INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata, Playgirl of the Western World: Aristophanes on the Early Modern Stage

by

Marina A. Kotzamani

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1997

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 9807953

Copyright 1997 by
Kotzamani, Marina Anastasia

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9807953
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

© 1997

Marina A. Kotzamani

All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

March 14, 1997
Date

Marvin Carlson
Chair of Examining Committee

3/14/97
Date

Executive Officer
Jill Dolan

Daniel Gerould

Miriam D'Aponte

Stanley Kauffmann

The City University of New York

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

To my parents

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation is largely a solitary activity. Indeed, while working on my thesis I would frequently experience and despair over "the loneliness of the long distance runner."[1] In retrospect, though, I realize this is a rather melodramatic way of looking at my adventure. Throughout this course, there have always been caring people around me, providing advice, intellectual stimulation, practical help and moral sustenance.

First I wish to acknowledge the members of my committee, Professors Marvin Carlson, Daniel Gerould, Miriam D'Aponte and Stanley Kauffmann. My work has greatly been improved by their thorough, penetrative and constructive criticism. Moreover, all were extremely available for consultation, stimulating and supportive. I am proud to have been their student. Professor Marvin Carlson proved to be the ideal adviser for me. I am grateful to him for discouraging my destructive tendency to view the dissertation as a lifetime project. He has helped me appreciate the importance of timely completing tasks if one wishes to move on in research and in life. Professors Daniel Gerould and Stanley Kauffmann had an enthusiasm for my subject which was moving and extremely inspiring to me. It gave me the impetus to be more creative and to work harder. Professor D'Aponte has also had a very positive presence in my committee, contributing a woman's nurturing perspective and sound common sense. I also wish to acknowledge a fifth reader of the dissertation: Dimitri Spathis, Professor Emeritus at the University of Athens. I thank him warmly for carefully reading my work and offering insightful commentary on it.

The subject of this dissertation is inter-cultural and has involved research in several countries. My task has been facilitated by the efficient help of friends and

[1] This is the title of a film by Tony Richardson (1962).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

kind strangers. I am indebted to Jeanne Eichelberger, Head of Special Collections of the State University of New York, at Binghamton and to Gisela Prossnitz, the Director of the Max Reinhardt-Forschungs-und-Gedaenkstaette in Salzburg. Both have generously taken time to find and send me material on Max Reinhardt invaluable to my research and to clarify my queries. I have also greatly appreciated assistance from the staff of the Deutsche Bibiothek in Leipzig and of the Staat Bibliothek (Newspaper department) in Berlin. Miraculously, the efficiency of these libraries carries over long distance. I am also grateful to Pamela Burrough, who undertook to zerox and send me manuscripts of Laurence Housman from the Somerset County Library, in England. My research in Paris was effectively speeded up by Florence Roth, the director of the Societe des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques. She promptly and efficiently put at my disposal eveything I needed, enabling me to finish an enormous amount of work in one day.

Warmest thanks are also due to my close friends Andri Havouzari and John Kafritsas, to my aunt Nini Capellaris, as well as to Lida Triantafillidou, Fofi Akrithakis, and Elfi Oikonomou for helping me to obtain research material from Austin Texas, Salzburg, Berlin, London and New York. I have also greatly appreciated the help of Nona Molesky, who generously volunteered to assist me in translating excerpts from Russian sources for the thesis. The layout of this dissertation is the product of harmonious Greco-Turkish cooperation; many thanks to my good friend Semih Firincioglu for formatting my text and for scanning the pictures included in the thesis.

In the last months of writing this dissertation I have enjoyed the affection of my close friends in New York, Sophia and Spyros Alexopoulos and of my cousins, Anne-Marie and Peter Embiricos. I also wish to thank my mother and brother, Maria and Dimitri Kozamanis for admirably standing by me. Both have been extremely reliable, encouraging and loving towards me throughout this challenging adventure.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Finally, I am pleased to acknowledge the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Museum of the City of New York and the Max Reinhardt Archive of the State University of New York at Binghamton, for allowing me to include photocopies of pictorial material from their archives in my dissertation.[2] Last but not least, I am indebted to the Onassis Foundation for generously supporting my work with a two-year fellowship.

[2] Credits are as follows: figures 3-1, 3-2, 3-5, 3-12, 4-1, 4-28, 4-30 to 4-37 and 4-41 are included in this work by courtesy of The Museum of the City of New York; figures 3-3, 3-6 to 3-11, 3-13, 4-29 and 4-38 to 4-40 are included by courtesy of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; figures 2-1 to 2-25 are included by courtesy of The Max Reinhardt Archive, Special Collection, Glenn G. Bartle Library, Binghamton University, State University of New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table of Contents

	page
Introduction	1
Chapter I The Discovery of Lysistrata's Libido: Aristophanes Joins the Boulevard	11
Chapter II Fun and Games on Reinhardt's Staircase: Aristophanes Ludens	90
Chapter III Lysistrata as Théâtre du Peuple: The Impact of the Soviet Revolution	175
Chapter IV Lysistrata and the American Popular Culture: "Aristophanes Puts 'em in the Aisles."	254
Chapter V 'No Sex Please, we are Suffragettes:' Aristophanes Votes for Women	336
Chapter VI Conclusions	405
Bibliography	413

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

List of Illustrations

Chapter I

Fig. 1-1 Drawing of the first set for Maurice Donnay's original production of Lysistrata (1892).

Fig. 1-2 Drawing of the second set for M. Donnay's original production of Lysistrata (1892).

Fig. 1-3 Photograph of the cast for M. Donnay's original production of Lysistrata (1892).

Fig. 1-4 Photograph of Gabrielle Réjane as Lysistrata in the 1896 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-5 Photograph of an Athenian woman in costume in M. Donnay's original production of Lysistrata (1892).

Fig. 1-6 Photograph of the Prologos character in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-7 Photograph of the women's meeting in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-8 Photograph of the principal male characters in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-9 Photograph of Lampito and her husband, Taraxion, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-10 Photograph of Lysistrata and Agathos before the temple of Artemis in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-11 Photograph of Salabaccha seducing Lycon in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-12 Photograph of Salabaccha's salon in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-13 Photograph of Salabaccha's salon in the 1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-14 Photograph of the miracle scene in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-15 Photograph of the finale in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-16 Drawing of Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-17 Drawing of R. Félyne as Salabaccha in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-18 Caricatures of the actresses potraying Lysistrata and Lampito in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-19 Drawing of Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-20 Photograph of the secret rendezvous of Lysistrata and Agathos in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-21 Photograph of Lysistrata and Agathos in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-22 Caricature of the principal actors in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-23 Caricature of the principal actors in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-24 Photograph of the finale in the 1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-25 Photograph of the women's meeting in the 1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Chapter II

Fig. 2-1 Photograph of the set, designed by Ernst Stern for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-2 Costume designs for the chorus women by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-3 Costume designs for the warriors by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-4 Costume design for a female chorus leader by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-5 Costume design for a female chorus leader by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-6 Costume design for a female chorus leader by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-7 Costume design for a market woman by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-8 Costume design for a market woman by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-9 Designs of female head-dresses by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-10 Costume design for the Proboulos by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-11 Costume design for a servant by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-12 Costume design for Kinesias by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-13 Costume design for Kinesias by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-14 Costume design for Manes, Kinesias' servant, by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-15 Costume design for a dancer by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-16 Costume design for a Spartan herald by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-17 Costume design for a Spartan envoy by E. Stern for M. Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Fig. 2-18 Drawing conveying an impression of Lysistrata by E. Stern (1908).

Fig. 2-19 Drawing conveying an impression of the first choral battle in Lysistrata by E. Stern (1908).

Fig. 2-20 Drawing conveying an impression of choral battle in Lysistrata by E. Stern (1908).

Fig. 2-21 Drawing of figures inspired by Lysistrata by E. Stern (1908).

Fig. 2-22 Drawing of figures inspired by Lysistrata by E. Stern (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-23 Photograph of scene from M. Reinhardt's 1920 production of Lysistrata at the Grosses Schauspielhaus.

Fig. 2-24 Drawing of the spatial configuration for Lysistrata by M. Reinhardt from the director's promptbook for the 1920 production.

Fig. 2-25 Sample of M. Reinhardt's annotation in the Lysistrata promptbook for the 1920 production.

Chapter III

Fig. 3-1 Costume sketches by Isaac Rabinovich for Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1923).

Fig. 3-2 Costume sketches of female chorus members by Isaac Rabinovich for Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1923).

Fig. 3-3 Photograph of the choral battle, act I, in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-4 Photograph of the choral battle, act I, in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig 3-5 Photograph of the choral battle, act I, in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-6 Photograph of the Proboulos and two members of the male chorus in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-7 Photograph of Lysistrata debating with the Proboulos in Nemirovich-Danchenko's production of the play (1925).

Fig. 3-8 Photograph of Olga Baclanova as Lysistrata in Nemirovich-Danchenko's production of the play (1925).

Fig. 3-9 Photograph of Lysistrata and Kinesias in Nemirovich-Danchenko's production of the play (1925).

Fig. 3-10 Photograph of the choral battle, act II, in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-11 Photograph of the choruses addressing the audience in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-12 Photograph of the women bidding for the favor of the audience in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-13 Photograph of scene from act III in Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925).

Fig. 3-14 A model of the set by Nicolai Menshutin for Liubov Yarovaya (1926).

Fig. 3-15 A model of A. Arapov's set for The Bridge of Fire (1929).

Fig. 3-16 Two photographs of Liubov Popova's set for The Magnanimous Cuckold (1922).

Chapter IV

Fig. 4-1 Photograph of Norman Bel Geddes' model for the set of Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-2 Photograph of Bel Geddes' model for the set of Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-3 Drawing of floor plan of Bel Geddes' set for Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-4 Photograph of Violet Kemble Cooper as Lysistrata, in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-5 Photograph of Blanche Yurka as Lysistrata in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-6 Photograph of Lysistrata consoling Kalonika in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-7 Photograph of Miriam Hopkins as Lysistrata in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-8 Drawing of Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-9 Photograph of Lysistrata and Myrrhina in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-10 Photograph of Lysistrata and Lampito in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-11 Photograph of a young Athenian woman in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-12 Photograph of a Spartan woman in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-13 Photograph of Hortense Alden as Myrrhina in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-14 Photograph of Spartan women taking the oath in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-15 Photograph of the young women in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-16 Photograph of an old Athenian woman in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-17 Photograph of the old men's chorus in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-18 Photograph of Sydney Greenstreet as the President of the Senate surrounded by his retinue in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-19 Photograph of the President of the Senate debating with Lysistrata in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-20 Photograph of Kinesias and Lysistrata in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-21 Photograph of Ernest Truex as Kinesias in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-22 Photograph of Ernest Truex as Kinesias in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-23 Photograph of Ernest Truex as Kinesias in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-24 Photograph of Polydorus. Kalonika and Kinesias in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-25 Photograph of Myrrhina and Kinesias in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-26 Photograph of Lysistrata conducting the peace negotiations. in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-27 Photograph of dancers performing the Bacchanalia in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-28 Photograph of the finale in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-29 Stills from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-30 Drawing. conveying an impression of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-31 Cartoon of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929) depicting the principal characters.

Fig. 4-32 Cartoon of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929) depicting Kinesias, Myrrhina and Lysistrata.

Fig. 4-33 Drawing of Violet Kemble Cooper as Lysistrata in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-34 Cartoon, caricaturing principal actors of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-35 Cartoon, depicting principal characters of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-36 Cartoon, conveying impressions of individual characters in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-37 Cartoon, depicting principal characters of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-38 Photograph of scene from Lysistrata directed by Blanche Yurka (1938).

Fig. 4-39 Photograph of Lysistrata's finale directed by Blanche Yurka (1938).

Fig. 4-40 Photograph of scene from Lysistrata directed by Blanche Yurka (1938).

Fig. 4-41 Photograph of the President of the Senate and Lysistrata from a later production of the play influenced by Bel Geddes.

Chapter V

Fig. 5-1 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "Lysistrata shielding her coynte."

Fig. 5-2 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "The toilet of Lampito."

Fig. 5-3 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "Lysistrata haranguing the Athenian women."

Fig. 5-4 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "Lysistrata defending the Acropolis."

Fig. 5-5 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "Two Athenian women in distress."

Fig. 5-6 Illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896): "Cinesias entreating Myrrhina to coition."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Introduction

Aristophanes' Lysistrata has a peculiar and fascinating history of theatrical interpretations, hitherto unexplored. Towards the end of the 19th century and for a period of about forty years, countless adaptations of this play appear throughout Europe. Varied influences such as the boulevard and the vaudeville tradition, Wagnerian theory on the Gesamtkunstwerk, feminism, the Great War and the experience of the Soviet revolution have acted on the original, ultimately producing strikingly different plays. The character of Lysistrata undergoes profound transformations. She is variously portrayed as a sexy and self interested bourgeoise: a playful schemer of childlike innocence; a militant feminist, fighting for women's rights; a pacifist; a woman of the people, in support of the Soviet revolution; an exceptionally astute businesswoman, gifted with leadership qualities.

Adaptations are written with a view to production. The staging of Maurice Donnay's French version of Lysistrata in 1892, marks the onset of boisterous production activity. Indeed, in the early modern period, Lysistrata is the only Aristophanic play staged almost yearly in Europe and later also in the United States. More importantly, 1892 also marks the beginning of a series of four major interpretations of the play in the theatre. Important actors, directors and designers collaborated in these projects. The productions drew the attention of famous critics and personalities of the time and were also enormously popular. Moreover, they all had long runs and frequent revivals, some spanning several decades.

The first, Maurice Donnay's Lysistrata, premiered at the Grand Théâtre, in Paris, with Gabrielle Réjane and Lucien Guitry in the principal roles and had several revivals until 1930. The second major production of Lysistrata was directed by Max Reinhardt in 1908 at the Kammerspiele and in revised form, in 1919 at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, in Berlin. In 1923 there appeared a third important interpretation of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the play, directed by Nemirovich-Danchenko for the Moscow Art Theatre's Musical Studio. The Soviet production travelled to New York via Berlin in 1925. Finally, in 1930, Norman Bel Geddes directed the last major production in Philadelphia. This was subsequently transferred to New York and had a highly successful run on Broadway. Each of these four projects appears to have established a distinct, highly original interpretative tradition, evidenced in numerous imitations. However, in spite of their divergence, all major versions of Lysistrata seem to have had pervasive influence on each other, both as texts and as productions.

In the period 1892-1930 there is thus an international discourse on the play in the West, which interestingly, reaches beyond the stage. Interpretations seem to be intimately related to cultural, social and political developments of the time. Lysistrata almost becomes a popular heroine, inspiring follies of the Belle Epoque. parodies, cartoons, literary debates, ladies' fashions, articles on the duty to vote and books on feminism. Excerpts from the play are performed at feminist meetings, while others are included in Soviet anthologies of communist works. It is remarkable that, over a brief period of forty years, a single play could undergo such diverse and far reaching transformations.

This study is concerned with the concentration, description and analysis of material on the transformations of Lysistrata from 1892 to 1930. Each chapter focuses on a central interpretation of the play, laying primary emphasis on the major production associated with it. Four approaches to Lysistrata are considered, presenting the original as a boulevard play within the vaudeville tradition, as a performance text of romantic and symbolist influences, as a people's play, associated with the Soviet revolution and finally, as a popular American comedy, expounding on the virtues of capitalism. In addition, there will be a chapter on adaptations of Lysistrata associated with the feminist cause. Even though these did not have a significant stage history, they are directly related to the major productions. In the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

final chapter I explore how Aristophanes has been interpreted in the early part of the 20th century.

There will be consistent effort to give a unified account of Lysistrata's trasformations, without sacrificing idiosyncratic features. Each chapter includes an analysis of the text employed in the relevant major production. Since all of these texts are adaptations, I am comparing them to the original, to determine how they have been modified. Moreover, I consider whether the author has been influenced by earlier versions of Lysistrata or by other plays. Every chapter begins with a review of the dramatic and theatrical interest in Lysistrata during the 19th century, setting each major transformation in context. Naturally, the adaptation's own impact is also considered. Discussion includes an examination of whether and how the text of a particular adaptation has been altered in revivals and other subsequent productions. Particularly important also is the question of an adaptation's influence on other plays. These are primarily but not exclusively translations and new versions of Lysistrata. It is neither possible nor desirable to study inter-textual influence independently of production. Indeed, the adaptations under study derived their importance precisely from the fact that they were employed in the major productions. Subsequently, authors would probably tend to imitate not just what they liked in their reading but also what had proved successfull on stage. Discussion of an adaptation's and a production's impact will then be interwoven.

