRODUCTION

> 'No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*.' (Donne, 1945, 538)

In this contribution, I want to focus on three different themes to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the early psychoanalyst, Otto Gross (1877–1920), which reverberates through

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a number of disciplines. Some 90 years after his death, his ideas prove to be topical in a way that continues to point well beyond present-day concerns towards an as-yet-to-be-realized future. I shall start from thoughts that constitute the central core of his work: his concept of relationship. In 1929 the writer Franz Werfel, one of Gross' close friends, had already written, ' "relationship" was the central focus of his teachings for renewing the world' (Werfel, 1990, 347). It is indeed particularly in this area that Gross goes way beyond modernity and post-modernity towards a post-postmodern revolutionizing of both individual as well as collective – political – ways of understanding relating. I shall link these to cutting-edge discoveries in three realms: firstly, neurobiology and research into human behavioural as well as maturational processes, secondly an unusual understanding – albeit not entirely new – of political justice and thirdly philosophical-analytical theories of relating. Around the time of the recent millennium completely new concepts and ideas were formulated that both fundamentally verify some of Gross' concepts and, of course, take them further. Although in each instance this has happened without any direct reference to Gross, there exist nevertheless important links, as I shall demonstrate – just as there are rivers that, for stretches, flow underground before unexpectedly emerging again above ground and nevertheless may be sharing the same source.

These current ideas are also further linked with regard to a possible aim: in each instance, they focus on what Otto Gross some one hundred years ago first described as the transformation of the will to power between self and other – with the aim of freeing a capacity to love, a capacity to relate that Gross always understood simultaneously as *inter*personal as well as *intra*personal and intrapsychic.

Following a brief outline of those ideas of Gross, central to his work, which I take as the starting point of my considerations, I shall present some of the cutting-edge findings in the areas mentioned in each of the following three parts of my contribution. In this, I proceed from the common bases of biology and the behavioural sciences via the collective realms of politics and law towards the personal in individual relationships before concluding with a summary.

OTTO GROSS: 'RELATIONSHIP AS THIRD, AS RELIGION'

(GROSS 1913b, col. 1180)

For the whole of his life, relationship/relating was probably Otto Gross' main concern. It forms the red thread that leads through everything he wrote about *das Eigene und das Fremde* – that which is my own and that which is the other's, in short: self and other. At the same time, Gross perceived the 'will to relating in contrast to the will to power [. . .] as the highest, essential goal of revolutions' (Gross, 1919b). He sees this as being closely linked with an 'inborn "instinct of mutual help" ' (Gross, 1919a, 682), for him the 'fundamental ethical instinct' (Gross, 1914, 529): 'This is [. . .] a congenital, *Ur*-instinct, characteristic of the human species, that aims simultaneously at preserving one's own individuality as well as a loving-ethical relationship with the individuality of others' (Gross, 1915, 529).

Here, Gross explicitly refers to Peter Kropotkin, who had published 'Mutual Aid. A Factor in evolution' (1902) – his response to the rise of social Darwinism – just after the previous turn-of-the-century. Gross' focus on what he called the 'inner conflict' between self and other should not be understood as being in contrast to the 'will to relating', but rather as

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its dialectical completion. Gross himself knew very well that the solution of this 'inner conflict' did not lie in a simplistic either/or: he seems to have clearly expressed this in 1919: 'human nature, as it is designed and inborn in all, is striving towards the two great values, freedom and relationship' (Gross, 1919b). At least implicitly I understand Gross here as expressing the necessity of an inner balance in which each may dialectically enhance the other.

Gross speaks of 'relationship as third, as religion' (Gross, 1913b, 1180). He calls it 'the pure, great third' (Gross, 1913a, 1142), which he equates with 'faith' (Gross, 1913a, 1142). In his known writings, he does not give any further explanation as to what exactly he means by that. Only from some of his love letters which have survived do we know a bit more of the religious depths of his personal experience. In 1907 he writes to Frieda Weekley – who was to become D. H. Lawrence's wife: 'You see, these have been the two great transformations that love has wrought for me: through Frieda I have [. . .] learnt to have faith in the world' (in Turner et al., 1990, 167; translation modified). Gross here underlines 'transformations', 'love' and to 'have faith': might they be identical for him? Could it be that the experience of the mystery of transformation in his love relationship awakens his religious feelings, his faith? In another letter he writes of the 'miracle' (Turner et al., 1990, 165; translation modified) of their relationship. Later, in one of his novels, D. H. Lawrence has the woman who stands for Frieda say about her lover Gross: 'He made me believe in love – in the sacredness of love' (Lawrence, 1984, 127).

