

On the Concept of Art & Drama in Line with Friedrich Schiller's "Total Revolution"

Of course, it was generally known even before the appearance of this drama that capital can not get fat unless it devours labor, that wealth can not be hoarded except through the channels of poverty, hunger, and cold; but such things are better kept in the dark, lest the victims awaken to a realization of their position. But it is the purpose of the modern drama to rouse the consciousness of the oppressed . . .

—The Social Significance of the Modern Drama (1914)

... the modern drama, operating through the double channel of dramatist and interpreter, affecting as it does both mind and heart, is the strongest force in developing social discontent, swelling the powerful tide of unrest that sweeps onward and over the dam of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition.

—The Social Significance of the Modern Drama

Publishers, theatrical managers, and critics ask not for the quality inherent in creative art, but will it meet with a good sale, will it suit the palate of the people? Alas, this palate is like a dumping ground; it relishes anything that needs no mental

mastication. As a result, the mediocre, the ordinary, the commonplace represents the chief literary output.

—Anarchism and Other Essays (1910)

On the Concept of Beauty in Line with Friedrich Schiller's
"Total Revolution"

Real wealth consists in things of utility and beauty, in things that help to create strong, beautiful bodies and surroundings inspiring to live in.

—Anarchism and Other Essays (1910)

Man must get back to himself before he can learn his relation to his fellows. Prometheus chained to the Rock of Ages is doomed to remain the prey of the vultures of darkness. Unbind Prometheus, and you dispel the night and its horrors.

—"The Philosophy of Atheism" (1916) (In her metaphor based upon Shelley's revolutionary poem, "Prometheus Unbound," Prometheus represents humanity, and being "chained" signifies being bound by religious terror and imposed morality, leading to darkness and suffering; by "unbinding" Prometheus, humanity can dispel this ignorance and embrace life, purpose, and beauty.)

“I want freedom, the right to self-expression, everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things.” Anarchism meant that to me, and I would live it in spite of the whole world—prisons, persecution, everything. Yes, even in spite of the condemnation of my own closest comrades I would live my beautiful ideal.

—Living My Life (1931)

I did not believe that a Cause which stood for a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from convention and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. I insisted that our Cause could not expect me to become a nun and that the movement would not be turned into a cloister. If it meant that, I did not want it.

—Living My Life

Out of the chaos, the future emerges in harmony and beauty.

—“The New Year” (Mother Earth, 1923)

I believe—indeed, I know—that whatever is fine and beautiful in the human expresses and asserts itself in spite of government, and not because of it.

—What I Believe (1908)

On the Concept of Revolution in Line with Friedrich Schiller's "Total Revolution"

The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well-being.

—My Disillusionment in Russia (1923 book that details her experience in Soviet Russia following her deportation in 1919 and her growing realization that the Bolshevik regime was a crushing, anti-revolutionary state, rather than the worker's utopia she initially hoped for.)

The dominant, almost general, idea of revolution—particularly the Socialist idea—is that revolution is a violent change of social conditions through which one social class, the working class, becomes dominant over another class, the capitalist class. It is the conception of a purely physical change, and as such it involves only political scene shifting and institutional rearrangements

—My Disillusionment in Russia

With the conception that the Revolution was only a means of securing political power, it was inevitable that all revolutionary values should be subordinated to the needs of the Socialist State;

indeed, exploited to further the security of the newly acquired governmental power.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

Revolution is indeed a violent process. But if it is to result only in a change of dictatorship, in a shifting of names and political personalities, then it is hardly worthwhile.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that revolution is in vain unless inspired by its ultimate ideal. Revolutionary methods must be in tune with revolutionary aims.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are one thing, while methods and tactics are another. This conception is a potent menace to social regeneration. All human experience teaches that methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the aims and means become identical.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

Revolution that divests itself of ethical values thereby lays the foundation of injustice, deceit, and oppression for the future society.

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Our institutions and conditions rest upon deep-seated ideas. To change those conditions and at the same time leave the underlying ideas and values intact means only a superficial transformation, one that cannot be permanent or bring real betterment. It is a change of form only, not of substance, as so tragically proven by Russia.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

This orthodox Marxian view leaves an important factor out of consideration—a factor perhaps more vital to the possibility and success of a social revolution than—even the industrial element. That is the psychology of the masses at a given period. Why is there, for instance, no social revolution in the United States,

France, or even in Germany? Surely these countries have reached the industrial development set by Marx as the culminating stage. The truth is that industrial development and sharp social contrasts are of themselves by no means sufficient to give birth to a new society or to call forth a social revolution. The necessary social consciousness, the required mass psychology is missing in such countries as the United States and the others mentioned. That explains why no social revolution has taken place there.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

The Communist dogma that the end justifies all means was also doing much harm. It had thrown the door wide open to the worst human passions, and discredited the ideals of the Revolution.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

No revolution can ever succeed as a factor of liberation unless the MEANS used to further it be identical in spirit and tendency with the PURPOSES to be achieved. Revolution is the negation of the existing, a violent protest against man's inhumanity to man with all the thousand and one slaveries it involves. It is the destroyer of dominant values upon which a complex system of injustice, oppression, and wrong has been built up by ignorance and brutality. It is the herald of NEW VALUES, ushering in a

transformation of the basic relations of man to man, and of man to society.

—My Disillusionment in Russia

Nothing would prove more disastrous to our ideas, we contended, than to neglect the effect of the internal upon the external, of the psychological motives and needs upon existing institutions.

—Living My Life (Cf. Friedrich Schiller on the sub-political roots of man's social dissatisfaction and Herbert Marcuse's Neo-Freudian theory of social change. The common point here is that human beings have never been free enough to express their true nature.)