This study will attempt to give a thorough description of each major staging. Particular attention will be paid to the synthesis of traditional, popular and avant garde features in the mise en scènes. Another concern will be to investigate whether and how the desire to achieve popularity has affected production choices. I will be concentrating not just on the premieres but also on revivals, so as to trace the productions' history. Discussion will also centrally focus on how the Lysistrata productions were received by critics and the general public. As in the account of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

adaptations, the identification and analysis of inter-relationships between major productions will be particularly important. I will also attempt to assess the impact of each major Lysistrata on other stagings within the same interpretative trend. Indeed, a special concern will be to explore whether the major productions initiated staging traditions.

The research material collected for this study is all essentially related to the theatrical representations of the play. The majority of the Lysistrata texts to be discussed are versions especially prepared for production. In the period 1892-1930 there is a marked preference for adapting, as opposed to translating this play. Productions employing faithful translations of Lysistrata are scarce and minor in importance. Yet, their inclusion in this study can illuminate people's fascination with the play in this period. Another small category of translations relevant to my research are those showing influence on or from the adaptations used in the major productions. For the most part, then, scholarly and literary translations of Aristophanes' play will not be considered.

Texts only comprise one part of the research material on the staging of Lysistrata. The range, quality and quantity of other production related articles are particularly impressive. Naturally, the documentation extant for each major production varies. However, it is possible to give a balanced account, as earlier productions had revivals in the 1920's. Relating to the conception and preparatory phase of the major productions, there are rehearsal notes, prompt books, costume, set and property designs. These will be weighed against or complement material bearing on performance and its public reception such as theatre programs, photographs, memoirs, reviews, articles, and newspaper cartoons. There is ample documentation to judge the historical importance of each major production on aesthetic and social grounds.

Scholarly criticism of the major productions has been a by-product of interest

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

either in the production history of Aristophanes' plays or in the work of a particular director. The former are usually surveys, attempting to cover enormous ground.[1] While the major productions of the 1892-1930 period are usually mentioned, discussion is confined to brief commentary, based on secondary sources. On the other hand, criticism in the context of a director's work does not generally focus on more specialized issues relating to the interpetation of Lysistrata. For example, there is little interest in examining how the text has been adapted, or how a production was revised in revivals. Of the four major productions, only Nemirovich-Danchenko's project has been more thoroughly studied. However, criticism focusing on this production has been almost entirely undertaken by Russian scholars and is unknown in the West.[2] Moreover, these commentaries appear to employ archival material drawn exclusively from Russian sources. There has been very limited use of the rich documentation on all four major productions, deposited in Western archives. Thus, the multi-faceted significance of Lysistrata in the period 1892-1930 has so far remained unnoticed.

The first chapter focuses on Maurice Donnay's adaptation of the play and its interpretation in the theatre in the numerous revivals of the original production until

---

[1] See for example, Alexis Solomos, The Living Aristophanes, translated and adapted by Alexis Solomos amd Marvin Felheim (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974); J. M. Nakhoph, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane" (The Heritage of Aristophanes) in Aristophanes Meletes (Aristophanes Studies), translated from the Russian into modern Greek by M. Garides (Athens: Mokhlos, 1957), pp. 191-236.

[2] The principal critic of Nemirovich-Danchenko's work at the Musical Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre is Pavel Markov. His two books on the subject both include extensive analyses of the Lysistrata production: Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko i muzykalnom teatre (Moscow, 1936); Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre (Moscow: Vserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1960). See also, V. Ya. Vilenkin, Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko ocherk tvorchestva (Moscow, 1941). Of Western critics, only Oliver Sayler has attempted an analysis of Lysistrata, drawing on a large body of material: Inside the Moscow Art Theatre (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1925).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the 1930s.[3] I show that the French author has transformed the Attic comedy into a boulevard play, reflecting central thematic and structural features of the early modern period's popular drama. Sex rather than politics is the moving force of the plot: characteristically, the heroine has both a husband and a lover, there is an added scene at an Athenian brothel and the women's seizure of the Acropolis has been ignored. The French Lysistrata will also be revealed to carry naturalist influences, projecting the prototype as a comedy of sexual manners.

Discussion of the adaptation's production history will focus on the identification of certain constant features in staging from 1892 to 1930, which effectively contributed to the conception of Lysistrata as a sumptuous and daring spectacle. Lysistrata's mise en scène will again be related to the early modern popular theatrical tradition. Influential theatrical antecedents on Donnay's play will also be considered. There are significant indications that this adaptation forms part of a French 19th century tendency to interpret the Aristophanic comedies into prevalent forms of the popular theatre. The numerous imitations of Donnay's adaptation will finally be used as evidence that Lysistrata invigorated this tendency, establishing a powerful tradition of Aristophanic interpretation which exclusively dominated the French theatre in the early modern period. Associated with the existence of an interpretative tradition is the reception of Lysistrata in the press. I identify attitudes and approaches to Donnay's version and trace their variability in the period 1892-1930.

The second chapter deals with Max Reinhardt's staging of Lysistrata, in Leo Greiner's adaptation.[4] The original, 1908 production had been preceded by a prologue, written by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Similarly to the French, the German

---

[3] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1893; Ollendorff, 1896; Fasquelle, 1919).

[4] Leo Greiner, Lysistrata (Berlin: Dr. Wedekind and Co. G. M. B. H., 1908; Bücher des Deutschen Theaters, 1920).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata emphasizes sex and spectacle, targetting a wide audience. I explore the influence of romanticism and symbolism on Greiner's adaptation and contrast it to the French, boulevardic approah. An outstanding feature of the German Lysistrata, evidenced both in the prologue and in the adaptation is its non literary, performance orientation. This interpretation's emphasis on theatricality will be related to Wagnerian and early modernist theatre theory.

The study of Max Reinhardt's directorial work will occupy the major part of this chapter. His original production of Lysistrata will be presented as the first attempt to stage Attic comedy in Europe, employing a modernist conception of mise en scène. Particular attention will be paid to the production's avant garde features. At the same time, I will investigate to what extent experimentation has been tempered by the concern to create a popular production. The impact of the German interpetation on later major productions of the play will be considered in the relevant chapters. I intend to show that Reinhardt's solutions to central staging problems of Attic comedy influenced all subsequent major interpretations.

The third chapter, "Lysistrata as théâtre du peuple: the impact of the Soviet Revolution," focuses on Nemirovich-Danchenko's staging of the play with the Musical Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1923. The text was adapted by Dmitry Smolin and translated into English by Gilbert and George Seldes, on the occasion of the company's tour to the United States in 1925.[5] Smolin's version presents Lysistrata as a people's play, emphasizing the role of the choruses. The women are earthy, healthy workers who wish to clear up the old and stale traditions represented by the old men. I closely consider the employment of choral parts for propagandistic purposes, in the Soviet version.

---

[5] Dmitry Smolin, trans. Lysistrata, translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes in Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio (New York: Brentano's, 1925), pp. 1-78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Smolin's adaptation derives its importance mainly from having been employed in Nemirovich-Danchenko's production. Lysistrata was widely perceived at the time as representing a break with the Moscow Art Theatre's traditional artistic outlook. This production was favorably compared to the revolutionary achievements of left wing theatre, in terms of the choice of subject matter and its highly stylized scenic interpretation.[6] I hope to show that Lysistrata was indeed a major innovative and experimental project. Discussion will focus on how Nemirovich-Danchenko's production choices contributed to a popular interpretation of Lysistrata, responsive to major ideological and aesthetic concerns of the early post-revolutionary period. My research has interesting implications about the historical development of the Moscow Art Theatre and of its founders in the 1920s. Nemirovich-Danchenko's production had an influence not only on the Soviet but also on the Western theatre, which may be directly discerned in Norman Bel Geddes' major interpretation of Lysistrata, in 1929.

This project will be the focus of the fourth chapter. The American transformation proved to be the last major interpretation of Lysistrata. I show that it incorporates features from all earlier major adaptations and productions of the play, creating, however, a distinctly new variant. The text was adapted by Gilbert Seldes, who had translated Smolin's Russian text in 1925.[7] Central focus will fall on showing how, in the American version, the original is transformed into a popular play celebrating capitalism. Of particular interest is the existence of an antithetical creative discourse to the Russian interpretation, which allowed for a sharp definition of the

---

[6] See letter of A. V. Lunatcharsky to Nemirovich-Danchenko, cited in Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre , pp. 225-228. See also his article, "Le Théâtre d'Art de Moscou" in Théâtre et révolution, edited by E. Copfermann (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), pp. 215-224.

[7] Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated and adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in A Treasury of the Theatre, edited by Burns Mantle and John Gassner (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), pp. 1475-1510.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American Lysistrata's ideological context. I show that the capitalist theme is reflected in both textual and production choices.

Norman Bel Geddes' mise en scène will be viewed as an example of the rapprochement between popular and avant garde theatre, that was characteristic of art in America in the 1920s. Another central concern will be to compare the American Lysistrata's modernist features to those of the earlier German and Russian projects. Concerning the production's reception, I analyze how it was advertised, as well as how it was reviewed in the press. Of special interest is a concern to avoid censorship. Finally, I show that Bel Geddes' Lysistrata inaugurated a long lasting tradition in adapting and producing this play in America, which extended into the 1960s.

In the fifth chapter, I discuss adaptations of Lysistrata expressly written to support feminism. The production history of feminist Lysistratas is mostly limited to amateur or inconsequential stagings. However, two adaptations are particularly interesting, as they appear to have strong connections to the French, the German and the American major productions. The first, La Grève des femmes is an adaptation by a French feminist, Raynal de Tissonière, published under the pseudonym Marie Després in 1895.[8] The second adaptation of Lysistrata is English. It was written by Laurence Housman and produced by Gertrude Kingston in 1910.[9]

Discussion in this chapter is directed primarily towards identifying the distinctive features of the feminist interpretative category. I explore comparatively how Després and Housman attempt to shape the original into an engaged, political play, by undermining the comedy's sexual content. Central focus also falls on showing how

---

[8] Marie Després [Raynal de Tissonière], La grève des femmes (Paris: Albert Savine, 1895).

[9] Laurence Housman, Lysistrata (London: The Woman's Press, 1911). The production opened at the Little Theatre, in London, on October 11, 1910.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these adaptations open up a discourse with the major interpretations from an alternative, non-mainstream perspective. Analysis will extend to other feminist, pro-feminine as well as anti-feminist plays and essays related to Lysistrata. I will trace the emergence of the association between feminist issues and Lysistrata in the 19th century. Moreover, I will attempt to give a picture of how feminist and anti-feminist adaptations changed through time. A highlight of this chapter is the close study of a pictorial interpretation of Lysistrata by the English illustrator of the 1890s, Aubrey Beardsley.[10] I indicate, tentatively, that he employs the Attic comedy to argue in favor of women's sexual liberation.

In the final chapter, I consider issues relating to the interpretation of the interest in Lysistrata in the years 1892-1930. I will primarily investigate how the major transformations of the play shaped this period's perceptions of Aristophanes. At that time, the ancient playwright gained unprecedented popularity, solely on the strength of Lysistrata. The rest of the Attic comedies are hardly ever adapted and produced. Drawing on material developed in the previous chapters, I will outline the central features of the approach to Aristophanes in the early twentieth century.

---

[10] Aristophanes, Lysistrata wholly translated into English and illustrated with eight full-page drawings by Aubrey Beardsley (Paris: Privately printed, 1934).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter I

The Discovery of Lysistrata's Libido: Aristophanes Joins the Boulevard

At the opening of the Belle Epoque, nobody suspected that Maurice Donnay's Lysistrata would have a legendary theatrical history extending over a period of more than thirty years. In 1892 when Lysistrata premiered in Paris, critics dismissed the adaptation as a banal, unimaginative vaudeville with "a fake Greek nose."[1] Yet, somehow, Lysistrata caught on. In 1893, it was cited as a notable production of the past year in Revue Encyclopédique. The critic concluded: "Lysistrata is a play that has been ignored for too long."[2] Responsive to popular demand, Gabrielle Réjane, who had been the first actress to play the title role in Donnay's adaptation, revived the production again successfully in 1896. The interpretation captured the lighthearted, carefree spirit of the Belle Epoque. Indeed, at that period Lysistrata came to be regarded as a fashionable enough name for a millionaire's yacht[3] or for a villa at the Côte d'Azur.[4]

Surprisingly, the adaptation's appeal outlasted not only the Belle Epoque but also World War I. At a 1909 major revival, Lysistrata was still as relishing as "fresh fruit in a cup, bathed in the froth of champagne."[5] After the war, in 1919, audiences and critics found Donnay's Lysistrata in production "not rejuvenated but new," as the

---

[1] Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations of French texts in this chapter are my own.

[2] Léo Claretie, "Théâtre," Revue Encyclopédique (October 15, 1893): p. 1011.

[3] Maurice Donnay, J'ai vécu 1900 (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1950), p. 11.

[4] Camillo Antona-Traversi, Réjane (Paris: Editions le Calame, 1930), p. 123.

[5] Camille Le Senne, cited in Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

heroine now spoke "in the name of all mothers."[6] By that time the interpretation had inspired countless imitations, stimulating a fervent interest in producing the play.

In the 1920s however, the popularity of Donnay's adaptation in France finally began to wane. The 1924 revival attracted ironic commentary. A critic noted that towards midnight, before the production was over, couples were hurriedly leaving the theatre to catch the last subway. "But this impatience was yet another form of tribute to the talent of the author and the actors" he caustically added with impeccable politeness.[7] Times had changed. Another critic snapped, "Today we need firmer and juicier fruit," urging for a faithful translation of the original.[8] Donnay's adaptation finally lapsed into obscurity in France, in a last Parisian revival that was generally ignored in 1930.[9] It is noteworthy however, that in the 38 years of its lifespan, the French Lysistrata also achieved a solid international reputation, influencing adaptation and production of the play in the West well into the sixties.[10]

Donnay did not solely rely on good luck to assure the longevity of his Lysistrata: he also resorted to cheating, modifying his text to achieve lasting popularity. There are three different versions of the adaptation. The first was employed in the original 1892 production.[11] The second, which will be referred to as 'the standard version,'

---

6 Louis Schneider, "Les Premières," March 8, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

7 "Au Théâtre Cora-Laparcerie," April 27 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

8 Gabriel Boissy, "Lysistrata." April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

9 Philip Carr, The New York Times, December 14 1930.

10 See the commentary on Gilbert Seldes' adaptation of Lysistrata in "Lysistrata and the American Popular Culture: Aristophanes Puts'Em in the Aisles," of the present study.

11 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1893).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

has been used in all subsequent revivals in Paris, except in 1919.[12] For this production the author revised the standard text to produce a new, third variant, relevant to the experience of World War I..[13]

Donnay's Lysistrata was the first Aristophanic play to be associated with a major production in France. In the 19th century, Gallic interest in the Atttic dramatist primarily has a classicist, non theatrical orientation. His plays are predominantly available in collected, scholarly editions. Interest in publishing the comedies individually is confined to The Birds, Plutus, Women in the Assembly and Lysistrata. There are only two translations of The Birds, published in 1863 and 1888 respectively, none of which seems to have been associated with production.[14] However, the 1888 translation by F. Rabbe also included notes on the staging of Aristophanes' plays in antiquity.[15] Plutus is clearly the most frequently translated Aristophanic play, owing perhaps to its straightforward didactic message. The first record of an individual edition of Plutus goes back to 1817.[16] Perhaps the most notable translation of this play was by M. Cattant, first published in 1843, which had five reprints to 1897.[17] There is a considerable increase of translations in the second

---

[12] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896).

[13] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Fasquelle, 1919).

