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BY EVELYN BYRNE  
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In trying to define my studio practice and in my attempts to arrive at a form with which I can work, I have treated the connection between Rosa Luxembourgh and Bertolt Brecht as the space to locate the discussion. A key area of investigation for me is that of what form the work should take. In that it is almost completely defined by ones audience. There exists a debate between Luxembourgh and Brechts' perceptions and opinions of a certain socialist realist novel of early 20th century Russia, by Maxim Gorki. "The Mother" told the story of a peasant women in the 1905 revolution. Rosa Luxembourgh advocated this genre by literature as potentially consciousness raising of social inequalities. She had dealt with the revolution itself at a directly analytical level. Brecht's adaptation of the novel, several times "removed" from its context and its straightforward presentation as a narrative, sought in an aesthetically revolutionary manner, to re-integrate itself with the audiences who came to see the play in Berlin in 1932, as part of a framework of transcending praxis.

The first indication of left wing commitment of weimar intelligentsia, had been in its opposition to the first world war, it's utopian socialism of 1919, and the short-lived soviet republic in Berlin, after which Rosa Luxembourgh and Karl Liebkricht its leaders were brutally murdered. Men such as Erwin Piscator were guided by such idealist enthusiasm. Bertolt Brecht's 'cold route' (1) on the other hand, to his political convictions of the early 1930's is indicated by his derision of productions such as the "Theatre Communist's", 'The Misery of the Masses' in Berlins west end. Such scepticism he noted,

"May have been due to my scientific education (For several years I studied medicine) which made me strongly immune to any influence on the emotional side" (2)

Where Piscator wanted references to show Berlin in revolt, and the deaths of Rosa and Karl, Brecht said they were too direct, he did not wish to dramatise the struggle, but "to requisition the theatre for the purposes of the class struggle .... to proceed dialectically" (3) he became interested in the writings of Karl Marx, in the course of struggles in trying to understand the operations of the Chicago wheat exchange.

"It wasn't of course that I had written a lot of marxist plays; but this man Marx was the only spectator for my plays that I had ever come across" (4)

This led towards his concept of epic theatre, which could deal with economic realities of mankind's occupation of the Big cities.

This did not make Brecht an instant communist, this association of Marxism with purely theatrical problems. He did contribute to a K.P.D. paper - the satirical "Der Knuppel" and he wrote poems about class solidarity, etc. He was established as one of Piscators collaborators in a theatre that accepted K.P.D. control. however his "Threepenny Opera" was viewed as destructive satire, and itself a piece of bourgeois opportunism in "Rote Fahne"

According to Fritz Sternberg, the sociologist, some of whose lectures on Marxism Brecht attended in Berlin, Brecht's 'turning point' came on May 1st, 1929, as he watched a banned parade from Sternberg's flat, in the vicinity of Karl-Liebknecht - Haus, communist party head quarters. Zörgiebel, the social democrat chief of police, had supported the employers by Forbidding any public demonstration. (5) Sternberg alleged that the violence inflicted upon the demonstrators was an experience,



which helped to push Brecht towards communism. 1929 was the year of his first so called "teaching plays" (Leherstücke) of which "The Mother" staged in 1932 in Rosa Luxemburg's honour was a great example.

The poet's task is to make the living concretely necessary language of his time. This task may seem utopian, for it means art for all, not as a product for consumption but as a productive capacity" (6)

An enquiry into role playing; how can the traditional purpose of a role be transcended toward revolutionary practice. The discussion is located between 2 pieces of work - "The Mother", by Bertolt Brecht and a performance piece of my own.

EVE: A grizzly blade cuts no apples ... well its sort of about splitting ... its where a word or an object or a sentence gets sliced into two halves, which enhance and contradict one another, so there's a space left between them ... a silence ... there are other ways of destroying a description besides eliminating it.

"The task of writing is not to supplant but to transgress. Now to transgress is both to recognise and to reverse. The object to be destroyed must be presented and denied at the same time. Writing is precisely what permits this logical contradiction ... But the opposite is not the reverse - the opposite destroys, the reverse challenges and denies. It seems to me that only inverted writing, presenting both straight language and its contestation (its parody) can be revolutionary".(7)

EVE: ... and then you can split the silence, the forest of starving silence ... what? But this is college work. No not just words but characters and costumes, role playing; to analyse ... it's not scientific really ... (takes apple) mmm.... thanks. Good for throwing at doctors. There's an apple soap in one of the scripts. Yeah, I think Selina said she was doing some marketing project about soap, ... I made a costume for the play; the "apple play", pleated and crispy, like an apple sound - green soft Apple soap for a moist, so moist, You'll just moan ... and lick ... and drip Pardon? Parody..... you see? ..... Selina?

Well Ma, why don't you just tell her that you cant afford to buy special soap for her sensitive skin, God she';s a bit too fussy about things these days ... yes Ma, we know. You were lucky when you were our age, if you cold steal an egg out of the kitchen for your hair. This reminds me of a part in a play called "The Mother" by Brecht, where the mother is worried because the soup isn't good enough for her son. Anyway the play goes on to point out that the lack of soup is not decided in the kitchen ... No, she wasn't made out to be an idiot .. just an uneducated peasant. No I'm not comparing you to her Ma, I'm sure you're perfectly capable of pointing things out to Selina yourself - like having to get a loan for her college fees.

