

OCTOBER

Sexual Revolutions: Otto Gross, Psychoanalysis and Culture

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Abstract

This article is a report of the 10th International Otto Gross Congress, Moscow, October 2017, consisting of an introductory summary by Gottfried Heuer, listing the speakers and the subjects they presented, followed by the text of his opening address, outlining Gross's links with Russian philosophy. This is followed by Birgit Heuer's opening address, introducing her concept of sanatology and how this relates to Gross's work. The article finishes with Gottfried Heuer's concluding remarks and a poem he wrote for the occasion.

KEYWORDS

October revolution 2017, Otto Gross, psychoanalysis and radical politics, roots of Gross's theories in Russian philosophy, sanatology

1 | INTRODUCTION

Organised by Lev Hegai, the 10th International Otto Gross Congress, held in Moscow in October 2017 coincided with the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution—hence in the background on the flyer the battleship *Aurora* that, in 1917, gave the starting shot for the revolution in St. Petersburg. Keynote speakers were Dr. Birgit Heuer and Dr. Gottfried M. Heuer from London (Jasbinder Garnermann and Giorgio Tricarico also presented via Skype). Natalia Pavlikova most kindly did the translating.

For a long time, sexual liberation was a forbidden theme in Soviet Russia. For the first time in the history of post-Soviet Russia an interdisciplinary conference was devoted to the Sexual Revolution. Well-known Russian scientists—not only Jungian, Freudian, and Lacanian analysts—but many specialists in history, art, philosophy, literature, and religion were presenting. Including the organisers and speakers, the three-day congress attracted over a hundred participants from all over Russia (as far away as the Ural Mountains), as well as from England, Scotland, Ireland, Finland, and Germany. In addition, video-recording enabled some 40 others to participate via Skype from Belarus, Germany, Kazakhstan, Moldova, the Ukraine, and the United Arab Republic. These videos are all available online (Khandurova, 2017).

Here, I (Gottfried Heuer) give a brief report on the Congress, followed by my own and my colleague Birgit Heuer's opening addresses, my concluding words and a poem I wrote about the occasion.

In my opening address I outlined the roots of Otto Gross's psychology in Russian philosophy, and Birgit Heuer spoke of the way in which her work links with Gross's ideas and how she has developed them further and thus brought them into the 21st century. Her main presentation, "The Words We Work With That Work on Us: Clinical Paradigm and Cumulative Relational Trauma," was a paper she had given earlier that year at the Society of Analytical Psychology (SAP, London) conference in New York (later published, B. Heuer, 2017). She also led a workshop on this subject. I gave two papers, "The Sacral-Revolution" (G. Heuer, 2009), and a detailed review of the film *A Dangerous Method* (G. Heuer, 2012). Further presentations included: Dr. Jasbinder Garnerman, Ireland, "The Feminine" and Dr. Giorgio Tricarico, Italy-Finland, "Porn as a Symbol of the Current World" (see Tricarico, 2018). The Russian presenters were Dr. Nina Savchenkova, "Sexual Revolution in the Context of Psychoanalysis and Postmodern Philosophy"; Dr. Aiten Yuran, "Possible Answer of Freud and Lacan to Alain Badiou's Assumption of Crisis of Sexuality"; Archpriest Andrew Lorgus, "Sexual Revolution and Orthodox Christianity"; Dr. Evgeny Zjarinov, "Sexual Revolution in Modern Literature"; Lidia Surina, "Cultural Traditions and Russian Psychoanalysis"; Oleg Telemisky, "Sexual revolution: Past, Present and Future"; Dr. Oksana Timofeeva, "We Have Never Had Sex"; Aurelia Korotetskaya, "About Love: Psychoanalytic Essay"; Dr. Valery Leibin, "Otto Gross as Ideologist and Practitioner of Free Love"; Dr. Stanislav Raevsky, "New Sexual Revolution and Psychological Complex"; and Dr. Viktoria Muskvik, "Culturology on Sexual Revolution." Simultaneously, parallel workshops were held at the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.



Flyer for the XVIII Annual Conference of the Moscow Association for Analytical Psychology and the 10th International Otto Gross Congress, Moscow, 2017. Translated, the flyer reads: The psychology of the unconscious is the philosophy of the revolution! XVIII Annual Conference of the Moscow Association for Analytical Psychology, X International Otto Gross Congress, 20–22 October 2017

To coincide with the Congress, my book *Sexual Revolutions* (Heuer, 2011) was published in Russian.