[14] Aristophane, Les oiseaux, translated by H. Dauphin (Amiens: E. Yvert, 1861). Aristophane, Les oiseaux, translated by F. Rabbe. Avec quelques mots sur la mise en scène dans Aristophane (Paris: Parvillez, 1888).

[15] Ibid.

[16] Aristophane, Plutus, avec un choix de scolies et de notes par A.-L. Ducasau (Paris, 1817), see Madeleine Horn-Monval, Répertoire bibliographique des traductions et adaptations françaises du théâtre étranger du XVe siècle à nos jours. Vol. I (Paris: C. N. R. S., 1958), p. 26, item 321.

[17] Aristophane, Plutus, translated and annotated by M. Cattant (Hachette, 1843, 1844, 1863, 1875, 1897) Ibid. items 325-329.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

half of the 19th century, a sure mark of Plutus' popularity.[18] In this period, the play is also first put on the stage, in drastic adaptations. Plutus premiered at the Vaudeville theatre on March 14, 1873, adapted into a vaudeville by Albert Millaud and Gaston Jollivet.[19] A few years later, Charles Lecocq shaped the Aristophanic play into a popular opera, which opened at the Opéra Comique on March 31, 1880.[20]

Individual editions of Aristophanes' female comedies are uniquely associated with production. Apparently, these plays were regarded as more advantageous theatrically than the rest of the Attic comedies. The texts are predominantly adapted rather than translated. Early in the nineteenth century, François Benoit Hoffman wrote a vaudeville with libertine songs, Lisistrata ou les Athéniennes (1802), distantly related to the original play.[21] Lisistrata, the wife of general Mérion, assembles at her home for the oath only the wives of high ranking officials, young and old, including her niece, Carite, who had only experienced married life for a day. Carite, unable to hold her tongue, lets her husband know of the women's plot and he informs Mérion, who decides to get even with Lisistrata. Mérion leads his wife to betray her oath by telling her he has sworn to abstention until Sparta is destroyed. The general then takes charge of the resolution, magnanimously signing the peace treaty. The morale, clearly stated by Mérion at the end is that women should swear no more, as they are unable to keep oaths.

Production of Hoffman's play was banned by censorship. The author accompanied the edition of Lisistrata by a preface, defending the morality of his

---

[18] Ibid, pp. 26-27.

[19] Albert Millaud and Gaston Jollivet, Plutus (Paris: M. Lévy, 1873).

[20] Aristophane, Plutus, opera, music by Charles Lecocq, (Paris: M. Lévy, 1880).

[21] François Benoit Hoffman, Lisistrata ou les Athéniennes (Paris: Huet, 1802).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

work.[22] Similarly to Lysistrata. Women in the Assembly was drastically adapted by Eugène Scribe and Varner into a traditional vaudeville with couplets. Les comices d'Athènes ou les femmes orateurs (1818).[23] As in Hoffman, misogynism in this adaptation is vehement. Women, curious to know what goes on in Parliament are duped into believing that men are deliberating on a resolution to distinguish women into age groups, by means of dress. The plot evolves around female scheming to prevent this action. In conclusion, women are instructed to be content with passing the laws of fashion. In a later play, Une femme qui se jette par la fenêtre (1847), Scribe and G. Lemoine distantly allude to Lysistrata, transferring the sexual strike within a bourgeois household context: a wife, on her mother's advice, employs sexual abstention as a means of manipulating her husband.[24]

Even though scarce, Aristophanic production in the 19th century in France then, is strongly associated with the popular theater and especially with vaudeville. Indeed, this dramatic form seems capable of assimilating central features of Aristophanic comedy, such as the penchant for fantasy, the combination of drama with song and the gross, uninhibited jesting. In the early 1890s, the vivacious, impertinent Aristophanic spirit was again distilled into a modern popular form, for performance at the Chat Noir cabaret. This was Maurice Donnay's first venture into playwriting. The author, then a young engineer, started his career as a dramatist with two amusing playlets, Phryné and Ailleurs.[25] Both have the loose dramatic structure

---

[22] "Préface," Ibid., pp. ix-xv.

[23] Aristophane, Les comices d'Athènes ou les femmes orateurs, translated by Eugène Scribe and Varner (Paris: Ladvocat, 1817).

[24] Eugène Scribe and G. Lemoine, Une femme qui se jette par la fenêtre (Paris: Beck, 1847).

[25] Maurice Donnay, Ailleurs (Paris: Ollendorff, 1892). Maurice Donnay, Phryné (Paris: Ollendorff, 1894).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of a revue and are imaginative and licentious. Ailleurs, subtitled "revue symbolique," is a tract against symbolism, clearly evoking The Frogs in its setting: the play presents a fantastic journey of Voltaire and the poet Terminus to Elsewhere. Phryné and Ailleurs were staged at the ombres chinoises of the cabaret in 1891 and were extremely popular.

Donnay attracted attention with his playlets as a promising writer of comedy. Early in 1892, he was approached by the composer A. Dutacq and the dramatist A. Dreyfus with a proposal to collaborate on the libretto of an operetta based on Lysistrata.[26] This was yet another attempt to exploit popular elements in interpreting the Aristophanic spirit. The first act would take place at a hairdressing salon, where a brooding Lysistrata would explain her scheme to the women while having her hair ironed.[27] The plan for the operetta fell through, but Donnay retained the idea of adapting Lysistrata, eventually channeling it back into drama. Thus later in the year, he came to an agreement with the producer and director Paul Porel to write a play based on Lysistrata for Gabrielle Réjane.[28]

Donnay's adaptation in the original and the standard versions is accompanied by a lengthy introduction delivered by Prologos, a character in a white tunic, crowned with flowers.[29] There is a clear-cut distinction between the introduction and the play: Prologos directly addresses the audience, speaking in the name of Maurice Donnay, "the author," before a drawn curtain. He subsequently takes no part in the action. The illusionist convention is in no way challenged within the play. The introduction

---

[26] Maurice Donnay, "Vers Lysistrata," in Mes Débuts à Paris (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1937), pp. 251-279.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1893), pp. 3-5. Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), pp. 5-8..

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

establishes a connection between Aristophanes and the audience through the help of two intermediaries, the author and his mouthpiece, Prologos. Prologos salutes Donnay's Parisian contemporaries, explaining he has come "to bring some light."[30] Indeed, he carries a lantern, to emphasize his elucidative purpose. It is necessary to interpret the world of Aristophanes for the audience.

Donnay playfully informs his contemporaries that the ancient dramatist's work has no relation to the modern idealized representation of antiquity as lofty and heroic. Similarly, Attic comedy is not appropriately represented in terms of exaggerated parody . The play introduced is neither tragedy, nor parody, but a meticulously faithful comedy of manners, and more particularly of sexual manners. Indeed, Aristophanes is almost presented as a naturalist, aiming to depict raw human nature, life itself: " Their poet, Aristophanes,/Was not deemed profane/When he brought upon the stage/Some acts after nature./Since he was making a very rigorous depiction of their manners/He did not excite any rumors."[31] His characters are not heroes but the real, lustful humans: "They had feet and hands./Hearts, brains ... and the rest."[32] Donnay claims that through Aristophanes antiquity can be demystified and shown in its real proportions. This approach has the effect of diminishing the distance between the ancient and the modern world. Indeed, as he explains to the audience, "Contrary to the usual custom/You are going to see people/Like yourselves, except for the costume."[33] Prologos also lightheartedly warns the audience about Aristophanes' licentiousness. While sexual manners have not changed, the attitude towards them is different in the modern world. For the ancients, "Modesty was unknown/And the

---

30 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), p 5.

31 Ibid., p. 8.

32 Ibid., p. 6.

33 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

naked Truth/Walked across the stage."[34] Moderns however, may be offended by the depiction of hard core 'naturalism.'

The inclusion of an introduction constitutes an intriguing choice. It is noteworthy that earlier authors, such as Hoffman or Scribe, who also interpreted Aristophanes in a modern context, had no concern to include explicative commentary on their work. Donnay's prologue however, panegyrically proclaims that the time is ripe for a rediscovery of Aristophanes. The introduction enables Donnay to accentuate the importance of his own intervention, in revealing Aristophanes' kinship to the modern world. At the same time, however, the French author is anxious to present himself as a faithful interpreter of the comic dramatist. The device of the Prologos mouthpiece effectively serves this goal. By speaking through a representative, Donnay puts himself in a privileged position as an interpreter, removing the threat of arbitrariness.

In directly addressing the audience, the introduction also functions as a modern analogue to the ancient device of the parabasis. Far from using the address spuriously, Donnay genuinely and persistently aims at establishing contact with the audience, employing a rich variety of tones. Prologos is direct, friendly and conversational. He is concerned that the audience is not confused and alienated. Above all, he seeks to create an atmosphere of intimacy, that will induce the public's identification with the action. Intimacy is desirable not only on account of the interpretation's realist orientation, but also because the subject is sexual. Indeed, Prologos meaningfully winks at the audience, making sexual insinuations about the play's "frankness," which " ... may appear to you/Extreme, you who call a cat/Something that is not a cat at all."[35] Clearly, the intent is to arouse the audience's curiosity and to secure its complicity. Thus Aristophanes is rediscovered

---

[34] Ibid., p. 7.

[35] Ibid., p. 8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in France as a writer of the private, as opposed to the public domain.

In spite of Donnay's claims to be a faithful interpreter of the Attic dramatist, he has in fact drastically altered the original. In the ancient Lysistrata the sexual strike is prominently projected as a political mobilization. The women do not simply decide to abstain from sex so as to end the war. They also occupy the Acropolis, taking hold of the treasury. Indeed, the city's foremost political institution is the focal point of the play's entire action. By choosing the Acropolis as the sight of the strike, the women in fact politicize their oath: the transference of all sexual activity from the private into the public domain acquires the significance of a civic protest. Practising the strike in the privacy of their own homes would render the women's political measure vacuous. Indeed, the scene of Kinesias' seduction takes place in front of the Acropolis with the choruses watching and taking it in. Far from conveying sexual thrill, the setting of this scene in public has the effect of comically focusing attention on the political message of the seduction. It is also important that the female mobilization provokes the reaction not only of the randy young males, but of the entire city. The attempts of the elderly male chorus and of the Proboulos to regain possession of the Acropolis are central episodes of the plot, in the original.

Donnay's Lysistrata bears little relation to the ancient play beyond the common initial premise of the sex strike. Abstention is entirely depoliticized, as it is now newly set in the private domain. The women take the oath in the city and afterwards go back home to wait for the men. The Acropolis, as the politically charged background of the action has been entirely ignored. Interest is solely focused on depicting all the kinky possibilities resulting from a universal female refusal to have sex. Donnay lets his imagination run wild, fully exploiting abstention as an aphrodisiac. The French Lysistrata then is a play about sex, not politics. However, this orientation aptly serves the purpose of depicting sexual manners, set forth in the prologue. Indeed, Donnay has shrewdly taken care to supply his sexy play with a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

classical mantle of respectability, blaming it all on Aristophanes.

In spite of some variation in the plot, all three versions of the adaptation follow the sexual orientation. The central axis of the modern play is a tale of adultery. Lysistrata is involved in a triangular relationship with two men, her husband, the lieutenant Lycon and the general Agathos. The heroine is an exceptionally articulate woman, who persuades her consorts, in the first act, of the necessity to strike. Before the meeting, there is considerable elaboration on the women's difficulties in appeasing their sexual desires, while the men are away. Thus the incentive to abstain is primarily sexual. Naturally, women who constantly have sex in their minds must be age and class specific: in the French adaptation they are young leisurely bourgeoises. They cannot be working women, unpleasantly wasting away on the struggle for survival, unless of course they have made sex their business. Indeed, the hallmark of this adaptation is the inclusion of courtesans to the female camp, led by Salabaccha, the proprietress of a distinguished brothel.

The women's reactions to abstention then, fall into two categories, comprising the main subject of two entire acts. In the second act, Donnay depicts the behavior of 'honest' women, devoting most attention to Lysistrata's meeting with her lover, for whom she is ready to betray her oath. The third act treats of the dejected husbands' professional reception at Salabaccha's brothel. Donnay establishes a sexual link between Salabaccha and Agathos, which allows him to variously exploit the jealousy theme in the three versions. The French adaptation ends in the same way as the original, with the conclusion of peace. However, in the modern play, the achievement of peace is not attributed to the women's collective action or to negotiations. Rather, the dénouement is the outcome of manipulation and deceit on the part of Agathos, Lysistrata and her niece, Callyce.

Callyce is the main character of a subplot added to the original, which effectively contributes to the resolution, in the fourth act. This modern character is a newly wed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

virgin bride whose husband had to leave for the front shortly after their marriage. Callyce refuses to swear the oath and is shut up in the temple of Artemis. Later, her aunt frees her, as she needs the privacy of the temple to be united to Agathos. Next morning the women discover her absence and Callyce is obliged to come up with a story to save her own and her aunt's honor. Thus she recounts that she was freed by Cypris, the goddess of love, who gained possession of the temple. The story is persuasively presented to the populace by Lysistrata as a miracle, signifying that the gods desire peace. The heroine's ruse leads to the happy outcome.

In the first version of the adaptation, intrigue is important. Agathos is simultaneously the lover of the heroine, as well as of Salabaccha. The two women then are rivals and the plot focuses on the antagonism between them. Lysistrata is straightforwardly presented as an adulteress, who devises the plot of the sex strike so as to avoid her husband, Lycon and to be freely joined with her lover, in secret.[36] After some titillating resistance, Lysistrata finally gives in to Agathos, when he threatens her to go to Salabaccha. Meanwhile, at the brothel, Salabaccha becomes increasingly anxious over Agathos' absence and starts suspecting Lysistrata, putting together clues. Lycon is the typical stupid cuckolded husband of French farce who understands and suspects nothing. At the fourth act, Salabaccha drags everybody to Lysistrata's place, so as to catch the lovers in the act and make a scandal. However, Agathos has already fled. Lysistrata manages to retain her composure and to prevail over her rival. The subplot of Callyce, combined with some off stage negotiation by Agathos finally leads to the termination of war.

Clearly, in the first version, Donnay has shaped the original into a vaudeville. Focus falls on devising an intriguing adultery plot and characterization is minimal.

---

[36] Agathos sees through the ploy and is overjoyed: "It's you, oh my Lysis, I can see how good you are ... and to think that I reproached you with indifference and coldness while you were maneuvering to keep me all to yourself, without sharing me with anybody.". Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1893), p. 148.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Interestingly, this transformation looks back to earlier French adaptations of Attic comedy and especially of the female plays. Indeed, there is close affinity between the adaptations of Donnay and Hoffman.[37] In both, women who take the oath are bourgeoises and there is an insistence on their difficulties in keeping it. Even though Lysistrata is not an adulteress in the earlier adaptation, she too betrays her resolution, submitting to a male will. In both plays, male intervention is also important to the dénouement, which is achieved independently of the women's mobilization. Finally, there is the presence in both texts of an intriguing common feature, suggesting direct influence. Both include a new character, Lysistrata's niece who is a virgin bride, unwilling to swear the oath and treacherous, like her aunt. The niece is analogously named Carite and Callyce. Even though the intrigue involving this character is different in the two plays, the similarities in the characterization seem too close to be coincidental. However, whether Donnay was directly inspired by the earlier text or not is of comparatively minor importance. The plays are sufficiently similar in the orientation towards vaudevillian sexual intrigue, to even allow for the adoption of common adaptation choices. This weaker argument intimates that Donnay is working within a nineteenth century popular tradition of adapting Aristophanes, opening up a promising research path.

Interestingly, Donnay's first version of Lysistrata is at odds with the naturalist conception of the play, announced in the prologue. The focus on intrigue diverts attention from the depiction of sexual manners. It took Donnay several years to realize in practice his model of Aristophanic interpretation. Of the three Lysistrata versions, it is the standard that best reflects his reading of the original as a comedy of manners. In the revised 1896 text, intrigue has been drastically reduced.[38] The

---

[37] François Benoit Hoffman. Lisistrata ou les Athéniennes.