Brecht Never presented ideas not genuinely experienced through human relations. "The Mother" performed in Berlin in 1932 was based on the novel by Maxim Gorki of the same name, it tells the story in the form of Brechts Leherstuck (teaching plays) of a peasant woman's gradual education and conversion to the revolutionary cause. It was staged in honour of Rosa Luxembourg, the spokeswoman and theoretician of the German left, one of the Founders of the communist party who had been assassinated in 1919 in the Berlin uprising. The play portrayed the Mother's earliest lessons about "the lack of meat not being decided in the kitchen" (8) to her finally carrying the red flag in the 1905 revolution, her rejecting the watery condolences at the death of her son, and her passionate appeals to other peasant women, to desist in supporting the powers which oppressed them. Played to working class audiences - 15,000 women saw the play that year - Brecht wanted to bring it outside the "apparatus of mainstream theatre, (9) to reach its target the proletariat The theme of enquiry, enacted on stage was whether the social function of the mother which



determines the continuation of the family could become a revolutionary one, and how. Both Walter Benjamin and Brecht called it a sociological experiment in revolutionary theatre.

When the theatre was visited by the police and performances prohibited and costumes confiscated, the actors went on regardless. Finally Helen Weigel, who played the Mother was dragged from the stage and arrested "... then Fascism came out into the open" (10) Brecht saw the police interference as an integral part of the performance, as part of his dialectical theatre. Another aspect of Brechtian theatre was the concept of reversal.

In Brecht's "The Mother", the relation is inverted; it is the son who gives birth, spiritually, to the mother. This reversal of nature is a great Brechtian theme: reversal and not destruction.

Thus this ancient theme of the changing of the guard, which has nourished so many heroic-bourgeois plays, has nothing anthropological about it here, it does not illustrate an inevitable law of nature: in The Mother, freedom circulates at the very heart of the most "natural " human relation, that of a mother and her son.

The Berliner Ensemble production of The Mother has shown how blind our Tout-Paris must be, to see nothing but propaganda in this play: Brecht's Marxist option exhausts his work no more than the Catholic option exhausts Claudel's. Of course Marxism is indissolubly linked to the play; Marxism is its object, not its subject; the subject of The Mother is quite simply - as the title says - maternity.



It is precisely Brecht's strength never to present an idea which is not experienced through a genuine human relation and (this is more original) never to create characters outside the "ideas" which make them exist. No one lives without ideology: the absence of ideology is itself an ideology. It was enough for Brecht to unite these two requirements to produce a surprising play which undermines two stock images: that of Marxism and that of the mother. By her mere condition as a revolutionary mother, Pelageya Vlassova fulfils no stereotype: she does not preach Marxism, she does not launch into abstract tirades on man's exploitation by man, on the other hand, she is not the expected figure of maternal instinct, she is not the essential mother, her being is not on the level of her womb. (11)

EVE: Anyway, My apple play..... There are two characters, each one sets out to knock the other's point of view. One's vehement Feminist wordplay is sarcastically sneered at by the other. But this sarcasm is just as appealing - you see? Deceit is both its subject and its object. Its about ... a "desuction" - deceit, desire and seduction. The green-soft; that's the apple soap, which switches, splitwise from soft words to vicious little fantasies.

Barthes, wrote about Brecht with regard to pleasure and bliss in texts (he makes great distinction between the two) in that he gives a great importance to pleasure on the subjective level, what is outdatedly called hedonism, (i.e. Brecht and his beloved cigars) ... but beyond this there is an extensive consideration of pleasure in his "Marxist oeuvre" (12) "I was captivated by the alliance of extremely vigilant informed and firm marxist thought (on seeing "Mother courage" presented by the Berliner Ensemble) with a sense of pleasure of forms, colours, materials, all that artistic materiality so extraordinary thought out. I understood, the

product of these two constraints was the thing to be desired. Then I read more of Brecht and discovered in him, that ethic of both pleasure and intellectual vigilance". (13)

By way of justification for the return of Pleasure repressed by Christian morality, then by positivistic, rationalistic morality, than once again by a certain marxist ethic, he feels that it permits a certain exploration of the human subject "however to make the distinction between pleasure and bliss, pleasure is "in the realm of reading the classics" but on the contrary, bliss is the system of reading or utterance through which the subject instead of establishing himself is lost, experiencing that expenditure, which is properly speaking, bliss". Texts of bliss that displease, provoke, which temporarily, in the flash of an instant, change and transmit you ... that don't tend towards the normal and the realistic. Texts of bliss, should be on the side of a certain unsettling not only on the level of imagination but on the level of language itself. (14) Brecht, in my opinion, seemed to shift between these levels of plaisir and jouissance but it was important to "return" back to recognition (pleasure). The object had to return from estrangement, unlike say dada or surrealism, where shock and confusion was the ultimate aim.

EVE: But even her so called viciousness is quite cute, even though she's trying to shock, with her "Ripping through the flesh and digging the nails in"

Barthes noted that time had a tendency to turn texts of bliss into texts of pleasure. Recuperation is the great law of history and culture recuperates for its own use. (11)

EVE: Her alchemy  
Par/Oxy Adable  
Par/Dyable  
Par/Lexadox  
See Which? Oh... the wild and wet  
and wondrous  
or rather;  
Sea Witch  
Par/Fum .... (perfume)

Its got to do with an investigation, on my part, into as equal a fascination with alchemy as with beautiful, seductive advertising of perfume, and suspicion about my place between these two myths. In that 'space between' is the importance of pointing out the context of this investigation.