When Gross in another instance in emotional language speaks of his love relationship – in this instance to Frieda's sister, Else Jaffé – as 'the first blossoming of a new world-spring' (in Whimster and Heuer, 1998, 142), he also expresses something else that is relevant for our considerations – that is, that the personal-intimate is identical with the collective. Later Gross speaks of the identity of the personal and the political in saying, 'The psychology of the unconscious is the philosophy of the revolution' (Gross, 1913c; col. 384). Lawrence scholar John Turner comments on Gross' 'erotic creed [. . .] – his faith in the power of love to transcend the individual ego [. . .] and thus to transform the cultural history of the many' (Turner et al., 1990, 157–8).

Otto Gross formulates an idea of the relationship between two creating a third that constitutes the numinous. From this basis he develops the concept of a dialectic relationship between a psycho-philosophical theory of relating, religion and radical politics respectively. With this analytic understanding of the personal as being simultaneously the political and with a re-sacralization of this linkage, Gross sets off one the most important socio-political and intellectual trends of the last 100 years. Already in 1909, Gross' anarchist friend Erich Mühsam described the essence of his theory:

> In an individual, nothing happens independently of these equally important aspects of the psyche: religion and sociability. The argument that sexuality embraces both, is correct, but in the same vein religiosity embraces sex and sociability, just as the latter includes sexuality and the religious. They are three coordinated and mutually inclusive aspects. We might understand sexuality as the relating of people to the individual, sociability as the interpersonal relationship, and religiosity as the relationship of the individual to the cosmos. The fact that each of these flows into the other, that there are no boundaries, and that each of these aspects embraces the other two, is self-understood [. . .] It should be our task to heal not only the sexual 'complexes' but maybe even more the social and the religious ones, to help the individual develop a sense of community and to re-experience the buried beauty of the world. (Mühsam, 2000, 15–16)

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The elegant ease with which Mühsam was able to connect here the different dimensions of relating is highly topical, as only now, a hundred years later, similar ideas are just beginning to be formulated again.

NEUROBIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE: DARWIN'S ERROR – OR 'THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMANENESS'? (BAUER 2006A)

Let us start with the biological basis: already in 1902, in one of his first publications on 'The phylogenesis of ethics' (Gross, 1902), the neuropsychiatrist and psychoanalyst Otto Gross had tried give ethics a basis in the natural sciences: 'Based on the preformed linkages of associations, the perception of suffering in an other [. . . leads] to the emotional state of compassion as the root of all ethics' (Gross, 1902, 103). When we read how Gross, at the end of the Great War, elevated the thesis of mutual aid, proposed by the non-biologist Kropotkin, to the rank of an instinct, we may well take this to be hardly more than an enthusing utopianism.

In his recently published book *Prinzip Menschlichkeit* (Bauer, 2006a) – 'The Principle of Humaneness' – the German neurobiologist Joachim Bauer also engages critically with Darwin's work. All too often Darwin's theory of evolution is being presented in such a way as being so closely linked to his behavioural-biological concepts of the struggle for survival and the survival of the fittest that any doubt about the latter can easily be dismissed as questioning the former. By contrast, Bauer sees Darwin's theory of evolution as completely separate from the theories of what came to be called social-Darwinism. What Kropotkin had been able to present some one hundred years ago as 'Mutual Aid in the Human and Animal Realm' (Kropotkin 1902: re-translation of the title of the German popular edition of 1908; Ritter, 1975, 7), could, due to the technology of his time, only be a theory based on observations of human and animal behaviour. Today, thanks to technical progress, Bauer, as a neurobiologist, is able to confirm these theories with cutting-edge discoveries in cell research.