[38] Maurice Donnay. Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rivalry between the heroine and Salabaccha no longer plays a major part in the plot, as the courtesan is now an ancient, disinterested mistress of the general. In the third act, rather than worry about Agathos, she diverts herself by exciting Lycon, who attempts to rape her. Indeed, Lycon has been changed in this version from a stupid cuckold to a virile and charming young man. In the fourth act, the scene between the two rivals has been removed and focus now falls on the manipulation to cover up the treachery, which has become more sophisticated.

With the removal of the rivalry intrigue the plot becomes more diffuse, allowing for a greater appreciation of the play as a tableau of sexual manners. Indeed, Donnay takes pains to establish the erotic milieu of ancient Athens, accruing detail upon detail in picturesque syntheses. Characteristically, whereas the original directly opens with Lysistrata, in the French play her appearance is delayed. It is preceded by the prologue and three scenes of Athenian life, in the absence of men to war. After the expository material about classical antiquity presented in the prologue, the play opens with women's voices, singing a hymn to Artemis to alleviate their sexual passions. Two old men listen and comment on the women's plight, supplying at the same time some background about the military expeditions, mixing facts about the Peloponesian war with fiction.[39] The following two scenes present the women themselves, intimately recounting their experiences of male privation while waiting for Lysistrata.[40] All this introductory material supplies the necessary background to key the heroine's address to the women in a supposedly authentic context. Donnay shows similar care in the presentation of Salabaccha's brothel, in the third act.[41] There is a clearly articulated interest in showing what an Athenian brothel actually

---

39 Ibid., pp. 9-12.

40 Ibid., pp. 13-23.

41 Ibid., pp. 88-121.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

looked like. Courtesans and clients are stretched along voluptuous divans. There are eloquent, though floppy philosophical discussions, poetry recitals, music, games and a voluptuous dance before coming to the juicier part of watching the courtesans seduce the husbands, only to leave them unsatisfied.

The naturalist concern to depict sexual manners is not only expressed in the painstaking care to establish milieu. It is also manifested in the focus on characteristic, individual cases, presented in meticulous detail. There is an impressive variety of reactions to the abstention taking place on and off stage. At Salabaccha's brothel, there is a long discussion about how individual men were received by their wives. Phidon, a philosopher, is a voyeur, who, on the occasion, expounds on the pleasure of this activity.[42] Later, four professional seductions of the married men occur on stage, arranged in individual scenes.[43] Men's reactions to arousal vary from the desire for romance to the urge to rape, culminating in actual rape attempts. In the camp of honest women, besides Lysistrata the adulteress and Callyce, the virgin bride, Donnay also closely follows the behavior of Lampito, who is here comically presented as a nymphomaniac, and of a pair of lesbians. The depiction of lesbianism is perhaps the most characteristic case of Donnay's sensual intent, as the women's oath presupposes a heterosexual society.

Donnay has superimposed on the original an entire scene, before the women's meeting, with the sole purpose of depicting the lesbians' self sufficiency in love.[44] Naturalist highlights include the recital of Sapphic poetry. Nevertheless, the lesbians eventually turn out to be relevant to the story, as their function is to stimulate male sexual arousal. Indeed, they are married and their husbands recount that after supper

---

[42] Ibid., pp. 99-101.

[43] Ibid., pp. 107-121.

[44] Ibid., pp. 13-15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they shut themselves up in a room with wine and fruit, to pass a night of joy. The men had to be content with the pleasure of watching through the keyhole, until the lights went off...[45]

The goal of depicting manners invites focus on the particular. Donnay has a keen interest in individually recording all sorts of sexual encounters, orthodox and unorthodox, so as to make his tableau all inclusive. This orientation distances him from the original's sense of collectivity. Indeed, the French author has no use for the ancient chorus. Besides the concern to individualize, the inclusion of choruses is also ruled out by the related decision to entirely avoid politics. In the ancient play, the two elderly choruses take an important part in the action. However, they are primarily associated with the defense of the Acropolis, not with sexual abstention. Another reason Donnay could not easily include choruses in his interpretation is that the chorus does not have a double language. In the modern play all characters, and especially the women, are hypocritical and treacherous.

Interestingly, however, Donnay has found intriguing means of integrating some choral elements in his interpretation. In the play's first scene, the two old men on stage serve traditional functions associated with the chorus.[46] As mentioned earlier, they supply background information about what goes on in the city during the war. Their lively, humorous references to their own past as warriors and their comparisons between war in the past and the present are themes also taken up by the original male chorus.[47] The two men also function as commentators. Indeed, the opening of the play is unwittingly set almost as a parody of a scene from Greek tragedy. The men are seated on stage, listening to the women's prayers to Artemis, heard within

---

[45] Ibid., p. 54.

[46] Ibid., pp. 9-12.

[47] See Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by B. B. Rogers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), lines 254-318, pp. 26-33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the temple. They are compassionate, referring to the women as "poor" and "dear fellow female citizens." But, "Don't they have the old men?" they also interject, in direct reminiscence of the lasciviousness of the original Aristophanic choruses.[48] They magnanimously conclude in mock social awareness "it is high time that the men came back."[49] However, a clever modern twist, is that the two old men are in fact usurers and war profiteers. Moreover, Strymodore is not even an Athenian citizen but a Jew, whose real name is Schlomo.[50]

In the modern play, then, Donnay has individualized the chorus and has mainly retained its function of observer, or witness. The choral detachment of classical Greek drama however, is ironically undermined. The revelation that the old men are not concerned citizens, entirely and conveniently eradicates the political dimension of the choral contribution to the action, sharply differentiating the modern play from the original. Within the modern sexualized context, detachment is humorously presented as a necessary consequence of the old men's fundamental inability to participate in the action: impotence. In this sense, detachment is also entirely appropriate to the adaptation's purpose of presenting a tableau of sexual attitudes. Indeed, the choral function of observing is intimately associated with voyeurism, in the modern Lysistrata.

This connection is fully exploited in the fourth act, set in the brothel. The male protagonists in this act are of course the young married men, participating in the crowning episodes of the seductions. However, the party also includes several philosophically inclined mature men who did not go to the war and who languidly watch the courtesans and the entire action from a distance. As mentioned earlier, the

---

[48] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), p. 10.

[49] Ibid., p. 11.

[50] Ibid., p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

central theme of the philosophical discussion at the brothel is voyeurism, passionately defended by Phidon: "all the women will be mine, since I only pluck from their beauty what belongs to the entire world, that is to say, spectacle."[51] Clearly, this argument also establishes a direct link between the chorus of observers on stage and the actual audience, encouraging them to relish the Lysistrata fantasy as voyeurs.

However, Donnay has also included in his adaptation a male chorus who directly participate in collective action, closely following the initial choral battle. As in the original, the two sexes confront each other with lighted pyres and water. However, the battle in the modern play does not have a political but a sexual motivation. It occurs at the end of the fourth act, when the men, enraged by the courtesans' refusal to have sex, attempt to possess them by force.[52] Thus, the original's humorous implications to erotic heat and forced sex, associated with the elderly chorus' phallic pyres are non symbolically interpreted in the adaptation as mass rape. Interestingly, this scene also functions as wish fulfillment for the passive chorus of observers, who are present in the action. "It's a pity," laments Phidon, when Salabaccha, to prevent the escalation of the conflict, orders the women to put their tunics back on.[53]

To sum up, the chorus is not integrally important to this interpretation, which focuses on the study of particular cases. Nevertheless, Donnay has retained choral elements in his adaptation, in the first and fourth acts, redistributing functions of the Aristophanic chorus to two distinct bodies: the individualized old men who act as observers and commentators of the action and the young men who directly participate in it as a collectivity. In addition, as shown earlier, Donnay has employed in the

---

51 Ibid., p. 99.

52 Ibid., pp. 118-121.

53 Ibid., p. 120.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

introduction the ancient device of the parabasis, relegating this intervention, however to the Prologos, who is not a character in the play. In all cases, the French author has taken care to entirely dissociate choral contribution from its political dimension.

The concern to steer away from politics, prevalent in this adaptation, is also clearly manifested in the spatial conception. Donnay has replaced the Acropolis by two sets. The first consists of a public square with houses to the left and right of the stage and a temple backstage center.[54] This is employed in the first, second and fourth acts. The third act, at Salabaccha's brothel, takes place in a vast drawing room, with divans around a large table. As is specified in the stage directions, the room opens to a magnificent view of Athens, in the distance, all white under a starry night sky.[55]

In the original, the entire action unfolds in a public, politically defined space. In Donnay's first set, the temple is certainly also public, but it is now entirely associated with sex and the supernatural. The space is devoted to the adoration of two female goddesses, Artemis and Venus. Venus is of course the sex goddess par excellence of Greek mythology, and in this interpretation she is set against Artemis, representing chastity, virginity, privation. Thus in contradistinction to the Acropolis, the temple also acquires a symbolic function, projecting the modern play's sexual preoccupation. This interpretation conveniently allows for women to act in a public space, entirely annulling the possibility that their presence there constitutes a political statement. There can be no mistake: all uses of the temple primarily have erotic associations. It is employed as a prison for the virgin bride who refused to abstain and as Lysistrata's secret love nest. Rather than supply a political context for their mobilization, the public space is thus used to expose the women's resolution as

---

[54] Ibid., p. 9.

[55] Ibid., p. 88.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fake.

Similarly to the temple, the brothel perfectly lends itself to the non political orientation of the French adaptation. Ipso facto, this is a public space entirely and solely associated with women as objects of sexual desire. Far from making a political statement, in resisting the men, courtesans are merely resorting to an old trick of their trade. It is noteworthy that the adaptation's scenes closest to the original conception have been set at the brothel. The languid sexual arousal of the men on stage and especially Salabaccha's seduction of Lycon directly refers to the Kinesias episode. Like Myrrhina, Salabaccha both whets Lycon's desire and finds various excuses to thwart him, old and new. Thus she flatters his masculine strength, lets him feel her underwear and, to top it all, provokes him to violence by exposing her leg and mentioning that rape is the dream of her life.[56] The elaboration of this game in the French version, however, solely aims at the sensual stimulation of the audience. The ensuing men's collective attempt at rape discussed earlier also evokes the original, in referring to the old men's initial effort to defend the Acropolis. Ironically, the setting of the courtesans' salon at a high place, with a view of Athens below directly invites comparison to the ancient citadel. Clearly, however, in the modern play, where the Acropolis has been turned into a brothel, the women can madden men with their resistance, without achieving any political result.

The women's inability to be politically effective is perhaps clearest when resistance is set in private space. Indeed, traditionally, women's apoliticism has been connected to their strong and exclusive presence at home, the private space par excellence. However, Donnay is not content to simply relocate the ancient militant females to their traditional apolitical milieu. He wishes to reinforce misogynist stereotypes of female untrustworthiness by letting the audience look through the

---

[56] Ibid., pp. 112-118.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

keyhole. In contrast to the courtesans, honest women, inexperienced in sexual tricks are all inclined to or actually do betray the oath in private unless they are indifferent to male courtship, like the lesbians. Lysistrata initially serves as a good example: she throws Lycon out of the house and then appears at her terrace urging him to make peace.[57] However, she later reemerges at the terrace when Agathos calls her and is persuaded to come out of the house to meet him.[58] The appearance at the terrace is of course a displaced image of the original Lysistrata's presence on the Acropolis. Acting like a typical representative of her sex, the modern heroine betrays the oath.

Lysistrata's consorts have a lowly opinion of their own sex. As Calonice explains, it is not possible that "two women, young, exquisite, adorable are not jealous of each other, do not detest, do not slander each other" unless they are lesbians.[59] However, Lysistrata is recognized by all females as "a superior woman."[60] Lampito finds that like Athena, she possesses resourcefulness, great judgement and a subtle spirit.[61] Also invoking Athena, Salabaccha praises her statesmanship to Lycon, at the brothel: "She is a great citizen, a true patriot. Had you heard her this morning, you would have been moved and convinced, as we were ourselves, and you would have been proud. It's a woman of genius."[62] The extraordinary praise is only used to expose Lysistrata's hypocrisy, as is clearly evident by the last example. The audience cannot overlook that the remark is addressed to Lycon, the cuckolded husband, after Lysistrata has betrayed her oath for

---

[57] Ibid., p. 49.

[58] Ibid., p. 63.

[59] Ibid., p. 18

[60] Ibid., pp. 63, 96.

[61] Ibid., p. 23.

[62] Ibid., p. 96.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Agathos.

Indeed, if the heroine is at all extraordinary in this adaptation, it is for her gift at deception, stereotypically associated with female nature. As is repeatedly mentioned, she is a woman beyond suspicion.[63] In the intimate scene with Agathos, her lover prevails, forcing her to drop her mask. Having been persuaded to betray her oath, Lysistrata literally reveals herself as double faced: "It seems as if it is not me, the wise Lysistrata that is acting at this moment, but another woman, that I do not know. God gracious, if they knew!"[64] In the fourth act, Agathos firmly takes the lead, appeasing Lysistrata's fears of divine vengefulness and devising the plot to cover up the treachery. When she confronts the people with the story of the miracle he is behind her, encouraging her to be eloquent.[65] Thus peace is finally attributed to a male stratagem, carried out by a woman to cover the betrayal of her political determination.

In spite of appearances then, Lysistrata is deep down a "real" woman, victim of her own sensuality and hypocritical. The aunt's instruction at deception to the equally treacherous and voluptuous niece reinforces the stereotypical image of woman as weak and wily. The invention of the niece serves the purpose of highlighting that misogynist qualities are almost inherent to female nature, passing down from generation to generation. Indeed, as the heroine is about to give in to Agathos, she laments that it is not possible to defy the laws of nature.[66] Again, the implication is clear: woman is an instinctive creature, whose strong sexual drive and emotionality overrides and annuls the possibility of rational political action.

---

63 Ibid., pp. 63, 85.

64 Ibid., p. 85.

65 Ibid., p. 138.

66 Ibid., p. 85.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Donnay's conclusion, however, is vacuous, since he has undertaken to demonstrate it in a totally apolitical context. Lysistrata's adaptation into a sexual fantasy has involved radical reinterpretation of politically charged central features of the original, such as the setting for the action and the chorus. It is also noteworthy in this respect that in the first two versions, war is treated lightly, as a joke. For example, tuning into the sexual theme right from the start, the heroine explains to the women that the cause of war was the abduction of some courtesans "and for three girls of pleasure, there's Greece on fire!"[67] This is certainly not the Peloponesian war. In ardent, bon viveur spirit, Lysistrata playfully incites Agathos to recount three great battles he has experienced.[68] Consonantly to this joviality, the oath has been transformed into a song.[69] There is no sense that the women are consciously making a commitment. Everything is set up so that their resolution will be betrayed. Clearly then, to extract conclusions about female adeptness for politics based on the women's reactions to abstention is to beg the question.

In the third version, Donnay alleviated the play's heavy emphasis on sex. Most of the casual, playful references to war have been removed and replaced by details stressing graver aspects of civil conflict. The heroine is now the descendant of illustrious male patriots. Her greatgrandfather was a general at Marathon and her grandfather died heroically at Platea.[70] In contrast to her self-interested hedonism in the previous versions, she has become humane and compassionate. As Lysistrata is about to enter the temple with Agathos in this version, she has nightmarish hallucinations. In horror, she sees on the steps all her loved ones who died in the

---

[67] Ibid., p. 30.

[68] Ibid., p. 69.

[69] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[70] Ibid., p. 60.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

war, the widows and the mothers crying, the orphans. This experience strengthens her resolution to keep the oath and she refuses to give in to Agathos.[71]

The heroine's newly acquired social consciousness does not signal an important development in Donnay's attitude towards women. At most, the French author now concedes that a woman can have noble intentions and a genuine interest for the good of humanity. However, it is significant that Lysistrata's resolution is presented as the direct result of a hallucinatory experience. As Agathos tells her, "you talk like a woman. You only see the deaths, the gaping holes of the wounds."[72] Indeed, the heroine's social concern is here intimately tied with the stereotypical female quality of emotionality. "She is losing her reason," again notes Agathos, signalling that she cannot be taken seriously.[73] Essentially, Lysistrata remains just as politically ineffective as before. Conforming to her new image of a good woman, she now does not participate in the deception of the people in the fourth act. However, this makes no difference. Her niece has developed into a wily enough female to undertake all the dirty work by herself. The eternal woman is always there. In spite of some variation then, in all three versions, the misogynist ideology is ardent.