Brecht found that marxism was a method which enabled him to analyse the things which interested him a Dramatist and to produce them onstage ... in doing "The Mother" he was attracted to the mother's character and her part in the class struggle.

Criticisms of the play claimed that there was no empathy produced in the audience with the facts presented on stage. This was caused by Brecht's techniques of alienation (verfremdung) distancing the observer from the object, "presenting", the text for analysis, a method of demonstrating to the audience. In that he agreed with Lenins view that socialism could only become a force if pursued like a science he proceeded with his 'leherstück' format. Kautsky had said that class consciousness required



study and insight and that spontaneity only had value as an "embryonic form of awareness". (15) Regarding himself as a leninist of the footlights, Brecht sought endlessly for methods and means of keeping the drama open to currents of movement; he needed a method of removing the audience from empathy with the characters on stage. He sought to demystify the notion of art as autonomous and privileged illusion, he wanted to integrate it by repeatedly exposing its own workings as changeable constructions, he viewed representation, as "both the model to be represented and the ways of representing it and literary activity as part of a transcending praxis". "Should we not simply say" said Brecht, "that we are not able to perceive anything that we are not able to change - even that which does not change us". (16) He viewed art, not merely as a reflection of economic relations, but itself a practical building element of that economic reality, a constitutive part of the productivity, activity of the social individual.

With these production aesthetics drawn from Marx's, classical analysis of the political economy of capitalism Brecht offered an alternative to the exclusive focus upon ideological social content in art, as marx's aesthetic views had been developed since his death. Brecht pointed to the contradiction to be resolved by historical praxis between the potential emancipatory use of montage, interior monologue and distancing and the social relations to which they had previously been connected.

Brecht embraced and cultivated pleasure and wit and humour when they served the purposes of dialectical thinking, or revealing social realities. He criticized those who concentrated upon personal psychological analysis without raising issues of historical causality.



The marxism which Brecht applied to cultural experience, meant that objects must return from alienation, as in cubism, revealing a changeable reality, estranging his audience from habitual assumptions, so that they might in turn, master the social world. A scientific desire to analytically decompose and re-arrange aggressively, an estranging representation is one which allows the object to be recognised and yet at the same time seem strange. A jagged discontinuity was intended to encourage intervention. 'Verfremdungs-effekt' the means through which the world is encountered afresh. Brechts theatrical practices drew upon figures and currents in russian futurism and constructivism. In the constructivist journals of the 20's "Lef" and "Novy lef" writers such as Mayakowsky, Sergei Tretjakov and Boris Arvatov developed the concept of art as estranging and renewing experience in a political context. Tretjakov, whose play "Scream Ciano!" was produced in Berlin in 1930 awakened Brecht's interest in new social and literary problems of the land of the october revolution. Tretjakov had argued against a simple embellishing of traditions such as that of Tolstoyan realism and hoped for a new culture to emerge, from the literature of newspaper people, writers who would literarize industrial experience, while all authors grew to see themselves as cultural producers, it was with such suggestions in mind that writers such as Tretjakov hoped to stem the drift of soviet cultural policy, by the early 1930's, towards Bureaucratic control and use of cultural forms for mass hypnosis and ideological manipulation (closely related to Brecht's aesthetic thought). Brecht was also well aware of Meyerhold's and Eiseinstein's use of marxist constructivism in film and use of discontinuous cutting.

EVE: Another slice? No, its not complicated at all ... I'm afraid sometimes I oversimplify too much, without sufficient analyses.

But often, the characters insist on explaining themselves as they go along, rescuing their dreamy sides from descending too deeply into the vapours, but by interrupting these disjointed fragments of images, I want to remove the representation from merely echoing whats going on. That doesn't really cause anyone any problems - especially when its a nice beginning, middle and end. All wrapped up.

Do you remember "Greek?" We did it in drama group and Paul was in the role of 'Eddie'? The white make up and jerking doll - like movements , while he was raving on about "Paddy's roaring drunk in their leprechaunish glee, bombing everything in sight" (17) and then goes on to reveal the reasons for those opinions .... like revealing one layer of the causes. Its a way for an actor to 'show' his character to the audience.

Showing the causes as well as the symptoms the apple character talks directly about symptoms, I mean physical symptoms - apple-y lungs, and apple bodies and "slicing the skin", and "piercing the holy crucible where life may have slipped in" (the apple womb) then she starts coughing - getting congested in the parable. The other half teases her.....

"Hard as Nails, she is"

Miss enthusiasm, then rants on about digging her nails into the flesh of the apple and ripping her throat apart

It's Not violent ... its cuddly ( it seduces)

Yes.... I remember, I came running in one day when I was

5 and you had lost my first tooth eating an apple .....

EVE: Oh I have loads of stories about apples I could go on for days.  
But its also about not letting yourself away with that sort of rot.

She talks about her props ...

"Well ... its sort of a cell.

Oh be specific! Do you mean a prison cell

Well Limited certainly

Walled in translucencies

Wide-eyed deafnesses

That shut out the world's knocking with a welcome".

Thats about Rosa Luxembopurg, when she was in prison. You see, she continued with her political writings as well as studying geology and other natural sciences. He had great aesthetic appreciations, seeing the arts as fulfilling of spiritual needs necessary for every individual in the realisation of his role to be played in transforming society.