Bauer describes the disastrous effects of Darwin's seemingly 'logical' conclusions from his theory of evolution about the struggle for survival especially in the German-speaking countries, where these ideas fell on much more fertile grounds than elsewhere. 'One of Darwin's errors,' writes Bauer

> that have survived to this day, is [. . .] his basic assumption that evolution has turned competition, struggle and selection into the central impetus of living organisms. [. . .] This basic assumption rests on an inadmissable transference onto living nature of an economic thinking that is based on competitive struggle and the maximisation of profit. (Bauer, 2006a, 123)

Whereas Bauer directly blames Darwin for this development, other scientists have a more differentiated view. The psychologist and primatologist Frans de Waal, for example, observes that Darwin, too, speaks of a 'moral sense or conscience' (Darwin, 1982, 71–2) in animals.

> Darwin firmly believed his theory capable of accomodating the origins of morality and did not see any conflict between the harshness of the evolutionary process and the gentleness of some of its products. Rather than presenting the human species as falling outside of the laws of biology, Darwin emphasized continuity with animals even in the moral domain. (de Waal, 2006, 14)

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De Waal sees the origins of Social Darwinism more in Thomas Huxley – at times called 'Darwin's Bulldog'. It was Huxley who saw human ethics as a victory over an unruly and nasty evolutionary process. [. . .] Huxley was in effect saying that [. . .] we can become moral only by opposing our own nature. (de Waal, 2006, 7)

Bauer describes how social Darwinism developed ideologically between 1870 and 1930. At the beginning of the previous century, the right of the powerful was derived from the evolutionary theories. In 1904 Ernst Haeckel, a 'fanatical convert to Darwinism', whose earlier work had 'really explained Darwinism to the world' (Robinson, 2008), advocated 'euthanasia for babies born with physical or mental defects.' He wrote that in considering important ethical issues like the selection of those unfit for life, 'reason' had to come before 'emotion' (Robinson, 2008, 108). Later, concepts like these led to the attempts of a self-declared 'Master-Race' to improve their race by selection and breeding. Social Darwinist theories thus helped to provide a pseudo-legitimation to efforts of social exclusion (cf. Agamben, 2003; Rother, 2005; Dienes, 2006), selection and, ultimately, genocide. A commentator in a recent BBC documentary on Darwin wrote, 'Darwin was quoted in Berlin when they were planning the genocide of the Jews' (Marr, 2009, 21). Many ideas of Otto Gross' father Hans Gross, the founder of modern criminology, about fighting crime and anti-social behaviour belong to the same context.

Bauer describes simplistic theories about 'selfish genes' or organisms as 'survival machines' as 'socio-biological science-fiction' (Bauer, 2006a, 135f.) and compares their popularization in the last 30 years, predominantly by the non-geneticist Dawkins, with the spreading of social-Darwinistic ideas 100 years previously.

'Why we naturally co-operate' is the subtitle of Bauer's book (2006a). The fact that as a geneticist he is engaged in cell research gives special weight to his arguments. In detail Bauer describes not only how life on earth would be impossible without co-operation, but also that it would never have emerged without it:

> Renowned scientists now believe that [. . .] development from simple to complex organisms has only been possible because cooperative processes have played a *central and primary* role. (Bauer, 2006a, 140)

> The production of genes as well as the commencement of their functioning is a cooperative enterprise [. . .] Correspondingly, the origin of individual cells [. . .] can only be conceived of as a highly cooperative process. (Bauer, 2006a, 150, 152)

A more direct scientific proof of Kropotkin's thesis is hardly imaginable. Even Gross' understanding of 'relationship as religion' today finds confirmation in the micro-realm of individual cells and their components. The physicist Jean Charon, engaging with the metaphysical implications of subatomic physics, genetics, and cosmology, has discovered that subatomic particles have many extraordinary characteristics that resemble those ascribed to the spiritual and the numinous (Charon, 1983/1977). From the perspective of quantum theory, informations of a spiritual content, too, are being exchanged between body cells in their relation to each other within the space-time continuum. According to Charon this religious content is continuously on the increase (Monte, 2005, 14).