My concluding words about the healing of wounded history *both* in terms of so many people gathering on the subject of Otto Gross, a political and psychoanalytic revolutionary Jung and Freud tried to delete from history, *and* in terms of the most generous invitation and reception of my wife and myself in a country which, at the time I was born, had been under assault by our country, costing so many millions of Russian lives, received a standing ovation, with many of us in tears.



Front cover of *Sexual Revolutions* edited by Gottfried M. Heuer (Russian edition)

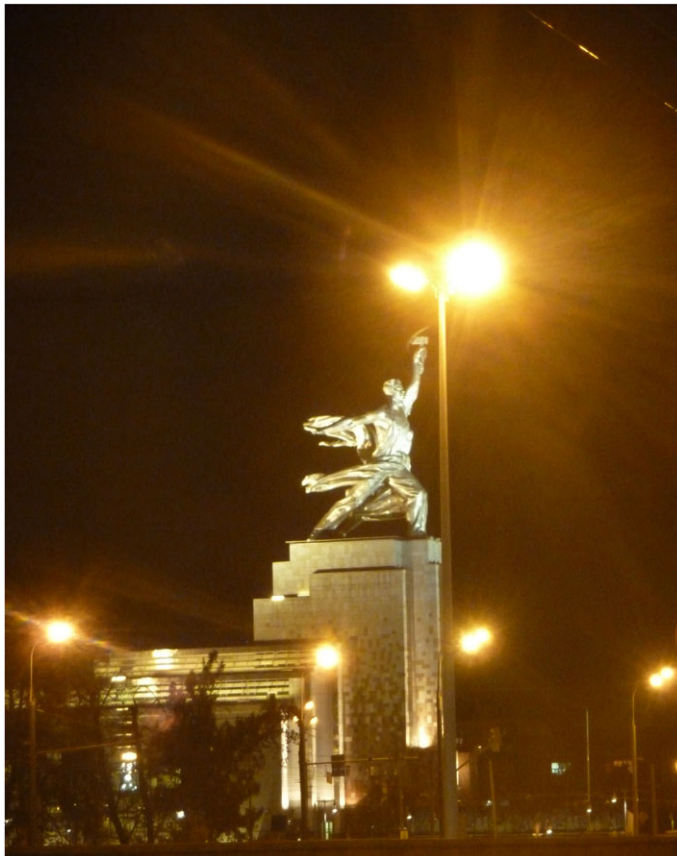
2 | OPENING ADDRESS, DR. GOTTFRIED M. HEUER

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, colleagues and friends!

It is such a great honour and privilege for both my colleague Dr. Birgit Heuer and me to be here with you today. Thank you so very much, dear Lev Hegai, representing the Russian Society for Analytical Psychology, for having invited us. We are here to celebrate the life and work of Otto Gross, the psychoanalyst/anarchist who was born 140 years ago this year, which is also the centenary of the Communist Revolution, the “ten days that shook the world” (Reed, 1919/Reed, 2017), which meant so much for Gross.

“To find the future, we need to unlock the past” might stand as a motto over Birgit Heuer’s and my presentations this weekend: engaging with Otto Gross and his psychoanalytic and political influence which lasts to this day is indeed an unlocking of the past: he belongs to those aspects of our past we were never supposed to know about. For over 100 years, the psychoanalytic establishment has tried to write him out of history: earlier this year, in the renowned *London Review of Books*, he was still referred to as “the depraved *opiomane* Otto Gross, gesticulating on the fringes of the early movement, passed between Freud and Jung like a hot potato and unmentionable in polite

psychoanalytical society” (Keegan, 2017, p. 6). The ancient Romans spoke of *damnatio memoriae*; the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm called such character assassination “Stalinist” (Fromm, 1989, p. 195). For me, we are looking at “wounded history” (Parker, 2001)—and I consider it our task to heal this wound. The philosopher Walter Benjamin saw the historian as “a prophet turned backwards” (Benjamin, 2010, p. 125), implying a spiritual dimension in this healing enterprise of looking back in the present in order to create a better future. This chimes with the Russian philosopher Mikhail Epstein envisaging “the re-birth of utopia after its own death, after its subjection to postmodernism’s severe scepticism, relativism and its anti-utopian consciousness” (Epstein, 1997). Although Birgit and I are both engaged in this, in my work I put greater emphasis on exploring the influence of the past on the present, of course, with a view to the future, whereas Birgit is even more forward-looking towards healing as a clinical issue with a particular emphasis on language.