But in the end it was through direct action, that she saw the achievement of the ultimate goal. She was critical of the blindness of so called marxists to the real meanings of his theory. She praised marx's "creative doubt" (18) of his own models and methods and she applied dialectical analysis in ways which contributed to greater understanding of the economic conditions which lay at the roots of the war. She spoke out against the first world war from the beginning. She saw it as destructive to socialism and merely part of the imperialism which re-inforced class divisions. The 'Junius pamphlet' which had to be smuggled



out of the prison state the 'theses in the tasks of social democracy'. Firstly, that WWI had annihilated 40 years of European socialism setting its proletarian sections against one another in Fratricide, trapping them in a capitalist war, only re-inforcing imperialism.

It constituted a betrayal of international socialism. The social democrat, she said, was condemned to impotence having repudiated the class struggle in war time. Such a delay, only alleviated ruling classes to strengthen their positions, the only solution was for the international proletariat to hurl its full weight at the forces of imperialism. Its very centre of gravity would be the Third International - the workers' fatherland. She had maintained a revolutionary internationalist position from the start and had ended in jail in 1915. The Junius pamphlet was written in 1916. From earlier text "Introduction to the mass strike" she had commented on her fear that S.P.D. was being choked by bureaucracy, she was concerned with a truly political and revolutionary consciousness. (19)

Rosa's work on the accumulation of capital took up that problem again after decades of vulgarised economics. where it had descended into tirades of Bourgeois economics, where capitalism was considered from the point of view of individual capitalists. Marx's capital had presented a radical break, not as an agitator who considered everything from a proletarian point of view such an approach would merely reverse the plus and minus signs, but rather his method was to consider the problems of capitalist society as a whole as problems of the classes constituting it, the classes being regarded as totalities - the first time that Hegelian dialectics had been converted into a science of revolution, the concept of totality allowed every part to come to the surface, the subordination of every part to the whole unity of history and thought. In Marx, the dialectical



method aims at understanding society as a whole. Bourgeois thought concerns itself with objects that arise either from the process of studying phenomena in isolation or from the division of labour and specialization in the different disciplines. Marxism, however, raises and reduces all speculations to the level of aspects in a dialectical process, not independent sciences of law, economics, and history but a single, unified, dialectical and historical science of the evolution of society as a totality. But in that the totality of an object can only be understood if the positing subject is itself a totality, marx precluded that in society only the classes could represent this total point of view by treating every problem from this angle, Marx supplied a correction to Hegel, who "still wavered between, the great individual and the abstract spirit of the people" (20) This contradiction, was in fact, a great source of fruitful tension for Brecht's Dramatic practice, he found that orthodox marxism had great difficulty in accommodating anything indeterminate, i.e quantum physics, mutation theory in biology. Brecht embraced these - their philosophical implications as a refutation of determinism, had the implication that while we are able to make forecasts on the basis of statistics and probability, no individual fate was quite determined. Past historical events were not inevitable, chance did play a part. Future movements were not completely foreseeable. Individual decisions were important and real and the sum of these made history. One could say his communism was balanced by a certain serenity. He had a fascination with the oriental, for Yin and Yang, the eternal duality and paradox. An orthodox marxist would not discuss oriental ideals, Marxism deals above all with great masses of people. Brecht was more concerned with the relationships of individuals to each other and why. He wanted to combine sensuality and materialism. (21)

Rosa Luxembourgh's applications of marxist dialectics as a model to communicate in-depth historical insights, resulted in fresh analysis and a marxist approach to each new situation. Her major work "The Accumulation of Capital" takes up the problem after decades of vulgarised marxism and its deflection into a bourgeois science. In George Lukacs essay on "The Marxism of Rosa Luxembourgh", (22) He criticised all the tossing and turning of isolated analysis and the "evading the confrontation by confining oneself to the analysis of isolated aspects in one or two of the special disciplines.... the attitude that inspires monographs is the best way to place a screen in front of the problem the very scent of which strikes terror into the heart of a social-democrat movement turned opportunist". (23) He said it would be undialectical and unmaterialistic to ask whether this theoretical relapse into the methodology of vulgar economics was the cause or the effect of opportunism. In the eyes of historical materialism the two tendencies belonged together: they constituted the ambience of social democracy before the war. The debate as conducted by Bauer, Eckstein and company did not turn on the truth or falsity of the solution Rosa Luxembourgh offered to the problem of Accumulation of Capital Debate centred on whether or not there was a problem at all. If its existence was derived from the point of view of the industrial capitalist it was easy to see that no problem existed.

Logically enough the critics who dismissed the whole problem also ignored the decisive chapter of her book - "The historical determinants of Accumulation". This can be seen from the way they formulated their key question. The question they posed was this: Marx's formulae were arrived at on the basis of a hypothetical society (posited for reasons of method) which consisted only of capitalists and workers. Were these

formulae correct? How were they to be interpreted? The critics completely overlooked the fact that Marx posited this society for the sake of argument, i.e. to see the problem more clearly, before pressing forward to the larger question of the place of this problem within society as a whole. They overlooked the fact that Marx himself took this step with reference to so-called primitive accumulation, in volume 1 of Capital. Consciously or unconsciously they suppressed the fact that on this issue Capital is an incomplete fragment which stops short at the point where this problem should be opened up. In this sense what Rosa Luxembourgh has done is precisely to take up the thread where Marx left off and to solve the problem in his spirit.