The micro-realm of gene-and cell biology can easily be linked in an important way with the macro-realm of mutual relationships from the perspective of human developmental

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research: 'Infant development researchers such as Colwyn Trevarthen, Daniel Stern and others now say that there is evidence that the infant is born with what *I* would interpret as an *intersubjective instinct*' (Grotstein, 2008, IX). Clearly, this confirms the 'will to relating' postulated as an instinct by Gross.

It seems to become ever more evident that maturational processes do not end with childhood or adolescence. The Australian analyst Judith Pickering states: 'Becoming who we are is an inherently relational journey: we uncover our truest nature and become most authentically real through the difficult and fearful, yet transformative intersubjective crucibles of our intimate relationships' (Pickering, 2008, I).

This, too, has been confirmed by recent neurobiological discoveries. The Italian physiologist Giacomo Rizzolati succeeded in isolating individual cells stimulated by specific stimuli triggered by the behaviour of others. He called these cells mirror neurons. These are the actual receptors that throughout our lives take in the environmental stimuli that they, in turn, pass on to the individual neuronal elements. They can be said to be the very organs that we use to establish relationships. In those processes, gene- and cell-structures are being transformed. This means that throughout our lives these remain malleable and can be changed (Bauer, 2006b, 2007).

RECONCILIATORY JUSTICE AND SACRAL POLITICS: 'NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS' (Tutu, 1999)

Jungian analysts Pamela Donleavy and Ann Shearer – the former an ex-state attorney – use these discoveries of latest research in the area of justice. Here they differentiate between the talion law predominant in Western culture with its aims of vengeance and punishments and a restorative justice characterised by efforts to rebuild a social harmony upset by unlawfulness or crime. The South African former Archbishop and Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu explains:

> Here the central concern is [...] in the spirit of *ubuntu*, the healing of breaches, [...] the restoration of broken relationships. This kind of justice seeks to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he or she has injured by his or her offence. (Tutu, 1999, 51–2)

Ubuntu is a religious socio-political concept rooted in African cultural tradition:

> It speaks of the very essence of being human. [...] It also means humanity is caught up, inextricably bound up in [that of others] [...] We say, 'a person is a person through other people'. It is not, 'I think therefore I am'. It says rather: I am human because I belong'. I participate, I share. A person with *ubuntu* [...] belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished. (Tutu, 1999, 34–5)

Already in one of his first published papers – in the criminology journal founded and edited by his father! – Gross questioned the legal right to punish assumed by society: 'If society carries out punishment [...] as justice, is this "punitive justice" not actually an injustice?' (Gross, 1901, 129). He takes the view that this kind of justice is a 'cruel and unjust emergency measure', a 'terrible brutality' (Gross, 1901, 129, 130). Correspondingly, Donleavy and Shearer state today, 'far from bringing transformation, the administration of

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justice can often reinforce the fear, misunderstanding and hatred between "them", the offenders, and "us", the law-abiding majority' (Donleavy and Shearer, 2008, 100). From a Grossian perspective this would mean to rather sharpen the conflict between self and other, because punitive justice with its talion law is based on the will to power, whereas a restorative justice grows out of a will to relating.

The dire results of efforts to solve the inner conflict between self and other with simplistic either/or decisions become apparent in individual and collective attempts to ostracize and ultimately eliminate the other via shadow-projections that are the basis of separating friend from foe in racist and other warlike conflicts. I want to present two examples from the collective realm for the kind of solution suggested by Gross: the first a potential beginning of a radical change in the collective unconscious; the second an effort of a lived practice that has helped to enable the population of a whole nation with its total revolutionary change in such a way that instead of the expected bloodbath, working towards a peaceful solution is now possible. My first example is the publication of *The Gospel of Judas* (Kasser et al., 2006) in 2006 (cf. Heuer, 2009), the second refers to the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by Desmond Tutu. Both have in common religious aspects of relating and forgiving in the process of reconciliation.