Worker and Kolkhoz Woman, sculpture by Vera Mukhina (1889–1953), Moscow, originally created to crown the Soviet pavilion of the Paris World’s Fair, 1937. Photo: Gottfried M. Heuer, 2017

Over 20 years ago, Alexander Etkind entitled his history of psychoanalysis in Russia *Eros of the Impossible* (1997). How appropriate, then, to engage this weekend with the *Sexual Revolution*—and the psychoanalyst who is said to have coined the term, Otto Gross (Werfel, 1990, p. 349). Of course, with both Gross and Jung, we understand sexuality as embracing the whole range from sex, Eros, to *any* kind of relating, including a spiritual dimension.

Gross brought revolutionary politics into psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis into revolutionary politics. He was the first to conceive of what today we express as “the personal is the political.” He was also a feminist, stating, “The

coming revolution is a revolution for matriarchy" (Gross, 1913/2009, p. 80), and he was the first analyst *not* to pathologise homosexuality. Also, in contrast to both Freud and Jung, there are no known statements from Gross which today can be seen as racist (Heuer & Chadwick, 2017). Yet his major contributions to our daily clinical practice are in the area of what we now call object relations: "'Relationship' was the central focus of his teachings for renewing the world" (Werfel, 1990, p. 347), wrote one of his friends. Gross inspired C. G. Jung's transference diagram (G. Heuer, 2017, pp. 97–100), and his work marks the birth of what today we call intersubjectivity. Yet, the origin of Gross's relational revolution lies—in Russia! Thus, celebrating his life and work in Moscow *also* means bringing Gross back to his roots.

Key terms in Gross's theoretical considerations are '*das Eigene und das Fremde*' [that which is one's own and that which is the other's], today we'd speak of self and other. Gross's terms were first used by the Russian philosopher Afrikan Aleksandrovich Špir (1837–1890). (Synchronistically in terms of Gross's link to Špir, the latter complained of a wall or conspiracy of silence [*das Totschweigen*]; Bréhier, 1948, p. 52.) Špir also influenced Tolstoy, who wrote in his journal in May 1896, "I am reading Špir all the time, and the reading provokes a mass of thoughts" (Wikipedia, 2018). "At the turn of the [twentieth] century, Tolstoy became the most important inspirator of anarcho-pacifist and Christian-anarchist communities" (Linse, in Müller, 1999, p. 5). Thus, both Špir's and Tolstoy's ideas had a huge impact on the Swiss village of Ascona, then the countercultural capital of the world: in the 1870s, at the end of his life, Mikhail Bakunin had lived in nearby Locarno (Broggini, 1978, pp. 23–24). Apparently, in 1904 Lenin had been in Ascona (Müller, 2017a). One internet site claims that there he "had been part of the Satanist project. . . where he was famous for his ecstatic dances" (Williams, 2006); another speaks of "a merry colony of young people living in caves, among them Lenin, Trotsky, and Chaliapin, mainly artists" (J. Müller, 1912, in Müller, 2017b). Yet another source states that even "Josef Stalin was rumoured to have contemplated a visit" (Török, 2007, p. 191).

It is known and documented that in Ascona Gross's anti-authoritarian rebelliousness received a political framework of anarchist thought when, in 1905, he met there the German anarchists Erich Mühsam (1878–1934) and his partner, Johannes Nohl (1882–1963; see G. Heuer, 2009). (Later, Mühsam was the first to proclaim the Bavarian Soviet Republic in Munich in 1919. He was murdered by the Nazis in one of the first concentration camps. Nohl, having received his training analysis from Gross, became an analyst in his own right, and was praised by Freud. In 1919 his most prominent patient was Hermann Hesse [G. Heuer, 2006;2017]).