This chapter was the last round in the debate about Accumulation of Capital between Rosa and Otto Bauer. In Rosa Luxembourgh's hands the problem becomes a historical one about the conditions of accumulation and thus it becomes certain that unlimited accumulation is not possible. Placed into the total social context, accumulated becomes dialectical it then swells into the problem of the whole capitalist system.

EVE: And she was praised for having a greater understanding of theory and how to apply it to real problems of the day. Also the unity of individual fate and the total process is the main thread running through her theory and her life, she always spoke of the proletariat and his relation to society as a whole. The means of organization for the proletariat was the party .... " bearer of the class consciousness of the proletariat and the consciousness of its historical vocation". (24)



The proletariat is at one and the same time product of the permanent crisis in capitalism and the instrument of these tendencies which drives capitalism towards crisis. In Marx's words "the proletariat carries out the sentence which private society passes upon itself by its creation of a proletariat". By combating capitalism it discovers its own place in society. She said class consciousness was the ethics of the proletariat, the unity of its theory and its practice, the point at which the economic necessity of the struggle for liberation changes into freedom. The strength of the party is nourished by the trust of the masses, which economic necessity have forced into revolt. Nourished by the feelings that the party is the objective of their own will. The visible and organized expression of their consciousness, of their oppression as a class.

The opportunists which Rosa spoke of, could not understand this active self knowledge, so their leaders spoke scornfully of, in the authentic tones of the free - thinking petty bourgeois of the religious faith that they saw at the roots of Bolshevism and revolutionary marxism. By "cloaking their negativity in the "splendid mantle of a cool and objective scientific method, every word betrays their complete divorce from the proletariat". (25) However there could be no guarantee of her certitude - the victory of the proletariat except by testing and proving the dialectical method, by action by living and dying for the revolution. Such fervour was at the heart of Rosa's belief ..." A marxist who cultivates the objectivity of academic study is just as reprehensible as the man who believes that the victory of the world revolution can be guaranteed by natural law. The so called "faith" is no more than the certitude that regardless of all temporary defects and setbacks, the historical process will come to fruition through our deeds". (26)



Opportunists again confronted by the dilemma posed by the impotence of communism, foresaw defects and that they must desist, but Rosa saw early on that the necessarily premature seizure of power was inevitable. She unmasked the resulting opportunistic fear and lack of faith in revolution as political nonsense which assumes that society progresses mechanically and imagines a definite point in time external to and unconnected with the class struggle when it will be won. Rosa's clear sighted certitude guided her, foreseeing her own death in fact, in the prematurity of the 1919 uprising in Berlin. Theoretically she had predicted its defeat years earlier. Yet she remained constantly on the side of the masses, a martyr to her unshakable belief.

EVE: No, I'm not making work specifically about Rosa Luxembourg, and not because she was a feminist, she refused to be pigeonholed on the "women's question" even though she was a close friend of Clara Zetkin, who is recognised as a Founder of Women's liberation as a working class mass movement (27) Probably, she would have been put into a corner of political discourse if her voice was only for women's oppression. She was more concerned with the underlying roots of inequality, where sex oppression is just another symptom of man's cruelty of his fellow human beings. She suffered a lot of antagonism, though from men and women ....

Once she wrote to Bekel complaining that from the start she had been given a "peculiar reception" in the german social democrat camp - and not only by those who oppressed her views. She attributed it to the fact of being an outsider ("nicht de la maison") The real reason was probably that it was important to resist her above all because she was a woman - a woman who dared to interfere in the masculine business of politics. Not only

that: she did not content herself with asking modestly for the opinions of practical politicians, but was 'cheeky' enough to develop her own views and - what was worst off all - put forward such convincing arguments that others had gradually to capitulate. (28)

EVE: That's why I'm interested in her life and work as I sit in college talking about making ideologically sound, marxist - feminist work. Only seeing all the limitations, psychological and social. I can't let myself away with naive ideas or hopes ... not like Brecht. Interestingly, he always used strong female characters, almost as doubly exploited victims of capitalism. (29)

Brecht's theatrical experiments where conventional means were constantly destroyed won great support among the most advanced cadres of the working classes. "The Mother" for instance, where the workers judged everything according to the truth of its content. They welcomed every innovation which helped the representation of the mechanics of society. They rejected everything that seemed theatrical. Technical equipment that merely worked for its own sake, that is to say, did not fulfil, or no longer fulfilled its purpose anything that was old, commonplace, or trivial, that no longer made one think they did not like at all ("You get really nothing out of it") if one needed an aesthetic you could get one here. "I shall never forget" says Brecht "how a worker looked at me when I replied to his suggestion that it would destroy the artistic form, he put his head on one side and smiled. A whole area of aesthetics collapsed because of that polite smile. The workers were not afraid to teach us and they were not afraid to learn" (30) Brecht spoke from direct experience then he was unafraid to produce unusual things. Bourgeois interjections

and opinions of working classes perceptions of art called art. "high flown stuff - they don't understand". (31) From this emerged Brechts breathtaking contractions and compressions in which there was simplicity and a fearless eye for the complex. The sharp eyes of the workers were capable of penetrating the surface of naturalistic representations of reality, to achieve a more accurate image of the real social forces at work.