For *The Gospel of Judas* I would like to use a principle of interpretation that C. G. Jung used some 50 years ago for the doctrine of the *Assumptio Mariae* – the assumption of the body of the mother of Christ into heaven – by the then pope. Jung understood this as a cultural event in the sense of the beginning of a revaluation of the feminine in the collective consciousness. The blossoming of feminism shortly afterwards and the degree to which it has changed our world since then may well be taken as confirmation of Jung's interpretation. *The Gospel of Judas* is a recently discovered gnostic text that is only slightly younger than the canonical gospels. The revolutionary significance of this text lies in the complete reversal of the valuation of the role of Judas in Christian myth. One English newspaper spoke of the 'Greatest archaelogical discovery of all time' (*Mail on Sunday,* London, 12 March 2006, in Gathercole, 2006, 1), and Simon Gathercole, reader of theology at Cambridge University, speaks of it as 'Rewriting Early Christianity' (Gathercole, 2006).

Why is such importance being given to 'The Gospel of Judas'? Far from being the most despised of the disciples – in many European languages 'Judas' is being used as an invective meaning 'traitor' – here Judas is being presented as the disciple closest to Jesus and the only one who most profoundly understands his message. It is for this very reason that Jesus chooses him to play the most difficult role in the fulfilment of his destiny. After two millennia of keeping Jesus and Judas separate as the polar opposites of light and dark, 'The Gospel of Judas' suddenly offers the mystery of their union, which Jung termed *mysterium coniunctionis*. The text ends with Jesus' capture. From this new perspective, the infamous 'kiss of Judas' is no longer the epitome of vile treason but a goodbye-kiss in intimate and loving friendship. We may well consider what the history of Christianity might have looked like if this kiss in friendship as an expression of a deeply felt will to relating had become the pre-eminent symbol of Christianity instead of the cross, instrument for a slow, torturous and lonely death. (I am grateful to my wife and colleague Birgit Heuer for contributing this particular idea in the course of in-depth discussions.)

In the traditional paradigms of Christian as well as therapeutic practice, suffering and growth have been seen as inextricably linked – paradigms that have focussed on the

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negative, on pathology. Some post-postjungians are increasingly questioning this, arguing instead for a 'sanatology' (B. Heuer, 2008ff.), a paradigm focussing on health and healing. Birgit Heuer, for example, writes, 'I wonder what a clinical paradigm might be like that, symbolically speaking, moved from darkness into light, without losing awareness of the darkness' (B. Heuer, 2003, 334). '[C]linical change then might also relate to a capacity to unlearn suffering and tolerate and learn reality in the form of innate, but individually specific, goodness' (B. Heuer, 2008, 187).

It is also remarkable that, for the first time, this text presents us with a *laughing* Christ! It reminds me of the German artist's Joseph Beuys' question, 'Can you really imagine a revolution without laughter?!' (Meller, 2008).

Theologian Aaron Saari points to the similarity between the words 'Judas' and, for example 'Judaïsm' and sees a direct link between the condemnation of Judas and anti-semitism:

> Jesus and the other eleven disciples become Christians, [. . .] and Judas remains the only Jew. When he becomes associated with the Jewish people, we see an unbelievable rise in anti-Jewish violence. Part of this is owed to the idea that Jews are Christ-killers or God-killers. [. . .] Judas is [. . .] the scapegoat. (In Batty, 2008)

In what has been called the 'Scapegoat Complex' (Brinton Perera, 1986), unwanted shadow aspects are projected onto a shadow-carrier, originally literally a goat that was then ritually sent into the desert to perish (Leviticus, 16: 21–22). It is the psychological mechanism whereby we 'behold the mote that is in' our brother's eye, rather than considering 'the beam that is in' our own (Matthew 7: 3). There is no conflict, no war – individually or collectively – without such shadow projection, where the other is being demonized in unconscious acting out. Eckart Tolle writes, 'violence would be impossible without deep unconsciousness' (Tolle, 1999, 61). Amazingly, for example, Hitler is supposed to have replied, when asked in 1939

> whether the removal of Jews from Germany would rid the world of his No.1 enemy, 'We would have to invent them, one needs a visible enemy, one in plain sight. The Jew is always within us, but it is simpler to fight him in bodily form than as an invisible evil.' (Hardtmann, 1982, 244)

If Hitler really did say this, then it would mean that at least in that moment he had been aware of an external splitting that found its internal correspondence. What is the reason for this? With Gross we might say, 'the will to power'. What he had not been able as yet to formulate as succinctly: the greater this will to power, the greater, actually, the unconscious weakness it is designed to conceal. 'Power over others is weakness disguised as strength' (Tolle, 1999, 36).