Donnay's modifications of the original reveal a strong concern to shape Lysistrata into a modern play of the popular French theatre. As mentioned earlier, the first version of the adaptation is a representative, if not a particularly original vaudeville. This dramatic genre, which had flourished in the nineteenth century, continued to have a stronghold in the theatre after 1870, when the vaudeville had definitely lost its characteristic couplets to operetta. Operetta had triumphantly emerged in 1858 with Offenbach's Orphée aux enfers and by 1870 it had rapidly matured into a distinct

---

[71] Ibid., pp. 75-80.

[72] Ibid., p. 78.

[73] Ibid., p. 77.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

genre, totally assimilating the vaudeville's musical component. The vaudeville succeeded in surviving the loss of its couplets, developing into a non musical dramatic genre. In the period 1870 to World War I. it is structurally distinguished into two types, depending on the rigor of the plot. the vaudeville structuré and the vaudeville à tiroirs.[74] The first version of Lysistrata displays the central structural features of vaudeville à tiroirs. This dramatic type is ideally suited to presenting pictures of manners, as it is characterized by an episodic plot, consisting of a series of loosely linked satiric sketches. Intrigue is thinner, resembling the structure of operetta. Indeed, towards the end of the nineteenth century, numerous authors commonly worked on both genres.[75]

It is noteworthy that Donnay's first version of Lysistrata has close affinities to Henri Meilhac's and Ludovic Halévy's Belle Hélène, confirming the existence of close ties between vaudeville à tiroirs and operetta, at that period.[76] Both plays purport to represent the human, intimate side of antiquity, approaching it in a grossly satirical, 'irreverent' manner. The theme is also strikingly similar: Belle Hélène deals with the seduction of Helen by Paris, resulting in the cuckolding of Ménélas. Indeed, it may not be coincidental that in the first version of Lysistrata, the cuckolding of the stupid Lycon is afforded considerable importance in the plot. Affinities extend to other characters: Calchas as a shrewd, interest oriented old man clearly resembles the aged war profiteers in Lysistrata's individualized chorus. The tableaux in both plays are completed with the inclusion of numerous extras, dancers, slaves, flute players and even courtesans, who, however, in Donnay are centrally prominent.

---

[74] See Henri Gidel, Le Vaudeville (Paris: Presses Universitaites de France, 1986).

[75] Notably, Henri Meilhac, Ludovic Halévy, and Robert de Flers.

[76] Henri Meilhac and 65 Halévy. "La Belle Hélène," music by Jacques Offenbach. L'Avant Scène Opéra 125 (November 1989): pp. 25-83.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In both plays, there is also a clear-cut distinction between manipulative leaders and the people, who are gullible enough to believe in oracles and miracles. Occasionally, the setting of individual scenes is also closely similar. For example, both plays include a picturesque vignette depicting the feast in honor of Adonis.[77] Even more strikingly, the opening scene is set almost identically in the two plays.[78] In Belle Hélène, as in Lysistrata, there is a public square and, at the background, a temple. The people are at the temple's footsteps making invocations to the gods, while Calchas is outside, commenting and supplying background to the action, like the old men in the later play. Apparently then, Belle Hélène was an influential prototype for Lysistrata. Indeed, the operetta had an important revival in Paris in 1899, inspiring Donnay with ideas on how to approach Lysistrata.[79]

Donnay's modifications in the standard version had the effect of shaping the vaudeville into the more sophisticated boulevard play. An offshoot of vaudeville, this dramatic genre started rapidly developing in the last decade of the nineteenth century and was very popular in France in the early modern period. The distinguishing mark of the boulevard is the focus on sexual relations. The mobilizing force of the plot is the couple and especially the woman, as a precious object exclusive to the husband which other men are trying to possess. Indeed, as in Lysistrata, these plays tend to explore ad nauseum all the psycho-social complications arising from adultery. There is a marked tendency, also displayed in the adaptation, to particularize social relations, transforming them to studies of intriguing individual cases. The sense of society as a collectivity is entirely absent in the boulevard play. However, the

---

77 Cf. Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, "La Belle Hélène," p. 28 and Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), pp. 46-48.

78 Cf. Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, "La Belle Hélène," p. 27 and Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), pp. 9-12.

79 La Belle Hélène was revived at the Théâtre des Variétés on November 25, 1899.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

anecdotal instances frequently carry generalized didactic messages. As shown in Lysistrata, the women's and especially the heroine's entertaining conduct is also presented with a view to reinforcing misogynist stereotypes. Another characteristic feature of the boulevard play, exemplified in the adaptation is the Parisian setting. Lysistrata may be nominally set in Athens, however, it transparently depicts the Parisian manners and morals of the Belle Epoque.

The adaptation is also a typical boulevard play in view of its structure. In assimilating features of varied dramatic origin, such as Attic comedy, naturalism, vaudeville and the comedy of manners, Lysistrata displays the flexible, hybridic form of the boulevard play. Characters, situations and dialogue have been grossly multiplied, aptly exemplifying another central dramatic tendency of the boulevard, to be prolific. The love for excess however, is firmly controlled by the constraints of a tight, neatly constructed plot. Situations smoothly develop and multiply from a carefully prepared initial given. In this respect, Lysistrata was an ideal play to adapt. The simple initial premise of the sex strike allowed Donnay to exploit to the maximum all sorts of variations and complications arising herein.

In the standard version, Donnay preferred to give up the vaudevillian jealousy intrigue, in favor of a more sophisticated depiction of manners, morals and characters, aspiring to naturalism. Indeed, unlike vaudeville, the boulevard frequently does have psychological and philosophical pretensions. The character of Lysistrata developed from a schematic to a more psychologically complex depiction of her intent and motives. However, and this is yet another typical feature of the boulevard, her complexity is fully articulated and explained, leaving no obscure residue at the end of the play. Indeed, the irrational is out of place in boulevard drama.[80] Note in this respect that the use of the miracle associated with the temple

---

[80] See Michel Corvin, "Le Boulevard en question," Le théâtre en France, edited by Jacqueline de Jomaron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), pp. 845-887.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the play is emphatically ironic. It is employed with the definite purpose of demonstrating to the audience Lysistrata's demagogic adeptness.

In the introduction, Prologos mentions that the ancients, unlike Donnay's contemporaries, believed in gods.[81] The people in the French adaptation, gullible enough to accept the miracle, are closely identified with the ancients. Donnay has shifted the focus of the original from the collectivity to the individual and is detached enough to laugh at the multitude's naivety. The trick played against the people by the clever heroes indirectly also amounts to a demonstration of the boulevard theatre's sophistication in relation to Attic comedy. Donnay is winking at his contemporaries, assuring them that they know better than the ancients. This ironic game of double senses, played by the clever heroes and the audience as accomplices against the duped is another central feature of the boulevard play. Complicity induces the intimate identification of the audience with the thriving protagonists, allowing for an illusionary satisfaction of repressed desires. Indeed, nurturing the audience with fantasies of sexual triumph is also central to the conception of the French Lysistrata.

Critical opinion on the adaptation supports my dramatic analysis of Donnay's versions as typical examples of vaudeville and the boulevard play. An interesting, if predictable feature of the play's reception is that it changed through time, in response to the modifications in the adaptation. Changes also faithfully reflect variations in esteem and popularity of the genres in question, in the early modern period. Finally, reception inevitably deals with the adaptation's relation to the original, offering interesting insights to the history of Aristophanic interpretation.

In 1892, critics are unanimous on the impossibility of putting Attic comedy on the stage, in the original. Even though some of the most penetrative minds appreciate

---

[81] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), p. 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aristophanic obscenity in its ancient context as "mythic, symbolic, almost religious,"[82] they agree that it cannot be appropriated to a contemporary audience.[83] Lysistrata for Jules Lemaître is "a priapic play."[84] He wonders how men in antiquity could attend public performances of such spectacles when at his own time, these exhibitions "would be difficult to endure" even for perverts, in the seclusion of privacy.[85] Another alienating feature of the Aristophanic plays is that they lack continuity of action, resembling more, as Fouquier puts it, "a series of tableaux in a yearly revue."[86] Exceptionally, Lysistrata does have unity of action, even though its construction is generally condescendingly regarded as "too simple."[87]

Lysistrata is also singled out by Lemaître as the Aristophanic play of closest affinity to the modern sensibility for the comic.[88] In this play there are no alienating humorless features such as the use of machinery, symbolic characters or elaborate fantasies of men with animal features. On the contrary, the initial given of the plot is founded on "everyday reality."[89] The poet supposes that the sex strike, frequently employed by women in private as a means of obtaining favors, is undertaken in

---

82 Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

83 See Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, Henry Bauer, Echo, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

84 Jules Lemaître, Impressions de théâtre V. (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1901), p. 7.

85 Ibid.

86 Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

87 Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, ibid.

88 Jules Lemaître, Impressions de théâtre, p. 6.

89 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

common for the public interest. Still, in spite of its comic virtues, the obscenity and the naivety of its construction preclude a staging of Lysistrata in the original.

These difficulties indicate the necessity of adapting the play for the contemporary French stage of the period. Indeed, critics concede that Donnay was justified in making modifications to Lysistrata.[90] However, they are unhappy with the result. All agree in characterizing the adaptation a vaudeville and most even aptly compare its farcical spirit to Belle Hélène.[91] Donnay's concentration on the adultery intrigue, though, is generally considered "banal" and "unoriginal."[92] Critics also object to the low quality of the humor. The original's licentious jokes have been transformed into facile pleasantries.[93] Comparison to Aristophanes is devastating for Donnay. Francisque Sarcey is categorical in his rejection: "Nothing is more alien to [the ancient dramatist's] magnificent impudence than perverted libertinage."[94] References to Belle Hélène similarly only serve to demonstrate the adaptation's inadequacies. Henry Fouquier places Lysistrata "in the tradition of Belle Hélène" but finds that in Donnay there is "less exaggeration, scenic vivacity and gaiety.

---

90 See for example, Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893 file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I. Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

91 Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, Henry Bauer, Echo, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata. Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Jules Lemaître, Impressions de théâtre, p. 9.

92 Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, Henry Bauer, Echo, December 23, 1892, Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

93 See for example Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, ibid.

94 Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meshing to form [in the earlier work] an enormous caricature."[95] Sarcey charmingly exposes Donnay as an impostor: Lysistrata is essentially "a photographically enlarged Chat Noir fantasy, designed to pass as a four act comedy on a vast stage."[96] Clearly, critics in 1892 sent Donnay back home to revise the adaptation and, to his best interest, he did well to heed them.

Confronted with the standard version, the new generation of critics in 1909 regarded Donnay's Lysistrata almost as a minor masterpiece. By that time, Donnay was a celebrated and esteemed dramatic author who had even joined the immortals in the French Academy.[97] Accordingly, comparison to Aristophanes served the novel purpose of demonstrating that with Lysistrata, Donnay had equalled his famous predecessor: "if two authors have been created to understand each other, these are certainly Aristophanes and Donnay."[98] The latter "does not follow Aristophanes but accompanies him with incomparable brio ..."[99] The adaptation was praised as a perfect specimen of "Parisian Atticism."[100] This characterization applies both to the play's literary qualities, and to character construction. Donnay "has taught Lysistrata to be within measure."[101] "He has cleared up the original of its horrible crudity, enveloping it with a touch of delicacy."[102] Clearly, the influence of Parisianism on

---

95 Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, ibid.

96 Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, ibid.

97 Donnay had been elected into the French Academy in 1907.

98 Georges Boyer, cited in Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

99 Ibid.

100 Robert de Flers, ibid.

101 Francis Chevassu, ibid

102 Adolphe Brisson, ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Atticism has the corrective function of making Atticism purer.

Characters in the standard version have acquired depth satisfying to Donnay's contemporaries. They are even deep enough to let their simple ancient prototypes show through. For Roger le Brun, characters have "a strange and occasionally disconcerting complexity of soul, but at the same time they are followers of Venus, whose simple nudity has been obscured by the libertine hypocrisy of modern times."[103] Indeed, Lysistrata in 1909 is also thought to offer food for thought, and even instruction. For Adolphe Brisson, through the presentation of "Athenian morals, [the play] targets our own decadence."[104] Comparison to Belle Hélène is now used to demonstrate Lysistrata's superiority. Donnay has improved on the superficial buffoonery of the operetta "with a fluid charm, a smile, a flower of irony, the light mockery of a philosopher ..."[105]

As a typical boulevard play, the standard version of Lysistrata offered to the audience a little of everything, sentiment, fantasy, montmartoise decadence, a love drama, skepticism.[106] Leon Blum's list of the play's virtues is closely analogous to P. Audiat's definition of a well made boulevard play. In both cases, the secret of success clearly lies in a varied and well measured combination of features. A play should contain "audacity but not too much, moral teaching though not bothersome, laughter but not out of measure and sentiment, though not mushy."[107] This

---

[103] Roger Le Brun, Maurice Donnay (Paris: Bibliothèque internationale d'édition, 1903), p. 13.

[104] Adolphe Brisson, cited in Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens." L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Léon Blum, "Lysistrata," Comoedia, October 31, 1909, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[107] P. Audiat, cited in Michel Corvin, "Le Boulevard en question," Le théâtre en France, edited by Jacqueline de Jomaron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), p. 863.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

description perfectly applies to the standard version. In 1919, the requirement for variety proved flexible enough to allow for the addition of a little patriotism without loss of popularity.

To keep up appearances, Donnay hypocritically claimed in 1919 to have changed the character of the heroine to bring her closer to her ancient prototype.[108] However, this was hardly necessary. The experience of the recent war had strengthened the critics' receptivity to the expression of patriotic sentiment on the stage. Thus critics were generally willing to be co-operative. Adolphe Brisson found that Lysistrata's new nightmarish visions were compatible with her strong emotive nature. He concluded, "This moment of recollection does not inordinately darken a comedy written in and for pleasure."[109] Antoine argued from a naturalist perspective that the modifications had in fact made the heroine's character more real: "Lysistrata became for a moment a contemporary overcome by the noblest of our emotions."[110] A few less distinguished critics, however, delicately complained that the inserted scene, "though laudable in itself," clashed with the play's jovial tone.[111] Moreover, the plot had now become dull, as the manipulation to cover up the treachery had been removed. Guillot de Saix lamented, "the dénouement loses its ironic force."[112]

---

[108] See Ch. de Lagrille, "La Lysistrata de Maurice Donnay au théâtre Marigny" La Rampe (March 9, 1919): p. 18.

[109] Adolphe Brisson, March 11, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[110] Antoine, "La semaine théâtrale," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[111] Guillot de Saix, "Lysistrata à la Comédie-Marigny," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. See also, Gustave Fréjaville, "Théâtre Marigny: Lysistrata," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[112] Guillot de Saix, ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For the 1924 revival. Donnay decided to re-employ the standard version. However, by the mid-twenties, the favorite boulevard theme of adultery with its attendant complications no longer made a good recipe for drama.[113] Indeed, Lysistrata was dismissed as a dated play, "a frivolous and cerebral entertainment for the carefree and a little futile" pre-war society.[114] Critics had finally become weary of the adaptation's boulevard pleasantries and soft core skepticism. As Gabriel Boissy clearly explained referring to Donnay's poetic style. "Today we demand more depth and find surface embellishment less desirable."[115] He found that the adaptation's "action lacked substance" and suggested it would have been preferable for war to be centrally important in the plot. "It was disconcerting that war, still so present in our flesh, in our heart ... was treated with such negligence," he wrote, disenchanted.[116]

The mid-twenties signals a new era in Aristophanic interpretation in France. Whereas at the end of the nineteenth century it was simply unthinkable that Aristophanes could be produced in the original, this possibility now seems appealing. Gone are the happy times when Donnay was exulted as the ideal modern interpreter of the Attic dramatist. For Gabriel Boissy, his adaptation actually prevents the audience from appreciating the "coarseness and pungency" of the Aristophanic text.[117] These qualities, ardently chastised in the earlier period, are now perceived as virtues. The critic concludes his article urging for an exact translation of

---

113 See Michel Corvin, "Boulevard et société 1890-1914," Littérature et Nation 5 (March 1991): pp. 5-17.

114 Gabriel Boissy, "Lysistrata," April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aristophanes, "which perhaps could be more effective in its vigor."[118] The relationship to Aristophanes no longer needs to be mediated. Dullin would soon heed to this advice, proposing new approaches to Attic comedy more respectful of the originals.