The criteria therefore, that Brecht claimed for popular art must carefully be chosen. The legibility of a work is not guaranteed because it is written like other works understood in their time. These other works were not always written like the works before them. Steps had to be taken to make them intelligible in the same way, we must do something for the intelligibility of new works today. "There is not only such a thing as being popular, there is also the process of becoming popular". (31) and on George Lukacs criticisms of Brecht's Modernism; "with a wave of his hand", said Brecht "he sweeps away inhuman technique, he looks back to our forefathers (classical works) and he implores their degenerate descendants to emulate them. Are writers confronted by a dehumanized man, has spiritual life been devastated, is he driven through life at an intolerable pace. Have his logical capacities been weakened to the so that the distinction between things no longer visible? Writers just have to keep to the old means to produce a rich life of the spirit. Held back the pace of events by a slow narrative, bring the individual back to the centre of the stage and so on". (32) Lukacs, regarded modernism, not as a protest to, but as a rejection of reality, certainly not concrete criticism, escaping into existential nothingness. (33) Lukacs was deeply committed to the continuity of classical European literature. The whole of his literary criticism of this decade was a deeply sustained attack on



aesthetic modernism mediated with the use of marxist analysis. Since however, in certain ways Lukács outlook resembled and provided philosophical underpinning for, soviet cultural policy (if not for the actual dismal practice of socialist realism) Brecht, by formulating his own response to this body of work was defending experimentation against official orthodox methods and developing important theoretical basis for the marxist reception of modernism. (34)

Rosa Luxembourgy, held views on the possibilities within literature, of a socialist realist literature as a means of consciousness raising among working classes. In Rosa Luxembourgy the split between aesthetic appreciation and Marxism is deliberate and manifest. She did not suppress her love for Art or abandon her artistic endeavour, in favour of her revolutionary activity. Rather she maintained her love for the arts by a deliberate refusal to analyse or criticise them, the closest she came to criticism in any aesthetic capacity was incidentally that of Marx's 'The accumulation of capital'. She wrote to Hans Diefenbach in 1917,

"It is above all the tendency of my taste, in scientific work as well as in art to treasure only the simple, the Calm and the Noble: I now find the much praised volume of Marx's capital, with its superabundance of rococo ornamentation in the Hegelian style, an atrocity, for which (from the party's point of view.) I should be placed in a house of correction for five years and discommunicated for ten". (35)

She rated classical literature of both Russia and Germany, very highly. The predominant characteristic of objects was the "gnawing and painful, but creative spirit of social responsibility .. from its first days at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it never denied its social



responsibility - never forgot to be socially critical". (36) On Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky .... "Their thoughts and emotions are not governed by the desire to hold onto the status quo. Theirs is the concern for man kind and deepest response to social injustice". (37) "The Mother", she said shook her deeply. The working class struggle she felt denoted the cultural revolution of society, the workers craving for knowledge was one of the most noteworthy cultural manifestations of our day. But active participation of the workers in the march of culture is subject to the fulfilment of very definite social conditions..... in that culture is created by the ruling class, the aim is to ensure the direct satisfaction of the needs of the social process and in part to satisfy the mental needs of the members of the governing class. The working classes she said, would not be in a position to create science and culture of its own until it has been fully emancipated from its present class position. She advocated the creation of the social conditions "requisite for free cultural development ... the workers, can only advance in so far as they create for themselves, the intellectual weapons needed in their struggle for liberation". (38) It would seem she predicted that socially conscious literature would bridge the gap between the bourgeois cultural forms and proletarian freedom to create its own working class culture. She wrote to Franz Mehring, "Thanks to your books and articles, the German proletariat has been brought in close touch not only with classic German philosophy, but also with classic German literature". His interest was to bring the classics of literature within the understanding of the working classes. (39)

Brecht's attitude on Lukács' literary theories are related in the essay "On the formalistic character of a theory of realism". (40) Lukács' had earlier charged Brecht with formalism Brecht demonstrated the fact that

Lukács' realist theory was based on the form of a few Bourgeois novels of the nineteenth century. He seemed to have ignored lyric poetry, or drama, two genres in which Brecht excelled, and which had reached high standards in Germany. Brecht talks about his own approach", - I have constantly to construct models, anyone who saw me at work would think I was merely interested in form .... attempting, full of scepticism to verify a particular fact, rubbing the sand from my eyes the whole time, so to speak, I have vague notions of colours at the back of my mind, impressions of particular seasons of the year. I have inflections without words, see gestures without meanings think of desirable groupings of un-named figures and so on. Images are extremely undefined, in no way exciting ... I think, "If I could only write a long, transparent, autumnal crystal clear chapter with an irregular curve, a kind of red wave form running through it". (41)

EVE: The form, I call it my "Brechtian Red Lechery ....

A Brechtian Red;

"Construct", she said

"An arc of blood"... cunt struck

In the Language Laboratory.

This poem, about an image, I love, the arc of blood. As though to deconstruct it for its pornographic possibilities, and then to reveal the enjoyment in the deconstruction itself not letting myself away with the pleasure of the words as they play on the audience. As though, free to play but aware all the time of what the audience might mistrust because of its task as a visually literate audience, of responsibility towards representation in advanced capitalist culture;

Transactions .....

Wench ... Arc of Blood.

Moon: its curved, did you say curved? ... like an Arc? or an arch?

Wench: Archies studio: Hand relief ten quid....