We may thus link the will to power with an incapacity to relate. Gross understood the decisive transformative step from the 'will to power' to the 'will to relating [. . .] as the highest, the essential goal of revolutions' (Gross, 1919b). In the collective, political sphere I am thinking in this respect first of an event that happened during Gross' lifetime – although it is not known whether he knew of it: the spontaneous Christmas truce in 1914, the first winter of the Great War, that started with the joint singing of carols in the German, British and French trenches and then led to the swapping of cigarettes, alcohol and personal mementoes and even to playing football together in No Man's Land (cf. Brown and Seaton,

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2001). Taking this a step further: is it possible to communicate this transformation any more convincing than by taking responsibility for past violence and by kneeling to ask for forgiveness? Recent examples in that respect are the spontaneous kneeling of the then German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1970 at the memorial of the infamous Warsaw ghetto and, early in 2008, the public apology of the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to the aborigines for the injustice and violence of the past three centuries (Rudd, 2008).

Gross, speaking about the religious dimension of relationship, makes me wonder whether he might have thought of the numinous aspect of such moments of transformation. Just as Gross' pupil Johannes Nohl supposedly said, 'Wherever one kneels to pray, [. . .] God arises before him' (or her) (Hessel, 1913, 140; cf. Heuer, 2006, 40f.). For Desmond Tutu the sacredness of such a moment seems to be beyond doubt. Frequently he concludes a successful work on reconciliation, as for example between members of the different sides of the troubles in Northern Ireland, with the words, 'Let's take off our shoes, because we are standing on holy ground' (cf. Genesis 3: 5). Correspondingly, C. G. Jung spoke of the analytic space as a *temenos*, 'a word used by the early Greeks to define a sacred precinct (i.e a temple) within which a god's presence can be felt' (Samuels et al., 1986, 148).

In the very same spirit Tutu also chaired the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission between 1995 and 1998, so far the greatest, i.e. nationwide, use of restorative justice. On the basis of 'The Truth Hurts, But Silence Kills' (Tutu, 1999, 81), victims of crimes and/or their descendants where invited to come together with the respective perpetrators. In front of the latter, the former had the opportunity to give testimony in public of what they had suffered. Subsequently the perpetrators had the opportunity to speak from their side about the crimes committed. They received a guarantee of amnesty provided they spoke the full truth and thus publicly took responsibility for what they had done. Well over 20,000 statements were received (Tutu, 1999). The work achieved by this commission is seen as a vital contribution to the predominantly non-violent transition in South Africa from the racist apartheid regime towards a democracy. Tabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor as president, commented in 1996, that the 'amnesty process [. . .] allow[s] the nation to forgive a past it nevertheless dare not forget' (in Tutu, 1999, 79). Of course this does not mean that the goal has been reached. Tutu himself said three years ago, 'Reconciliation is a long process. We don't have the kind of race clashes that we thought would happen. [. . .] But maybe you ought to be lenient with us. We've been free for just 12 years' (in Steptoe, 2006).

Mutual shadow-projecting and its cementation in the vengeful justice based on the talion law in restorative justice is transformed into relating with the potential of mutual understanding and reconciliation. For me the project of commission is so far the most magnificent example of a realisation of Gross' vision of a synthesis of mutually embracing and enhancing ideas from the realms of religion, radical politics and relational, i.e. psychodynamic psychology.

RELATIONAL THEORY: 'BEING IN LOVE' (PICKERING, 2008) OR 'THE ART OF RELATING' (Beringer, 2006)

Relating is at issue in all the areas touched so far; the totality of the ecological and sociological balance rests on an intricate network of relationships. What about our personal relationships?