Most importantly, Mühsam and Nohl introduced Gross to the anarchist philosophy of Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin (1842–1921). By transferring Kropotkin's core concept of "mutual aid" (1902), the mutual relating of equals, into the consulting room, Gross revolutionised Freud's initial medical model of a hierarchical doctor/patient relationship. In 1907 Gross was already speaking of "the huge shadow of Freud no longer darkening [his] path" (Gross, 1990, p. 212)—he never said anything negative like that about Kropotkin. The latter spent the summer months of the years 1908 to 1913 in Ascona (Green, 1986, p. 125); it is almost unimaginable that he and Gross did not meet during these years—yet if they did, it has left no traces in the historical records so far discovered.

In terms of the impact of Russian culture on Gross, it is also interesting to note that, if he mentions writers of fiction at all, these are predominantly Russian, e.g. Dostoevsky, and the expressionist writer Leonid Andreyev (1871–1919). In several instances, Gross refers to the latter's *The Red Laugh* (Andreyev, 1905/Andreyev, 2005), which describes the nightmarish sufferings of a man traumatised by war.

And, of course, after the October Revolution, Gross speaks of Lenin, calls his ideas a "revelation of the mind/spirit" (Gross, 1919/Gross, 2005, p. 242) and praises Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first Soviet People's Commissar of Education, for "his unheard-of ingenious creative power" (Gross, 1913/Gross, 2009a, p. 351). Obviously, Gross died before the Bolsheviks' suppression of the sailors' uprising in Kronstadt and the anarchist rebellion led by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine. However, we might speculate about the direction Gross's attitude towards the Bolsheviks might have taken, had he lived longer. Having declared in 1913, "I have only mixed with anarchists and declare myself to be an anarchist, I am a psychoanalyst and from my experience I have gained the insight that the existing order. . . is a bad one. . . [And] since I want everything changed, I am an anarchist" (in Berze & Stelzer, 1999, p. 24), Gross later became a council, i.e. Soviet, communist in its literal meaning. His closest and most long-lasting friend, the

expressionist writer Franz Jung (1888–1963), joined the German Communist Party, and, dissatisfied with their hierarchical order, co-founded an offshoot party. After Gross's death, together with some comrades, Franz Jung hijacked a fishing trawler in the North Sea and abducted it to Murmansk. From there, he and his comrades reached Moscow, where they discussed politics with Lenin, who saw Jung's group as representing a threat to communism the way he understood it, resulting in his 1920 pamphlet "'Left-Wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder" (Lenin, 1920).

Jung's—and Gross's—political attitude may be summed up by Gross who was already writing in 1913,

None of the revolutions in the course of history succeeded in establishing freedom for the individual. They all fell flat, each the forerunner of a new bourgeoisie; they ended in a hurried desire to conform to general norms. They all failed because the revolutionary of yesterday carried within himself the authority . . . that puts any individuality in chains. (Gross, 1913/Gross, 2009a, p. 386)

This is where Gross saw the task of psychoanalysis as *preparatory work* for a true revolution: only working towards inner change simultaneously with external, political activism could bring about the desired transformation. In 1919 he proclaimed, "the highest and true goal of revolutions" to be replacing "the will to power" by "the will to relating" (Gross, 1919/Gross, 2009b, p. 355). Resurfacing decades later as "Make Love, Not War!", this in particular is another one of Gross's lasting legacies in terms of *relating* in any context—interpersonally in both personal and therapeutic relationships, as well as collectively and politically. Of course, this applies to *intrapersonal* relating, too, between me and myself, as it were. This is a task still awaiting its fulfilment, a challenge to all of us.

Some of the questions Gross posed continue to be burning questions today, and the answers he offered are promises yet to be fulfilled in the hopefully not too distant future.

Last, but certainly not least, I bring greetings and blessings for all of us during this congress from the daughter of Otto Gross, Sophie Templer-Kuh, who was almost one year old at the time of the October Revolution. Now aged almost 101, she lives in Berlin, where she is visited every day by her son, Anthony Templer, and is in daily email contact with her daughter, Anita Templer, in California. All three send their love and blessings.

3 | OPENING ADDRESS, DR. BIRGIT HEUER

I am delighted to be here, and I am looking forward to sharing and discussing my ideas with you.

Since 2001, I have been developing my thoughts on a clinical approach which I call *sanatology*. By this I mean clinical work that is specifically oriented towards healing. After publishing a number of papers on it, I wrote a doctoral thesis on this theme (B. Heuer, 2015). I have brought along a copy of my thesis as a gift for you.