"Of course", he says, "the artist is concerned with formal matters, formalism must be carefully defined, not merely applied to so-called "unrealistic" works. (42) Roland Barthes on formalism, warns against attacks on formalism "always being made in the name of content, the subject, the Cause, in the name of the signified". (43) the formalism he has in mind does not mean neglecting or ignoring content i.e ("man") but in not stopping at the threshold of content - content is precisely what interests formalism because its endless tasks each time is push content back until the notion of content ceases to be pertinent, to displace it according to a successive play of forms. Verne quoting Poe said; "Happenstance must be the matter of unceasing and rigorous calculations" it is not matter which is materialistic, but the retraction, the lifting of safely catches, what is formalistic is not "Form" but the relative time of contents, the precariousness of references, (44) Brecht mentions the autarky of the third reich as being "perfect on paper: a case of political formalism. (45) National socialism was socialism in form, i.e. formally it is correct, formally the task is solved, means that really it is not solved. Or 'I did it to preserve the form' means what I did was not very important. In this way Brecht unmasked as formalistic, even works which did not elevate form above social content ... works which were realistic in form. (46)

To start with Brechts polemic against Lukács' fostered on the manifest contradiction between Lukács' view of the great European Realists of the 19th century as essentially bourgeois writers and Lukács' claim that their



literary achievements could serve as a guide to proletarian or socialist writers in the 20th century. If the realism of Balzac or Tolstoy were determinite products of a particular phase off class history how could any marxist argue that the principles of their fiction could be relevant at any phase of subsequent history, dominated by the struggles of a new antagonistic class. Capitalism had changed drastically and no longer necessarily produced historical forms of individuality of the Tolstoyan or Balzacian type. To refurbish these would be a flight from realism. Conversely, where Lukács changed modernist writing with formalism, because of its use of fragmented techniques such as interior monologue or montage, it was actually Lukács himself who had fallen into a deluded and timeless formalism by his determination to deduce forms from literary traditions with no regard for the historical reality that must encompass and transform all literature. The genres in which Brecht excelled had been the fields of the most radical innovation in German culture since the 19th century, Brecht stressed the need for experimentation, for "open-ended" works, which didn't offer solutions on paper - by presenting well rounded individuals in society.

Although, it seems to me, Brecht shared with Rosa Luxembourg deep similarities in their regard of the importance of the individual as well as his relationships to mass society they would have differed in their attitudes about the potential of art as a transcending praxis. Rosa saw that people could only work within the existing frameworks of bourgeois culture. Brecht sought to make representations outside the mainstream apparatus and to make the workers shape things for themselves. By revealing the 'casual network', he thought that they might break out of the circle which trapped them. Rosa saw art merely as a symptom with

limited possibilities, except on the personal level. Brecht saw it as a potentially emancipatory device.

EVE: Its like trying to break out of another circle, artists making political art, when a college education, from a Dublin working class point of view is seen as increasingly elitist. Look at the way, Ma, you told that chap collecting for the Workers' party, that you weren't interested - because I told you he was in college with me. You thought of him as privileged so he had no credibility as a socialist. Well, that perception, I believe, is one which art must take into account. It is like another role which the art piece could be seen to play so I assign the image two different 'roles' to play, as though to investigate what is left between them. But its important that it uses an everyday object, annoyingly normal things that have been deconstructed to death, like soap or fashion advertising ... (glancing through a magazine) Look, a costume for the apple, it's got to be halfway between being floaty and being really stark and trendy, more of the splitting, for both psychoanalysis and seduction, desire and desire ... a sort of scientific poem.

Barthes decided to investigate fashion as one of these objects of communication, as they pass on everyday existence and an opportunity to self knowledge on a most immediate level, as one invests oneself in ones own life. They also possess an intellectual existence, offering themselves to systematic analysis by formal means. As the project could not effectively study combined systems, i.e. an object comprising manufacturing techniques, images (photographic) and written text all at the same time, he decided to concentrate on written fashion - described

fashion, as a new dimension, as a projection of a collective image  
repetroir It is a medium for images, stereotypes, a great wealth of  
elements that are not real, but utopian in nature presenting a stereotyped  
image of femininity behind the phraseology of fashion magazines.  
"Moreover fashion tries to make the garments it describes correspond to  
what we want to express about ourselves ... the complex role we want to  
play in society". (47)

In the essay about this project, he talks about why he chose such a  
seemingly frivolous object to make structural analysis. He deliberately  
wished to put forward the method for which the object was only the  
pretext. he called it a poetic project. A scientific poem ... the  
creation of an intellectual object from seemingly nothing worth talking  
about. (48)

EVE: Its a self-consciously apple-y costume, so that you can see that I  
am packaging and signifying ... it knows it is in a performance art  
piece. Full of inferences about my mental state, and 'switching;'   
messages ... No, I don't think, its confusing. The key to the  
riddle is in the riddle. That's from Rosa Luxembourgh. She used to  
write about the threads connecting her to life in all its variety.  
She was fascinated by geology;

"Strange

How most people feel the earth  
form under their feet,

When inside it is flaming" (49)

Almost, one might say, these poems were analogies for her  
perceptions of the economic superstructure, which she so carefully



scrutinised seeing contradiction and Flux, where others saw fixed patterns and solidity. Her lyrical talents were by no means confined to poetry: The reader of Rosa Luxembourgs's writings will find that the reproaches and accusations directed against dogmatic mechanical interpretations of Marxism in general reflect her ability to grasp the infinite richness of reality, to give a vivid picture of the multiple connections between things, to seize reality in its living rhythm ... her liveliness and depth of feeling .... far removed from the soul less and lifeless descriptions that her contemporaries have inflicted on us under the pretext of marxism (50)