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Otto Gross assumes the 'inner conflict' between self and other as part of the human condition in which 'human nature, as it is conditionally inborn, strives towards the two important goals of freedom and relatedness.' (Gross, 1919b). Only implicitly does he hint at a solution. The analyst Judith Pickering, mentioned above, goes a decisive step further: 'The "trick" of successful love is the ability of each mate to remain a separate individual *vis-à-vis* the other, while at the same time being able to remain immersed in an utterly indivisible duality' (Pickering, 2008, XI). Explicitly she calls this solution 'the marriage of alterity and altruism' (Pickering, 2008, 38). Intentionally, Pickering chooses the term 'alterity' to denote a state differentiatedness and individuality. She sees this in contrast to an understanding of love in which lack and incompleteness constitute the default position – the platonic concept of being only one-half and permanently in search for the other missing half in order to reach completion and fulfilment. Indirectly, this also seems to be the source of then wanting *to own* the other, with all its concomitant aspects of power – in fact, the very opposite of love. In contrast, Pickering in this context quotes the philosopher Edith Wyschogrod commenting on the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas:

> Love represents the paradox of crossing boundaries whilst remaining distinct. We think we overcome alienation by merger, but the implicit denial of difference and autonomy destroys relationships, for there can only be relationship when recognizing the fact of being two, without which relationship is not possible. (Wyschogrod, 2000, 127, quoted in Pickering, 2008, 50)

Commenting on Levinas, Pickering writes that he

> said that ethics begins in apprehending the face of the Other. The face-to-face encounter is iconic of the primordial reality of a relational context in which ethical responsibility based on doing justice to the otherness of the other person is a metaphysical imperative.
>
> Levinas' description of the face-to-face ethical standpoint is one of standing before the Other as one would approach the holiest of holy. (Pickering, 2008, 50)

This is the concept that Gross first formulated in terms of a respectively dialectic interaction of individuation, relatedness and ethics in a way that he experienced in a numinous way. Pickering observes here a similarity

> to the Christian [...] paradox of the Trinity: the co-herence of the three-in-one. [...] We hover forever between our separateness and interdependence; our bodies and our minds, ourselves and the other, being known and unknowable, becoming one flesh and forever separated in the flesh. (Pickering, 2008, 62)

I said earlier that in terms of what Gross might have meant by 'sacredness of love' (Lawrence, 1984, 127) or, 'relationship as third, as religion' (Gross, 1913b, 1180), we have to rely on speculation. On the one hand his experience of relationship can be understood as underpinning his psychology, yet on the other hand in some of his love letters that have been preserved he directly speaks of the numinous of these experiences. In one of his letters to Frieda Weekley Gross quotes Nietzsche's 'will of two people to create <u>that</u> which is <u>higher</u> than those who created it – it is this will that I call a good marriage.' (In Turner et al., 1990, 168; translation modified). Gross describes this will as '<u>higher, infinitely higher</u>

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upwards, from a belief in the rising and creating anew as that which eternally drives us as the innermost principle of life' (in Turner et al., 1990, 168; translation modified). It may not be irrelevant for our subject that Nietzsche himself – and Gross is bound to have known of that – writes of the sacredness of such a union (Nietzsche, 1902, 104).

When Gross speaks here of 'creating anew', this seems to include that aspect of transformation that our language so clearly expresses with the link between healing, (making) whole and holy. Correspondingly, Freud, some hundred years ago, speaking of the transforming power of his analytic work, wrote to Jung, 'Essentially, one might say, the cure is effected by love' (Freud/Jung, 1974, 12f.). We might link this with Jung regarding the analytic space as holy ground (cf. 'temenos', above). For him the success of the analytic work depended, '*Deo concedente*', on God's grace, God's presence (Samuels et al., 1989, 211f.). Correspondingly, he had written over the entrance door to his home, *'Vocatus atque non vocatus: deus aderit'* – called or uncalled, God will help/be present – the Latin translation of the motto of the Delphic oracle.

We can easily find in Western culture other testimonies of the experience of the numinous in love. From the Christian tradition we know, 'God is love' (John, 4:8). 'Liberated from a confined viewpoint of the solitary ego,' writes Pickering, 'we feel an exulted state of being at one not only with our beloved, but also with the whole of creation, the Divine Lover' (Pickering, 2008, 23). The ecstasy of love literally gives us experience of being outside of ourselves, which makes us feel divine, thus tasting the numinous. Correspondingly, we experience this connecting force itself, which enables us to transcend the separation from the other, also as divine. The philosopher Martin Buber was inspired by Gross in perceiving the relatedness between people as being linked to that between humans and God in his 'I – Thou' principle.