My connection with Otto Gross has two aspects:

Firstly, *sanatology* is based in an in-depth critique of mainstream clinical work. Otto Gross's ideas, which Gottfried will tell you about, similarly challenged the psychoanalytic approach of his time which had tragic results for him. He was excluded from the psychoanalytic association and, in addition, suffered a *damnatio memoriae*, the extinguishing of a person's memory and their place in history.

In my thesis, I did textual and narrative analysis of clinical case studies. For this purpose I looked at some typical examples of clinical language and reflected on their connotations and implications. The results were used to build up a picture of the underlying and implicit world-view of mainstream clinical work, which I call the "mainstream clinical paradigm" (B. Heuer, 2015).

This underlying outlook is problematic as, in essence, it is informed by negative ideas about the world we live in. It is, however, very similar to the outlook of the typical patient in psychotherapy. Thus, the mainstream clinical paradigm fails to offer a perspective that is sufficiently alternative to that of its patients. If we do not offer a different perspective or world-view from that held by our patients, it is difficult to imagine how we may effect healing, although of course it happens regardless.

Sanatology tries to remedy this situation by offering a different world-view, which I call deep positivity. Interestingly, this world view can currently be argued by employing empirical science in the form of quantum theory. Another bit of science that can be used to argue deep positivity is complexity theory, the study of complex systems and their self-generated patterns.

Coming back to Gross, I think we can say that his ideas presented too much of a challenge to the mainstream clinical paradigm of psychoanalysis at the beginning of the previous century. Although this term did not exist then, we might say that he envisaged a more relational world, as well as a world of unconditional love and greater equality. In contrast, mainstream psychoanalysis held a more negative and unequal world-view.

I think deep positivity might be a current version of Gross's approach, which is why Gottfried has called me a "modern Grossian." This, then, represents the second aspect of my overlap with Gross. The difference between Gross and myself is that I am able to employ the ideas of critical philosophy which only emerged after the Second World War as a reaction to the totalitarian thought which had swept across Europe previously. Critical philosophy holds that any form of science—be it empirical or hermeneutic—is informed by implicit, underlying views and values.

My idea of a clinical paradigm is thus a critical philosophical tool. It helps us understand that a psychoanalytic approach is not neutral. Rather it is informed by specific values and views of the world. I believe that Gross's argument would have been much strengthened had he had critical philosophy available in his lifetime. The critical philosopher Thomas Kuhn wrote a seminal book called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1970). He described exactly and minutely the dynamics within a scientific approach, when new results or original thought lead to revision and change. Kuhn explained that such changes are at first vigorously opposed, only to be assimilated later. For Gross himself, Kuhn's insight came too late. However, it can still be employed in retrospect to clarify what happened to Gross's ideas from their initial violent rejection to their eventual assimilation.

I believe this also contributes to a healing of the injury to Gross and his ideas, particularly with regard to the *damnatio memoriae*, the removal of all traces of his work from the historiography of psychoanalysis.

Rehabilitating Gross and reinstating his work has been Gottfried's lifelong passion. My lifelong project has been sanatology and the clinical paradigm. Part of my initial motivation for this was the plight of analyst colleagues who wanted to innovate or question the mainstream clinical paradigm of our time. In the process, it seems I am able to contribute to Gross's retrospective rehabilitation, and for this I feel immensely grateful.

4 | CONCLUDING REMARKS, DR. GOTTFRIED M. HEUER

Спасибо (thank you) is the first word I learnt to say in the Russian language from Ivan Nikolaichik, who met Birgit and me at Domodedovo airport, and on the following day introduced us like a guardian angel to your beautiful city.

I want to give thanks again: nowhere ever have we been so generously welcomed and looked after throughout our stay here as by you! Спасибо to you, dear Lev Hegai, for having invited us and for having organised this great 10th International Otto Gross Congress in conjunction with the XVIII Annual Conference of the Moscow Association for Analytical Psychology, and also, of course, for getting the translation of my book *Sexual Revolution* published in time for this congress!

Спасибо to Natalia Pavlikova for having translated our presentations and for having thus given us a voice in your beautiful Russian language!

In my opening address you may have noticed how, at one moment, I was overcome with emotions: this was when I realised that your all having come together for this congress is an important step in healing wounded history—healing our collective wound from Jung, Freud and others having treated Otto Gross abusively by trying to purge him from history.