She wrote to Mathilde and Robert Seidl,

"Do you now what keeps bothering me, now? I'm not satisfied with the way in which people in the party usually write articles they are all so conventional, so wooden, so cut and dry ..... scribblings are usually not lyrics, but whirrings, without colour or emotion..... I believe the cause lies in the fact that when people write they forget for the most part to dig deeply into themselves and to feel the whole import and truth of what they are writing. I believe that in every time every day in every article you must live through the thing again ...." (51) Rosa had a reputation as an extraordinary speaker. Not that she was a charismatic in the usual sense, she avoided pathos and appealed more to the reason of her listeners than to their emotions. But she led them out of their usual ideas and into wider perspectives, and swept them along with her fireiness and her whole forceful personality.

Poles reading Rosa Luxembour's political writing, were enthusiastic at her literacy style, at its power and its shimmering beauty, and place her among the great masters of their language. Germans who are even only slightly acquainted with her work in German can well understand that she was mistrustful of her German. She was plagued by the fear that her Polish might creep in and affect its style. There was no need for her misgivings she wrote a clear and masterly German, she had absorbed the spirit of the language, even the earthy idioms of the people gave her no problems, and she knew how to use them to add colour and force to her arguments. As a hammer in the craftsman's hand becomes an extension of his arm, so language to her was part of her being. Sometimes she wrote long and very complicated sentences but she never succumbed to the possibility of allowing the thread of ideas to get entangled in an underbrush of subordinate clauses. Her sentences grow out of her ideas even when they are complicated they run freely and naturally and are therefore clear. Rosa's great talent as a propagandist is clear, she never forces her ideas on her readers; she seeks to convince, she is above all teacher, rarely agitator. In her manner of looking at the world and its problems, she always grasps the complex and intertwining phenomena of life, and in particular of social life, as a whole and as a process. Yet her presentation is never pedantic. The echo of reality always resounds in it and one can feel the fiery and forceful temperament of the author. (52)

She used her gifts at poetic language just as much as Brecht did as a dramatist in his political theatre. Both relied on a premeditated passion to rouse the masses which they sought to guide towards a new society. Rosa through direct action, Brecht however, seems to have placed all this vehemence onto a stage space, more safely one might say. "The Mother", in 1932 seems to have been the zenith of his political fury, it was the only

overtly political play which met with a certain amount of approval from the communists. He was never outwardly as communist from then on. By 1940 he had ceased to identify with the proletariat but he retained the same romantic attachment which gave birth to the utopian communism of Marx and Engels, and continues as ideology today. To the 1951 audiences of The Berliner Ensemble's production of "The Mother" Pelega Vslassova was a sentimental of a heroine of the revolution of 1905 (53).

The first Russian Revolution dates from Bloody Sunday of 22 January 1905. Rosa Luxembourgh was living in Berlin at the time of the 1905 revolution in Russia and working with the feverish exertion of all her energies despite her ill health - studying political events closely, vigorously critical of illusions and utopian ideas prevalent in the revolutionary consciousness.

At the same time she devoted her entire strength to her activities in the German and the international working class movement in order to work out the significance of the events in Russia for the proletariat as a whole. Russia's revolution had strengthened the revolutionary consciousness of the German workers and made them ready for action. German workers were affected by an immense thirst for information about the Russian revolution. People throughout the country wanted to hear Rosa Luxembourgh. The series of innumerable meetings where she spoke as a representative of the revolution became a tour of triumph. Because of the pressure of the enthusiastic masses, she was allowed to speak even on trade union platforms which up to now had been forbidden territory to her. Clara Zetkin had helped a great deal in making her friend's conquest possible; with equal energy she had thrown herself into the centre of the work



propagating the ideas of the russian revolution. Rosa in February joyfully greeted the revolt of the russian people who had risen in their millions to go out on the first general strike in Russia. Everything she had achieved up till then - the scientific investigations, the intellectual struggles, training and organisation of revolutionary consciousness had been guided by the ever present thought of revolution and now it was there. (54)

Brecht, conversely discovered Marx as his audience For his dramatic practice, which he subsequently consciously directed towards marxist ends. But there have been those who have asked him "Mr. Brecht, are you in earnest?" - with regard to his political theatre.

"I often imagine being interrogated by a tribunal", now tell us Mr. Brecht are you really in earnest?", I would have to admit, that No, I'm not completely in earnest, I think too much about artistic problems, you knew about what is good for the theatre, to be completely in earnest." (55)

EVE: It points to a certain honesty about his attitudes to the limitations imposed upon political art. When the aesthetic considerations weigh as heavily as the ideological ones one is bound to lean towards one to the detriment of the other. In my opinion the most important aspect to be highlighted for my own purposes and intentions, are those very areas of 'limitation, or boundary. If it could be described as a line drawn marking out the limits that a piece of work can reach, aesthetically, or socially and then watching. the possible perceptions at both sides of that line ... which ideally would place the observer at that line ....

"Once", she said lightly

"As apple, I fell to earth (She falls down)

But what I did

Only shifted the dust about" (sighs dramatically)

- Pssst. Hey! Eve,

Watch out for the serpent....

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