Three aspects need to be emphasised here: firstly, the power of transformation which simultaneously is secondly the capacity to relate, and, thirdly, born of these two, the holy third, the relationship itself. This corresponds to Christ's 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.' (Matthew 18:20). This for me links with that mysterious and numinous moment of transformation that Gross refers to when he speaks of converting the will to power – that forever insists on separation and war – into the will to relating, a change that revolutionises us. Barack Obama, in his inauguration address spoke of this, too, in terms of 'extending a hand' and 'unclenching your fist'. Did Gross think of this numinous moment when he spoke of 'relationship as third, as religion' (Gross, 1913b, 1180)? He adds that this kind of relating contained the 'compulsion to individuation' (ibid.). Are we to understand this as the workings of the life force, as libido, the drive to grow by transformation? That would mean: the deeper we enter into relationship with our Self, the closer we come in contact with God. 'All transformation includes experiences of transcendence and mystery and involves symbolic death and rebirth.' (Samuels et al., 1986, 151). This means that change, growth, life itself, possess the aura of the holy since – all scientific progress notwithstanding – the mystery remains. And if this mystery of creation – that *life* is being created from the interactive relationship of different elements with each other – finds an echo in each transformational step, or is thus being repeated in the creation of something new, and if love does indeed change and heal us, then we indeed get closest to this mystery of creation and its sacredness when being in love.

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The Islamic poet and mystic Rumi wrote some 750 years ago:

> The subject has no end. If all the seas of the world were ink, and all the trees of all the forests were pens, and all the atoms of the air were scribes, still they could not describe the unions and reunions of pure and divine souls and their reciprocal loves. (Rumi, 1999, 170)

CONCLUSION

To summarise: starting with Gross' concepts of relationship, I have shown how, today, his ideas are being confirmed and developed further in various areas of the sciences and the humanities. On an empirical basis, quantum theory and neurobiology have validated the theory of mutual aid that Gross took from Kropotkin to further his own psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice. Cutting-edge observation of human maturational processes have found evidence of an instinct towards relating as postulated by Gross. On a collective level I have spoken of possible indications of a transformation of consciousness in connection with the publication of 'The Gospel of Judas'. I have linked that on a political level with the South African 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' – as one example of what Andrew Samuels calls the 'resacralisation of politics', a development in the history of ideas that started, in its relationship to analytical theory, at the time of the birth of modernity with Gross' work. At the same time, the Commission's work is a practised example of a restorative justice that does not aim at vengeance and punishment but reconciliation and forgiveness. Of these considerations, too, we find initial formulations in Gross' ethical concepts. And finally in the realm of couple relationships I have shown how cutting edge psycho-philosophical concepts can be directly linked to those of Otto Gross. The solution of what he called the inner conflict between self and other that he only implied is now explicitly portrayed in the marriage of alternity and altruism.

'*MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR*!' OR 'BLESSED *ARE* THE PEACEMAKERS: FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD'

(Matthew 5: 9)

In 1919, after the failure of the German revolution in the wake of the Great War, for Gross the necessity to replace the will to power with the will to relating became 'the highest, the essential goal of revolutions' (Gross, 1919c). The message can hardly be expressed any clearer: 35 years later, Martin Luther King wrote: 'Far from being the injunction of a Utopian dreamer, the command to love one's enemy [Matthew 5: 44.] is an absolute necessity for our survival. [It…] is the key to the solution of the problems of our world. Jesus is not an impractical idealist; he is a practical realist' (King, 1969, 47f.). King concludes, 'We must live as brothers or perish as fools' (King et al., 1994, 224). At the millennium Desmond Tutu proclaims, '*No Future without Forgiveness*' (Tutu, 1999).

Now – in the words of Nelson Mandela –

> The time for healing the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us. […] We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve such success. We must therefore act together […] for the birth of a new world. […] Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves. (Mandela, 1994)

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