But that is not all: when I was born in December 1944 in northern Germany, our countries were at war, a war Germany had started, and that cost so many millions of Russian lives. So your generous invitation to us, as Germans, is also an important step towards healing *that* wound, too, in our collective history. And we are both deeply grateful for that!

Bless you—and спасибо—*большое* спасибо (thank you—thank you *very* much)!

5 | A POEM, GOTTFRIED MARIA HEUER

The Gathering of the Rebel Angels:
With Otto Gross to Moscow:
1917–2017–2117.
Past–Present–Future.

Did you know that “*Revolution*”
actually means “Rolling back”?
Well, I *didn't*, and—
it somewhat disappointed me. . .

Revolution, that *longing* for freedom,
the desire for equality, in mutuality,
had been a favourite word of mine,
a word that *touched*
my heart and soul,
came from my body and my mind,
that longing. . .

So—
let us roll, then,
let us *rock* and roll,
go with the flow. . .

That *longing for equality*,
in fact, goes back,
at *least* 500 years, as
the German peasants, in revolt,
were challenging, “When Adam dug,
and Eve, she spun,
who was *then* the noble-man?!”

Let us roll *back* a hundred years,
to nineteen-seventeen,
to those “Ten Days
that *Shook* the World”,
when old
had gone on far too long
and something,
everything!
just *had* to change—
and *did!* —

Longing for freedom
like a flower for the sun. . .

"A miracle has happened!"
the poet Alexander Blok rejoiced,
"Nothing is forbidden—
almost *anything*
might happen!"—
"Almost anything. . ."
Like,
Moscow, then, in March,
a Liberty parade,
hundreds of thousands
in the streets: it was
like a circus with a camel
and an elephant,
plastered with posters, like,
"There won't be any freedom,
as long as woman is a slave!"

And from Eisenstein's "October",
I see the woman on the drawbridge,
and her hair—
that longing. . .

In the parade,
they also had a wagon,
carrying a coffin, labelled,
"The Old Order" and—
"almost *anything*
might happen"—
and it *did!*

Twelve hundred miles,
as the black crow flies,
as they say,
to the west,
a psycho-analyst,
in fact, a psycho-anarchist,
for years had worked
for exactly that, "in preparation
for the revolution,"
that he was sure would come—
and it *did!*

He'd been longing,
longing for the freedom
from the shackles of the mind:
"I have only mixed with
anarchists—and I am one!

From my experience
as a psycho-analyst,
I've gained the insight
that the existing order
is a bad one.
And since I want all to change,
I am
an *anarchist!*"

Longing, the longing. . .
"Almost *anything*
might happen!"—Like,
"The coming revolution
is one for women's rights!"
And yet, he knew,
knew all too well,
that, so far, "all revolutions
have run aground,
have floundered, petered out, become
just a renewal
of the old,"
that got repeated
because the revolutionaries
of yesteryear did, indeed, "roll back",
reverted to the old
they thought they had buried,
all because their souls
had retained that old—
in spite of their longing
for freedom, and the new!

It's the psyche, our soul—
individual and collective,
so intimately linked,
as to be identical—
that will need to change,
for both the personal,
as well as the political
to transform for good,
for the ever better,
so that we
don't "roll back":
"Anything might happen!"

Miracles are possible:
the mystery of healing
can spread like the aurora,

the rosy dawn
of all-embracing love.

My longing is,
may every step I take
be a step in that direction.

Today, as we look back,
one hundred years,
with open eyes to see,
it is still true:
"Ye are many—
they are few,"
as Shelley wrote,
some hundred years
before October 1917,
in *The Red Mask*
of Anarchy.

Let's look ahead, then
and,
as that longing
is continuing to burn,
more urgently than ever,
let's *make* the change,
let's—
be the change we long for,
transform our souls
inside out
and with it all the world about!
Let us
replace the will to power
with Eros of relating, *that's*
my longing, my desire.
Miracles are possible,
"anything might happen" now.
Let's get there,
let's not wait
another hundred years:
"Oh my love,
now I know
all your freedom;
I know that it will come;
but what will it be like?",
asked, in 1863
Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in

What is to be done? —.

“And behold, a ladder
set up upon the earth
and the top of it
reaches to Heaven.
And behold
the angels of God. . .”

See!

A white feather!
There is one
for each and everyone
of us!



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Gottfried and Birgit Heuer in Red Square, Moscow

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