Lysistrata opened at the Grand Théâtre, in Paris and had a successful run of seventy performances.[119] It was produced and staged by Paul Porel, an older and venerable contemporary of Antoine, who had a reputation as a director of artful and luxurious spectacles.[120] Lysistrata too, was primarily conceived and appreciated as a good show. Francisque Sarcey describes it as "a sumptuous spectacle, arranged with exquisite taste," offering "a rich display of marvels": "Groupings of beautiful creatures, lavishly costumed or artfully undressed; ... Charming music ... a truly beautiful set and acting to perfection by Ms. Réjane and Mr. Guitry."[121] Besides the two great protagonists, the cast included other notable but now forgotten actors of the late nineteenth century,[122] as well as ... the young Lugné-Poe in the role of an old man. Porel had assembled no less than one hundred chorus girls on stage, "whose charms marvelously framed the talent of Réjane ... ".[123]

The original production and all subsequent revivals employed two sets, faithfully

---

118 Ibid.

119 Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

120 See Camillo Antona-Traversi, Réjane (Paris: Editions le Calame, 1930), p. 309.

121 Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

122 Notably Aimée Tessandier, Augustine Leriche and Montbar. See Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

123 Léo Claretie, "Théâtre," Revue Encyclopédique (October 15, 1893): p. 1011.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

corresponding to Donnay's conception of space in the adaptation.[124] The first represented a public square, surrounded by buildings.[125] The focal point, at the back and stage center was the temple, with its impressive façade of four heavy columns. Lysistrata's house was situated stage right and was equipped with an acting area at the top, especially designed for the heroine's appearances on the terrace. In the limited space between Lysistrata's house and the temple, the designer M. Jambon had squeezed in a triumphal arch, used for the entrance of Agathos' army.[126] On stage left there were more houses, and painted at the back there was a view of Athens, with the Acropolis at the top.[127] This configuration limited the main acting area to the semi-circular open space of the public square. Also forming a semi-circle, the second set represented the interior of Salabaccha's salon.[128] The space was defined by ionic columns and there were divans, set in the round for the reclining courtesans and their customers. Possibly on stage left, there was an opening onto a rose garden.

Lysistrata's set designs appropriately serve the adaptation's naturalist inclinations. There is a remarkable insistency on detail, especially apparent in the first set, which is overcrowded with buildings.[129] The critic of Monde was impressed by the exactitude in the representation of Athens. This was the actual Mecca of

---

[124] See Figures 1-1 and 1-2.

[125] See Figures 1-1 and 1-3.

[126] Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre, "La Soirée Théâtrale" Monde December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[127] Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[128] See Figure 1-2.

[129] See Figures 1-1 and 1-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

letters, not a fictive substitute.[130] Indeed, details are important to fixing milieu. Similar concern for exactitude is manifested in the costumes, designed to look authentically antique.[131] Women wear long chitons and men are in short tunics. Individuality appears to be particularly important to the conception of dress, in this production. In spite of the large number of the cast, no two actors appear to wear the same costume in the finale.[132] Pleating, jewelry, embroidery, headdresses, are zealously employed in great variety to give the impression of ancient Athenians in their Sunday best.

The representation of milieu aimed not only at being exact and picturesque but also, at creating a sensuous atmosphere. Light contributed to this effect, establishing three moods: the gaiety of full daylight for the women's assembly, romantic night shadows for the love scene and daybreak for the final act.[133] A. Dutack's music was discreetly employed as background and it was also used to establish a link between acts so that continuity would not be disrupted.[134] Tunics were of rich and fine transparent materials forming a harmonious tonality.[135] The dancer at Salabaccha's was exquisite.

Discussion of the acting was almost uniquely focused on the leading couple, Gabrielle Réjane and Lucien Guitry. In 1892, Réjane was already at her prime.

---

130 Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre, "La Soirée Théâtrale" Monde December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

131 See Figure 1-3.

132 Ibid.

133 Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

134 Henry Bauer, Echo, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

135 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

widely recognized as the finest French player of comedy. She was distinguished for having a typically Parisian, popular verve, associated with the Montmartre quarter. Réjane had made her debut in 1875 at Vaudeville and had appeared in innumerable light comedies forgotten today. Some of her frequently cited earlier successes are close in date to Lysistrata. She had played the leading roles in Edmond de Goncourt's Germinie Lacerteux (1888) and in Henri Meilhac's Ma cousine (1890). Moreover, in 1891, she and Guitry had charmed audiences as a pair of lovers in Amoureuse of Porto-Riche. Lucien Guitry had made his first professional appearance in 1878, as the jeune premier in La dame aux camélias of Dumas fils. In the early 1890s he had resumed his career on the French stage after spending almost ten years living and working in Russia. His most brilliant successes were yet to come. Guitry would distinguish himself as the lover par excellence of boulevard plays.

Criticism of the acting in Lysistrata reflects the period's general theoretical approach to Aristophanic interpretation, discussed earlier. The key to putting Attic comedy on the stage is applying the right sense of measure to temper its excessive features. Besides "measure," another word frequently used in the criticism of Lysistrata's acting at the Belle Epoque is "spiritual." Also associated with temperance, "spiritual" is commonly employed to mean: sexually suggestive, though not offensive. Thus, Sarcey found Lucien Guitry "superb" in the role of Agathos, explaining that he revealed "a sense of measure and tact we had not previously surmised him capable of."[136] He particularly liked the actor in the seduction scene, which was "certainly daring, yet spiritually conducted."[137] Réjane was familiarly praised for her exuberant vivacity in interpreting Lysistrata. She gave life to the part,

---

136 Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I. Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

137 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with "her spirit, the biting verve of her delivery, her perkiness."[138] At the same time, however, she is praised for "her sense of measure in delivering the daring word."[139] Another critic notes approvingly that, even though she appears to come from "Montmartre rather than the Acropolis, she is satisfactorily spiritual."[140]

Réjane's interpretation made a lasting impression. Indeed, it is regarded important enough to be mentioned in contexts independent of Aristophanic production. Thus, in recounting his memories of Réjane, Antoine mentions that "those who saw her in the [Lysistrata's] love scene will never forget her," preferring unfortunately, to keep the experience to himself.[141] Ginisty and H Bidou are more enlightening.[142] Interestingly, in both accounts, the impression that has survived the test of time is Réjane's ability to give a measured and well rounded interpretation of the comic part. Thus, Ginisty mentions that "in Lysistrata she had this sense of measure that was proper to her, combining ease, authority and distinction with gaiety."[143]

For H. Bidou, Lysistrata represents a landmark in Réjane's career as the first part in which the actress achieved a unified expression of contrary features in her acting, clearly manifesting "the extreme subtlety of a simultaneously pathetic and comic

---

138 Henry Bauer, Echo, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

139 Ibid.

140 Camille Bellaigue, Revue des Deux Mondes, January 1, 1893, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

141 André Antoine, "Mes souvenirs sur Réjane," La Force Française 7 (July 1920): pp. 1-7.

142 See Camillo Antona-Traversi, Réjane (Paris: Editions le Calame, 1930), pp. 339-342.

143 Ibid. p. 341.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

genius."[144] The critic gives a list of binary opposed qualities, achieving perfect balance through controlling each other. Interestingly, Réjane's measured acting in Lysistrata is presented as the ideal interpretation of Donnay's adaptation. Indeed, the reconciliation of ancient excessive features to the modern Parisian sensibility is regarded as the chief common virtue of the text and of Réjane's approach to the leading role:

> She was unforgettable [as Lysistrata]; her lighthearted earnestness, the mirth mixed with tenderness, the mockery cut short by the weakness of an affected heart, the masterful control of impetuosity, her anger, adroitness and exactitude, the cold blooded vivacity, the sincerity in lying, the transport and the irony, all this was Athens and Paris, Aristophanes and Maurice Donnay.[145]

Réjane was pregnant throughout the period she played Lysistrata in 1892.[146] Her swollen belly was visible, in spite of the costumer's conscientious efforts to hide it with a richly pleated accordion tunic. As Donnay mentions in his memoirs, the actress' talent made the audience forget that she lacked the figure appropriate for the role.[147] Indeed, no critic took issue with this point. A more serious disadvantage of the original production noted by Antoine was that the Grand Théâtre was unsuitable for the staging of drama, as it had formerly been a music hall.[148] Its balcony was too high and distant and the frame of the stage out of measure. Audiences however were not put off. When the original production closed, its popularity had not abated.[149] In

---

144 Ibid., p. 342.

145 Ibid., pp. 342-343.

146 Maurice Donnay, Mes Débuts à Paris (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1937), p. 275.

147 Ibid.

148 André Antoine, "Mes souvenirs sur Réjane," La Force Française 7 (July 1920): p. 5.

149 Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the 1896 restaging at Vaudeville. Lysistrata ran for 175 performances.[150] Réjane again held the title role. playing however with a new cast.

In 1909, Donnay's adaptation was newly produced by Cora Laparcerie, an actress who also came to manage several theatres in her career. She chose Lysistrata to inaugurate her acquisition of the Bouffes-Parisiens theatre and played the lead role herself. Laparcerie was a notable dynamic actress of the boulevard. who had made her debut at the Odéon, under Antoine's direction. Lysistrata proved to be one of the most memorable parts of her career.[151] The 1909 production was also financially successful. running for 150 performances.[152] Laparcerie would subsequently make the most of the play. restaging it in 1912 and 1924 and taking it on tour to the French provinces and abroad.[153]

The 1909 and all subsequent revivals do not lay claim to originality. Essentially they repeat the main staging features of the 1892 premiere. adjusting them to contemporary taste. The emphasis falls on presenting a grand and luxurious spectacle. featuring talented principals, lavish costume and scenic designs. live dancing and music. and numerous shapely girls. Thus in the1909 revival, there was a live orchestra of fifty musicians and singers. original dancing. including also a warmly applauded number of dance barbare and beautiful actresses "whose

---

(November 20. 1909): p. i.

150 Ibid.

151 J.-B. J., "Cora Laparcerie est morte" Figaro, August 29, 1951, file on Cora Laparcerie, Rt 8497, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

152 Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

153 See the chronological list of Aristophanic productions included in this study.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eurythmics were enchanting to the eye."[154] The girls were not as numerous as in the original production but, as a critic notes with appreciation, the audience had a closer view of them.[155]

The set again featured architecture à l'antique. The new designs, however, are noticeably more atmospheric and picturesque. In the first set, all buildings, including the temple, have been arranged on the two sides of the stage, leaving the background space in the middle free for a romantic tableau of trees, white square houses and the port in the distance bathed in blue.[156] The Acropolis is prominent in the second set, ironically drawing attention to its displacement in Donnay's adaptation.[157] The salon is suffocated by decorative features. Every inch of the walls is covered by multifarious reliefs, garlands and decorative motifs, all minutely detailed.[158] Similar zeal is manifested in the conception of the costumes.[159]

Costume design generally follows the same principles as the original production, in emphasizing period features and individuality.[160] However, the design of the female garments also reveals a tendency to satisfy contemporary fashion. Indeed, the

---

154 Camille de Sainte-Croix, cited in Gaston Sorbets, "Lysistrata aux Bouffes-Parisiens," L'Illustration Théâtrale, 130 (November 20, 1909): p. i.

155 Ibid.

156 Louis Schneider, "Lysistrata. La mise en scène et les décors." Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. See also Figures 1-8 and 1-10.

157 Louis Schneider, "Lysistrata. La mise en scène et les décors." Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. See also Figure 1-12.

158 See Figures 1-11 and 1-12.

159 See Figures 1-8, 1-9, 1-11, 1-12 and 1-15.

160 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dresses of Lysistrata resembled more elaborate evening toilets.[161] The heroine appeared at the women's assembly wearing a chiton style draped frock of voluptuous gold, matched by a light ivory cape. For the love scene she slipped into an etherial pink muslin, discreetly held at the shoulders by pearl straps. The effect was complemented by a shawl of light blue tulle.[162] For Salabaccha and the courtesans, a more oriental style had been adopted, projecting the body's sculptural form by means of tightly fitting tissues, decorated by costume jewelry.[163] Amusingly, Ghenya, in the section "The Fashion in Theatre" advises women on where to buy a bustier similar to Salabaccha's, in Paris.[164]

Critcs praised Laparcerie's acting, making, however, commonplace, unenlightening remarks. Thus, they noted her "gaiety," "charm," "vivacity," "elegance" and "tenderness."[165] All of these characterizations have also been applied to Réjane, in contexts, however, where they are more meaningful. It is unclear then how Laparcerie's interpretation of Lysistrata differed from Réjane's. Donnay found that the press had been unjust to Laparcerie. The memory of her great predecessor prevented critics from fully appreciating Laparcerie's worthy dramatic

---

161 See Figures 1-10, 1-14, 1-16 and 1-19.

162 Ghenya, "Lysistrata. La mode au théâtre." Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

163 Ibid. See also Figure 1-17.

164 Ibid.

165 For example, consider: "Mrs. Cora Laparcerie ... was a brilliant Lysistrata of remarkable elegance and exquisite tenderness." Francis Chevassu, "Lysistrata. La soirée" Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Similarly, Emery writes about Laparcerie's acting: "... the enthusiasm brimming in her eyes, on her lips, bestow on the Lysistrata she has composed the vivacity, eloquence and impetuosity that we find in Aristophanes ...." "Lysistrata. Comment ils ont joué," Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

qualities: "her sincerity, nice voice and harmonious figure."[166] The critic of Le Théâtre attempted a direct comparison of the two actresses in Lysistrata. Whereas Réjane had been a Parisian malicious and naughty mistress. Laparcerie was more composed, giving the impression of "the sculptural Athenian of the friezes."[167] She emphasized self-confidence and wisdom in her interpretation of Lysistrata.

The memory of Réjane also weighed down on Jeanne Provost's interpretation of Lysistrata, in the 1919 production.[168] Provost had been a classically trained actress who had then recently left her position at the Comédie Française for the commercial theatre. She was praised for conveying "authority and strength of character" in her interpretation of the lead role.[169] At the women's meeting Provost was "calm and determined, resembling a modern suffragette."[170] Antoine appreciated the "sensibility and amplitude" of her delivery in the love scene. Indeed, he found that Provost was satisfying as Lysistrata, given that the role had "a heavy and glorious heritage."[171] Other critics however were put off by her "refined coldness."[172]

---

166 Maurice Donnay, J'ai vécu 1900 (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1950), p. 223.

167 Adolphe Aderer, "Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens. Lysistrata." Le Théâtre 265 (January 1910): p. 24.

168 The production, directed by M. R. Trébor, opened at Comédie-Marigny on March 8, 1919. See Figures 1-20, 1-21, 1-22 and 1-23.

169 Guillot de Saix, "Lysistrata à la Comédie-Marigny," September 9, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

170 Régis Gignoux, March 9, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

171 André Antoine, "La semaine théâtrale," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. See also Figures 1-20 and 1-21.

172 Henry Bidou, "La semaine dramatique," Journal des Débats, March 10, 1919, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nostalgically remembering Réjane's "spirit, grace and tenderness."[173] By comparison, Provost lacked "nerve and exuberance."[174]

To be fair, however, Provost was competing against her predecessors with the changed text, in which Lysistrata appears more sober. Indeed, perhaps there was a general intent in this production to classicize effects, cutting down on playfulness. In a similar spirit to Provost, Jean Worms played Agathos "with a heaviness and sincerity" criticized as inappropriate for the role, "which called for subtlety, malice and letting think one believes only half of what one says."[175]. In spite of praising Lysistrata's newly acquired patriotism, critics would not give up easily on their fun. The production was moderately successful, holding the stage for 33 performances.

In Lysistrata's last major revival, Laparcerie strove bluntly for bolder effects, in a desperate attempt to squeeze all the adaptation's sensuality to the dregs.[176] The production was once again conceived as a grand spectacle, featuring 120 actors and 350 costumes. By 1924 critics tiredly noted that Laparcerie had used "the familiar" decors, giving her credit, however, for renewing them.[177] Indeed, the sets display bolder lines, shapes and colors.[178] The decors are now a long way from the finely detailed earlier depictions of Atticism, tending rather towards ancient Egypt.[179] A

---

[173] Edmond Sée, March 9, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid.

