Ludwig Rubiner's "Psychoanalysis"

Otto Gross

Translator's note: Ludwig Rubiner was an Expressionist writer who had polemically written against Gross in Die Aktion. *The following is Gross' response.*

Many years ago at the Salzburg Psychoanalysts' Congress I spoke about the perspective on the fundamental problems of culture as a whole and on the imperative of the future gained through the discovery of the "psychoanalytical principle", i.e. the exploration of the unconscious. S. Freud's response at the time was: "We are doctors and want to remain doctors".

We know now how much greater the gift was than the giver permitted himself to hope. Today, the psychology of the unconscious is the first and only certain guarantee for finding real answers to real questions and the right ways to reach the right goals - there already exists a periodical that tries to take first, though faltering, steps on this basis. Men of literature, of course, may still be able to believe -naively and simply: "Only its brute practical use, the healing effect, is of any import".

But we hold: That man is able to know himself now, that people are allowed to hope and obliged to strive now to understand one another, that in this way the infinite and ultimate solitude surrounding the individual becomes surmountable, that an ethic with truly alive roots announces itself, this is its practical effect and worth.

Of course, so far art has been the sole guiding light pointing the way to an understanding of unconscious psychological meanings, and the power of the artist will again be called upon to lead the way on new paths of knowledge. Any art shying away from exposing itself to the ultimate questions implied by the psychology of the unconscious will not be art at all, anymore.

We, aspiring to pass beyond solitude, do not believe any longer that the lawmaking spirit will be the creative spirit - it's true: the idea by and in itself adulterates, it forces - but we believe that only an idea having passed beyond solitude, i.e. and idea existing within love, will be creative and free, will be free spirit. A free spirit not existing within love will be conservative or disintegrative, God or Devil, but never free spirit.

Ludwig Rubiner betrays a fateful error by juxtaposing woman and free spirit. We believe, the revolution that will join woman and freedom and spirit together into one will be the first and only true revolution.

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Trans. Christian Neie

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