[176] The production opened at the Théâtre Cora Laparcerie on April 18, 1924.

[177] Nozière, April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[178] See Figures 1-13, 1-24 and 1-25.

[179] See Figure 1-13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

new inspiration was that Lysistrata appeared at the women's meeting in a chariot![180]

Antoine wrote that the production offered the seductions of the music hall. He describes the costumes as "very revealing, resembling those worn at the most suggestive revues."[181] The lesbians had short hair, exciting profiles, and were barefooted. Their miniscule tunics, "evoked Lesbos for men only."[182] Courtesans appeared descending a ramp, to fully exploit their physical attributes. Their multicolored tunics allowed for appreciation of their "nude arms, half seen legs, protruding bosoms and debauched eyes."[183] Indeed, the scenes at Salabaccha's were referred to as "an orgy, ... a triumph of flesh display" complete with nude dancers framed by black torch bearers.[184]

Unlike other impatient, bored or ironic critics, Antoine found that the production's "orgiastic spirit [was] not unpleasant," admitting however, that "the great agitation and truculence" on stage crushed poetry.[185] Indeed, the acting was generally regarded more competent on the lively, exuberant passages than on the lyric. Agathos was credited for having "hot sensuality" to balance off his lack of refinement.[186] There could be no excuse, however, for the "too colloquial" tone of

---

[180] See Figure 1-25.

[181] André Antoine, April 21, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. See also Figure 1-13.

[182] Armory, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[183] Gabriel Boissy, "Lysistrata," April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[184] Armory, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[185] André Antoine, April 21, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[186] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

some chorus girls.[187] Laparcerie alone was found to be exceptionally competent in her interpretation. She admirably combined a combative, derisive spirit with a fully matured sensuality. Her elocution was warmly praised as refined and richly nuanced.[188] Gabriel Boissy has left a vivid and affectionate portrait of Laparcerie as the last Lysistrata: " ... her alluring mockery, her voice, resonating temptation, her joyous laughter, turned her to the magnificent, the adorable, the enchanting Lysistrata."[189]

Addressing himself to posterity, another critic of the time has left some reflections concerning Lysistrata's reception since the premiere, in 1892: "A historian of the public spirit could piquantly verify that at each revival [of Lysistrata] ears were less and less shocked by the libertinage of a fantasy more Parisian than Athenian."[190] In 1924, there was a nostalgic remembrance of the original production "as the joy of our first years of theatre."[191] The play, mused another critic, "takes us back to our puberty, restless and timid."[192] Indeed, audience reaction in 1892 had a charming, youthful innocence. Sarcey reports that the public spontaneously exclaimed in admiration at the discovery of Salabaccha, magnificent and imposing, lying on the

---

187 René Bruyez, "Au théâtre Cora Laparcerie," Le Théâtre 304 (May 1924): p. 433.

188 Ibid.

189 Gabriel Boissy, "Lysistrata," April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

190 April 19, 1924, unidentified review, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

191 Gabriel Boissy, "Lysistrata," April 19, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

192 Armory, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

divan.[193] "A gentleman from the orchestra," writing for Monde noticed a "prudent lifting of fans in the theatre," at the delivery of suggestive passages.[194] To the critics' condescension, the audience enjoyed even the most naive pleasantries, consisting of mixing slang with ancient words.[195]

In 1909, Léon Blum noted that though almost entirely new, the audience "appreciated Lysistrata in the same way and for the same reasons as in the previous productions."[196] The audience certainly was still ardently enthusiastic, though perhaps less timid: it had no inhibitions in noisily applauding the dance barbare and in shouting bravos at the curtain calls. [197] In 1919, Donnay's appeal to patriotic sentiment was on the mark. The audience warmly applauded Lysistrata's added scene and critics found this acclaim well deserved.[198] Louis Schneider interpreted the audience's reaction as a sign of maturity. Whereas the public had previously only seen the play as an ironic fantasy, now they understood that "Lysistrata's soul should naturally become more somber."[199] It seemed as if the adaptation had

---

[193] Francisque Sarcey, Le Temps, December 26, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[194] Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre, "La soirée théâtrale," Le Monde, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[195] Henry Fouquier, Figaro, December 23, 1892, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[196] Léon Blum, "Lysistrata" Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[197] See Serge Basset, "Aux Bouffes-Parisiens: Lysistrata," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: Emery, "Comment ils ont joué," Comoedia (October 31, 1909), file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[198] Edmond Sée, March 9, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[199] Louis Schneider, "Les premières," March 8, 1919, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

become a classic.

However, in 1924, there was no longer an audience for Lysistrata. J Botrot ironically commented that the public at the premiere was very mixed, consisting of theatre celebrities, the doorman and the butler of Donnay, three obscure academicians, a relic of the Chat Noir and 150 merchants from the neighborhood.[200] The production also targeted the visitors of the 1924 Olympic games. Reactions were naturally well varied. Except perhaps for the visitors, everybody else could no longer get excited, as they almost knew the lines by heart. Victims of the war and militarists were "lightly shocked" with the production's casual references to war.[201] The dance at Salabaccha's was received with coldness in the orchestra and the balconies. However, at the galleries, audiences openly expressed derision with clapping and laughter.[202] Mirth was also unwittingly provoked by a young actor dressed in green, who had a strong regional accent.[203] Clearly, thirty two years after the original production, the audience had grown old enough to reject Donnay's adaptation.

Throughout its long history, Lysistrata aimed primarily at satisfying the large popular audience. Similarly to the adaptation, the play's production exhibits typical features of the boulevard theatre. The boulevard play is essentially a literary, conversational form, thriving in "the dialogue of pleasure and the pleasure of

---

200 Jean Botrot, "Lysistrata. La soirée," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

201 Ibid.

202 "Lysistrata" April 27, 1924, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

203 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dialogue."[204] Language is its principal instrument of transgression into the sexual theme which is treated as taboo: everything is implied, while nothing is actually said or done on stage. This conception actually reduces the mise en scène to a decorative function. Indeed, the boulevard theatre has little interest in exploiting scenic devices. Actors are essentially debaters; they do not play with space. However, they are capitally important in communicating, through their voice and face, every nuance and implication of the text. Indeed, in this form of theatre, talented actors are an enormous asset. The boulevard supported and propagated the cult of stars.

Lysistrata's scenic conception as a spectacle perfectly illustrates this boulevardic adaptation's emphasis on the depiction of sexual manners. A play about manners invites pictorial representation: indeed, manners are depicted. The sexual theme's intimate connection to fantasy also whets the appetite for visualization. It is noteworthy, however, that the show in the Lysistrata production is totally devoid of experimental zeal. The stage design closely follows Donnay's scenic descriptions. Moreover, in both sets, play with space is limited to the boulevard theatre's conventional uses for hiding and eavesdropping, already specified in the text. There was little for the director to do besides strategically placing the principals so as to enhance their presence on stage, tastefully surrounding them with chorus girls for greater effect. Indeed, the severe limitation of the director's contribution is also manifested in the production's resistance to change through time. As shown, all the revivals of Lysistrata make use of common staging features, adjusting decorative details for the sake of variety. Conservatism in the staging highlights the boulevard theatre's ordering of priorities: the production is subservient to the text.

Regarding the scenic conception, the highest impotance is afforded to the stars'.

---

[204] Michel Corvin, "Le Boulevard en question," Le théâtre en France, edited by Jacqueline de Jomaron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), p. 864.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

not the director's contribution. As mentioned earlier, in the original production it was the two gifted protagonists and especially Réjane who were considered primarily responsible for imprinting the author's interpretation. This was also recognized by Donnay himself. On the inauguration of Réjane's theatre in 1906, Donnay sent her flowers from his villa "Lysis," explaining he had chosen the name "in souvenir of Lysistrata and consequently of you, — were you not my first and how superb! interpreter — " he wrote in the note accompanying his bouquet.[205] Clearly, the Lysistrata of the Belle Epoque was meant to be solely identified with Donnay and Réjane. The author committed this thought to posterity, sending to Réjane the note in admiration, as "a token" of his "gratitude."[206]

It is impossible, however, to take Donnay seriously. According to Jacques Richepin, Cora Laparcerie's husband, at one time, the author had also characterized his wife the ideal interpreter, calling her "the unique Lysis."[207] Whether Donnay was unfaithful to Réjane or not does not make any difference. The point is clear: In typically boulevard fashion, the Lysistrata interpretation is conceived as the offspring of a love affair between the author and a gifted actress, leaving everybody else out of the picture. Stretching the metaphor further, the author's contribution to creation is regarded as more weighty. Without him Lysistrata would not exist, whereas actresses are replaceable, even sacred monsters, like Réjane.

In the boulevard theatre, there is not much scenic variety from play to play. The only essential requirement is for a space where intimate interaction can take

---

205 Maurice Donnay, cited in Camillo Antona-Traversi, Réjane (Paris: Editions le Calame, 1930), p. 123.

206 Ibid.

207 Jacques Richepin, "Trait de mœurs théâtrales," December 10, 1918, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

place.[208] This is usually the anonymous marital or extramarital salon bourgeois. The representation of open space is rare and used primarily to break the scenic monotony of the salons. In Lysistrata, Salabaccha's brothel obviously conforms perfectly to the boulevard theatre's scenic prerequisites. However, unlike standard boulevard plays, the adaptation presents the idiosyncrasy that open space, represented in the first set, is centrally important. Even though sexual abstention has now been relegated to the private sphere, it must still take place in public. To avoid misunderstanding, Donnay explains to the audience in the prologue that unlike Parisians, ancient Greeks had no hesitation in exposing their nudity at the stadium "Without any malignant intention/From head to toe."[209] This explanation turns out to be unnecessary: the public square is essentially used by Donnay as a private space.

In the crowning episode of Lysistrata's meeting with Agathos, Donnay has inserted into the original all the traditional tricks of boulevard theatre.[210] Agathos invents an excuse to send Lysistrata's husband along with the men at Salabaccha's to clear off the public square for his secret rendezvous. Before persuading Lysistrata to meet him, he eavesdrops on Lampito's attempts to seduce her husband. The two couples resort to an idiosyncratic use of the square. In a space primarily designed for exposure, they take every care not to be seen. Indeed, secrecy is Lysistrata's chief worry, preventing her from seeing Agathos: "No I was not afraid of being feeble, but I could have been seen, and Lysistrata should not even be suspected."[211] The public square then functions as an extension of the private salon bourgeois. It is noteworthy

---

208 Ibid. See also Michel Corvin, Le théâtre de boulevard. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989).

209 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), p. 7.

210 See Michel Corvin. "Le Boulevard en question," Le théâtre en France, edited by Jacqueline de Jomaron (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), pp. 845-887.

211 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), p. 73.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that the multitude of buildings in the original production surround the public square claustrophobically, giving almost the impression of a closed space.

Donnay's Lysistrata was enormously popular and influential. The original production's fame quickly spread beyond Paris. In 1893, a cast was quickly assembled to play Lysistrata in Brussels. Lucien Guitry held the role of Agathos, as in the original, and the heroine was played by the singer M. Ugald. The production was financially successful. An intriguing feature of this venture, recounted in Donnay's memoirs, is that the author would give a talk before each performance explaining why Aristophanes had written Lysistrata.[212]

All this perhaps appeared new and wonderful in 1893. In the spring of 1925, the stale final revival was also taken on tour to the French provinces and abroad. If the production could no longer hold an audience in Paris, it was still "good enough for the Orient." Indeed, it was shown abroad in Corsica, Egypt, Turkey and Greece.[213] The French text was also independently produced in many cities in France as well in francophone Monte Carlo, Brussels and Geneva.[214] The adaptation's translation into numerous foreign languages for production effectively contributed to building up its international reputation, reaching as far east as Russia and as far west as America.[215]

A notable translation of Donnay's text was in modern Greek, in 1910. The play was produced by Marika Kotopouli, the most important actress of the early modern period in Greece, who also held the title role.[216] Another interesting production of

---

212 Maurice Donnay, J'ai vécu 1900 (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1950), p. 9.

213 See file on Cora Laparcerie, Rt 8499, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

214 See chronological list of Aristophanic productions included in this study.

215 See chapters IV and V of the present study.

216 See Giannis Sideres, To arkhaio theatro ste nea ellenike skene. Vol. I, 1817-1932. (Athens: Ikaros, 1976), p. 239.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Donnay's Lysistrata opened in Berlin, in 1926, at Max Reinhardt's Kammerspiele theatre. This was directed by Erich Engel. In 1919, a reputable French publishing house felt confident enough about the play to translate and publish it in English.[217] Indeed, in the 1920s there developed a keen interest in producing Donnay's play in America. Central features of his adaptation were eventually channelled into the American major interpretation of Lysistrata, in 1929. The French Lysistrata's influence on the American theatre will be considered in the fourth chapter.

Donnay's play has also served as a model for a great variety of minor dramatic explorations. Interestingly, these branch off to dramatic genres already assimilated into the original adaptation, with one exception. This is the feminist version of Lysistrata, La grève des femmes by Marie Després, that will be discussed in the fifth chapter. The French Lysistrata has inspired imitations in all forms of popular theatre prevalent at the time, ranging from the unassuming vaudeville and the operetta to the boulevard play. A year after the original production, Battaillocles and Mersethos were probably the first to imitate the original Lysistrata adaptation, writing for production an orthodox vaudeville with lots of songs.[218] Their play parodies Donnay's text, closely following its plot development. The only new comic inspiration is that Nicostrate, the husband of the virgin bride is totally ignorant of his marital duties. He has a revelation, however, on hearing Lysistrata and Agathos having sex within the temple: "Oh! What do I hear? Eureka!"[219] The original adaptation's lyricism has been totally eliminated and humor is coarse and broad.

---

217 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata, translated into English by Helen Davenport Gibbons (Paris: Fasquelle, 1919)

218 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by L. Battaillocles and J. Mersethos, music by Alfredos Patussetas (Paris: A. Patay, 1898). See also chronological list of Aristophanic productions included in this study.

219 Ibid., p. 40.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

focusing on the sexual theme.

At the beginning of the century, the composer Paul Lincke wrote the lyrics for a romanticized operetta entitled Lysistrata, which was to become an international success.[220] The libretto, written by H. Bolten-Bäckers, transparently reveals Donnay's play as its source. With minor variations, it closely follows the adaptation's plot development. The familiar temple of love is central to the action and has exactly the same functions as in the original. The subplot involving the courtesans has been removed. Bolten-Bäckers, however, had the inspiration to multiply the love couples. The heroine now has two virgin nieces shut up in the temple, who are later paired off to discover love. In perfect symmetry with Lysistrata's extra marital activity, her husband too begins an affair with an old lover. The ingenious solution at the end is divorce by mutual consent, to make everybody happy.

The Lysistrata operetta caught the attention of the international community immediately. In 1904 it was translated into French and adapted by P. L. Flers for performance at the Moulin Rouge.[221] The following year the operetta was produced in Madrid, on a Spanish libretto by A. Fernandez-Arias and C. L. de Cuenca.[222] Lysistrata's "Glow-worm" song became an extremely popular international hit of the period.[223] The refrain runs: "Shine little glow-worm, glimmer, shine little glow-

---

220 H. Bolten-Bäckers, Lysistrata, operetta in two acts, music by Paul Lincke, translated into English by Lilla Cayley Robinson, file on Lysistrata, Schubert archive, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

221 Bolten-Bäckers, Lysistrata, music by Paul Lincke, adapted by P. L. Flers. Theatre Program for production at the Moulin Rouge, file on Lysistrata Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

222 A. Fernandez-Arias and C. L. Cuenca, Lysistrata (Madrid, 1905).

223 See Richard Traubner, Operetta, A Theatrical History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 238.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

worm, glimmer! Light the path, below, above, and lead us on to Love! Love!"[224] Clearly, the operetta is a long way off, not only from Aristophanes, but also from Donnay's piquant sensuality.

A notable imitation of Donnay's Lysistrata into boulevard theatre is Jacques Richepin's La grève des femmes.[225] This play purports to show greater awareness of the reality of war than its prototype. War profiteers are introduced into the action and have a prominent part as evil manipulators of the people. The courtesans, too, are unfavorably portrayed as money greedy. Lysistrata is a meek and open minded leader faithful to her husband. However, she has a very kinky idea concerning the strike. The heroine pays the courtesans to leave the brothel, so that married women can take their place in disguise and resist their husbands. Action then turns into a mess, as all the possibilities of erotic fantasy playing between married couples are explored.

The play succeeds in affirming marriage at the end, teaching that sexual stimulation does not need to be revitalized extra-maritally. As for peace, this adaptation's message is clearly humanitarian: "All aspiring peace, peace of tomorrow, with kindness, with forgiveness, conquer the world!"[226] Like the standard, boulevard version of its prototype, La grève des femmes purports to be a play not only about sex but also about ideas. Richepin's play was hastily written in the spring of 1919 for Cora Laparcerie, after Donnay refused her permission to produce his

---

224 Paul Lincke, The Glow-Worm, song from the operetta Lysistrata, words by Lilla Cayley Robinson (London: Hawkes and Son, 1905), p. 5.

225 Jacques Richepin, La Grève des femmes (Paris: Fasquelle, 1919).

226 Ibid., p. 202.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

adaptation, preferring to stage it at a larger theatre.[227] The two plays were in production simultaneously in the spring of 1919, evoking direct comparison. The imitation was rejected as "a vulgar and suggestive spectacle ... fit only for the brothel."[228]

Jacques Richepin had originally chosen to entitle his play Lysistrata, provoking the vehement reaction of Donnay, who persuaded the Society of Dramatic Authors to put a ban on his rival's use of this title.[229] This measure gave rise to a heated controversy, "the Lysistrata case," pursued through open letters in the press. Donnay ponderously interpreted Richepin's behavior as indicative of his contemporary theatre's moral decadence and dramatically declared "I won't let Richepin shoot down my Lysistrata like an enemy plane."[230] His rival answered back, accusing him of hypocrisy and opportunism.[231] Numerous men of letters intervened, taking sides. Paul Souday pointed out that as a classic, the play was in the public domain and everybody had the right to adapt it. If Aristophanes said nothing, how could Donnay be angry, he asks.[232]

The crux of the matter was, though, that Richepin was imitating the French

---

227 Jacques Richepin, "Trait de mœurs théâtrales," December 10, 1918, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

228 "Lysistrata," Journal, Chicago, May 31, 1919, file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

229 See Maurice Donnay, "Trait de mœurs théâtrales," December 8, 1918, Pierre Wolff, Président de la société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques, "Trait de mœurs théâtrales," December 9, 1918 and Jacques Richepin, "Trait de mœurs théâtrales," December 10, 1918, unidentified publications, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

230 See Maurice Donnay, ibid.

231 See Jacques Richepin, ibid.

232 Paul Souday, "L'affaire Lysistrata," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

adaptation rather than the Greek prototype. However, since Donnay had employed unchanged the title of the Attic comedy, Aristophanes could now come to the rescue of the French author's imitators. Indeed, as a result of the controversy and of the play's relevance to war in the Spring of 1919, Donnay's imitators asserted themselves more boldly than ever. They flooded the press with announcements concerning Lysistrata plays they had written or were about to write, threatening to revive and produce them. These were either in the original title or in a variant directly evoking Donnay's play, such as Lysis Rata ou la grève de l' amour, and Grève des cocottes.[233]

In these boulevardic imitations, Lysistrata is frankly regarded solely as a licentious play about sex. Indeed, Donnay's addition of courtesans to the original became a mainstay of its imitations. Courtesans were so titillating that they even inspired more drastic departures from Lysistrata, as in Jacques Richepin's Xantho chez les courtisanes.[234] This play, set in antiquity, follows the adventures of Xantho, an honest married woman who goes to a brothel to learn sexual tricks. Xantho was produced by Cora Laparcerie in 1910, who also acted the title role with notable success. This play was used as a basis for Richepin's later notorious 1919 Lysistrata adaptation.

Huntly Carter, in The New Spirit in the European Theatre, 1914-1924 designates 1919 as the climax of sexual decadence in the Parisian theatre, which had started

---

[233] Both of these plays have been produced. The former is by Jean Séry and Mathonnet de Saint-Georges and the latter by R. Gauchot and M. Harry. See chronological list of Aristophanic productions included in this study. On December 14, 1918, Florentin and Hirschfeld announced they had written a Lysistrata adaptation entitled Les Oiselles. On December 19, 1918, Louis Lemarchand and de Cournotsky similarly informed the press that they were preparing a sketch entitled Lysistrata for production at Folies-Bergère. See file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[234] Jacques Richepin, Xantho chez les courtisanes (Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1910).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

during the war.[235] Donnay's Lysistrata is one of the two plays singled out for decisively contributing to typifying the pornographic spectacle of the period, consisting of classy decors and "grossly immoral exhibitions": masses of bare flesh, choruses and principals indulging in suggestive movements, crowds of women naked save for a fig leaf promenading over the stalls on glass paths or sitting next to and kissing male spectators.[236] Carter is far from being a dispassionate reporter. He has puritanical inhibitions showing through his descriptions, which are therefore untrustworthy. However, his account clearly indicates that Donnay's Lysistrata had pervasive influence on the generation of licentious sexual plays.

Towards the end of 1918, while "the Lysistrata case" was being hotly debated, there appeared a satirical poem in the press, in which the theatre is humorously likened to a brothel:

> Over there, a luminous bridge./Designated for the preferences/Of libidinous old men/Oh! these transparencies/ ... We see bums surge up/In the course of the slightest play/For dirty uncle Harries/In quest of ... nieces/... Shepherd girls parade/Through the orchestra and the stalls/Their poor denuded bodies/Trembling in ancient vestments/It seems that almost everywhere/Expert directrices/Have but a sole purpose, above all:/To show us ... thighs.[237]

Cherchez Donnay! The poem is affectionately dedicated to Maurice Donnay, ironically perhaps designating him as the originator of the theatre's pervasive licentiousness. Imitators just followed suit.

Antoine came to Donnay's defense. In his review of the Lysistrata production in

---

235 Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in the European Theatre 1914-1924 (New York: George Doran Company, 1925).

236 Ibid., p. 138.

237 Dominique Bonnaud, "Chronique Rimée. A Maurice Donnay," December 19, 1918, unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1919, he paid tribute to the original adaptation as a model of taste and tact, sharply distinguishing it from lewd plays of low quality. He almost regards the French play a classic, in proposing a dramatic approach to daring subjects that combines piquancy with literary merit. Antoine even risks the prediction that Lysistrata's enchantment will have lasting value:

> Maurice Donnay goes as far as possible; he says everything but with what grace, what enveloping lyricism! We understand here what differentiates a work of art from the gross licentiousness of certain recent works. ... If there exists truly at present a public relishing in somewhat physical pleasures, it will find them for a long time to come, I think, in Lysistrata, which is a literary delight, infinitely superior to the dubious productions they burden us with .... [238]

Indeed, Donnay's efforts to classicize Lysistrata's 1919 production discussed earlier, appear more comprehensible in this comparative context. He aimed at sharply distinguishing his adaptation from its imitations, projecting it as the original and the best.

The popular modern plays based on the French Lysistrata had an even more distant connection to the Attic comedy than the original adaptation, totally losing, in some cases, sight of Aristophanes. Donnay's play however, also stimulated an interest in translating the prototype and influenced interpretative choices adopted. As discussed earlier, the production of Aristophanes in the original was generally regarded unfeasible at the early modern period. In 1895, however, there appeared a Lysistrata production in an exact translation by Robert de la Villehervé.[239] Sensitive to propriety, the translator has glossed over the original's obscene expressions. The play was produced at the Comédie Parisienne by the Théâtre des Poètes. The

---

238 André Antoine, "La semaine théâtrale," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

239 Robert de la Villehervé, Lysistratè (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

director. Charles Leger. had apparently taken care to mount a historically accurate production, incorporating for example the ancient tonal scales in the music.[240]

However, this project was unenthusiastically received. It simply confirmed the opinion that the humor of Attic comedy was untranslatable: "May they leave us in peace with Aristophanes, whose work, or at least the comic passages are unintelligible to us." wrote Catulle Mendès, concluding, "I don't see any excuse for the exact translation of de la Villehervé, ... if only the gracious Parisian figure of Miss. Geneviève Bouffé."[241] Henceforth, there was no further attempt to produce Lysistrata in the original, in France, in the early modern period.

Towards the end of the past century, there also emerged an interest in publishing literary translations of Lysistrata, for the benefit of the cultivated reader. The most notable efforts in that direction all bear the stamp of Donnay's influence: Lysistrata is primarily approached as a comedy of sexual manners. In the preface to his translation of the play, published in 1898, Charles Zevort closely follows the explicative commentary of Donnay's prologue.[242] In Aristophanes, "nothing is hidden." Even the preliminaries of the love act are exposed at the public square, offending the modern sense of delicacy. However, this "defect" must be understood as "a trait of manners."[243] Indeed, Zevort expounds on the abundance of picturesque

---

240 The music for the production had been prepared by Henry Ghys. Lysistrata's program contains useful information on the composition. For example : "Entrance of the women in the Acropolis, march on the lydian mode," Robert de la Villehervé, Lysistratè, theatre program, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I. Rondell Collection. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

241 Catulle Mendès, L'art du théâtre (Paris: Fasquelle, 1897-1900), pp. 344-345.

242 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated and with an introduction by Ch. Zévort. illustrated by Notor (Paris: Fasquelle, 1898).

243 Ibid., p. 10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

incidents in the play, which "already prefigure the comedy of manners."[244] These "charming details ... initiate us better than all historical narratives to the intimate life of Athenians."[245]

In Lucien d'Huys' literary translation of the play, published in 1911, there is more emphasis on Lysistrata's sexuality.[246] Directly evoking Donnay, the author poetically explains in the preface: "This comedy .. makes us dream of the singular seductions that possessed the bodies of courtesans at that time ..."[247] He then gets carried away, in a poetic visualization of courtesans and ancient orgies. The original's comic qualities are also understood in voluptuous terms: "The superb ruse, immerses our senses into a dream of luxury, ... evoking oriental (!) fables."[248]

A characteristic feature of literary translations at that period is that they are all illustrated. This practice is probably also linked to the interpretation of the original as a comedy of sexual manners. Consonantly to Lysistrata's scenic conception as a spectacle, readers too, were given the sensual stimulation considered appropriate to the play through illustration. Thus, the edition of Zevort's 1898 Lysistrata is accompanied by gravures of ancient Greek art works, highlighting the translation's emphasis on manners.[249] Lucien d'Huys' 1911 translation emphasizing sensuality has been illustrated with gravures by F. Kupka, depicting "the forces and subtleties of

---

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid.

246 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by Lucien Dhuys, illustrated by F. Kupka (Paris: A. Blaizot, 1911).

247 Ibid., p. i.

248 Ibid., p. vi.

249 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated and with an introduction by Ch. Zévort, illustrated by Notor (Paris: Fasquelle, 1898).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

living flesh."[250] A much later Lysistrata translation by Raoul Vèze (1928), also evoking Donnay's play, includes water color drawings of sexually explicit subjects.[251] This practice of illustrating Lysistrata translations had surprising longevity in France, persisting to the mid-forties.[252]

Interest in producing other plays of Aristophanes in France remained residual at the early modern period. Productions were scanty and inconsequential, limited to Plutus, The Clouds, The Birds and Women in the Assembly.[253] Plutus was directed by Antoine and produced at the Odéon in 1898, featuring Cora Laparcerie as a young débutante in the cast.[254] Two well known authors of the period, Sacha Guitry and Edmond Rostand also made isolated efforts to dramatically exploit alternative plays of Aristophanes, besides Lysistrata. Early in his career as a dramatist, Guitry adapted The Clouds for a production in 1906.[255] Edmond Rostand's Chantecler has a distant, even though recognizable connection to The Birds: all its characters are animals with

---

250 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by Lucien Dhuys, illustrated by F. Kupka (Paris: A. Blaizot, 1911), p. xii.

251 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by Raoul Vèze [Jean Hervez], illustrated by Carlègle (Paris: G. Briffaut, 1928).

252 See for example: Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by Emile Chamontin, illustrated by Jacques Touchet (Paris: E. Chamontin, 1941); Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated and adapted by Georges Vertut, in Dialogues de courtisanes, edited by Georges Eudes, illustrated by Le Mengeot (Paris: Athéna, 1946); Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by M. Artaud, illustrated by Maurice Leroy (Paris: Dr. H. P. Heincken, 1948).

253 See chronological list of Aristophanic productions inluded in this study.

254 See J.-B. J., "Cora Laparcerie est morte" Figaro, August 29, 1951, file on Cora Laparcerie, Rt 8497, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

255 See chronological list of Aristophanic productions inluded in this study. To the best of my knowledge, S. Guitry's adaptation of The Clouds has not been published.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

human qualities.[256] In 1930 Donnay adapted Women in the Assembly on the same recipe as Lysistrata.[257] The setting is again a little square in Athens with picturesque features. Besides her old husband, Praxagora also has a young lover with whom she flees out to sea at the end of the play, escaping the mess she has created. Praxagora's exodus to Utopia simultaneously signalled the end of Aristophanic adaptations in boulevardic form. The production of the play was unsuccessful and closed after only a few performances.[258]

Donnay's Lysistrata then was primarily influential in drawing attention to the particular play as opposed to the corpus of the ancient dramatist. The adaptation was the most comprehensive expression of a well articulated tendency in the nineteenth century in France to interpret Attic comedy in the forms of the popular theatre and especially vaudeville. In the 1890s, Donnay achieved through trial and error in presenting the definitive modern version of Attic comedy, turning Lysistrata into typical boulevard drama. The choice of play was not coincidental, as the original's central theme of the sex strike was immediately relevant to the strong sexual orientation of boulevard theatre. However, Donnay had to drastically distort Lysistrata, to make it conform to the popular theatre's prerequisites, entirely removing the original's political component and placing all emphasis on modern conception of sexual intrigue. The adaptation also centrally aspires to be a depiction of manners, displaying sensitivity to naturalist influence. The importance of Donnay's Lysistrata is not only limited to dramatic content. This is the first French adaptation of Aristophanic comedy to be associated with a major and influential

---

256 Edmond Rostand, Chantecler, translated by Kay Nolte Smith (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1987)

257 Maurice Donnay, L'assemblée des femmes (Paris: Les OEuvres Libres, 1931).

258 Maurice Donnay, Mon Journal 1919-1939 (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1953), p. 217.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production. The theatrical interpretation of Lysistrata lays central emphasis on spectacle and exhibits characteristic features of boulevardic staging.

The Lysistrata of the Belle Epoque functioned as a powerful model in the French theatre, establishing a tradition of adapting translating and producing Lysistrata in the early modern period. A distinction can be drawn between high and low culture imitations of Donnay's work. High culture imitations take the form of literary translations of the play, which are closer to the Attic comedy than the low culture Lysistratas, in dramatic forms of the popular theatre. These are generally inferior in quality to Donnay's adaptation. Whether high or low, however, imitations adopt a common interpretative approach to Lysistrata, projecting it as a comedy of sexual manners. The fervent zeal to imitate the original adaptation indicates that it was extremely sensitive to the demands of the times.

In 1897, at the full swing of the Belle Epoque, Aristophanes emerged from the underworld to assume the lead role in a French play about his work. Aristophane et Molière by Jean Bertheroy.[259] This play was written on the occasion of Molière's 275th birthday anniversary and was produced at the Comédie Française. The two great comic authors present their views on drama in a friendly chat, strolling through Paris. The portrait of Aristophanes presented by Bertheroy clearly goes back to Donnay, in emphasizing hedonism. However, the ancient dramatist's love of pleasure is rather negatively perceived in the later play. In contrast to Molière who cares about humanity and wishes to reform man through his plays, Aristophanes is a disillusioned amoral hedonist, maintaining that the aim of life is pleasure.[260] He argues that there is no point in trying to change humanity, since there has been no progress in manners and morals since antiquity:

---

259 Jean Bertheroy, Aristophane et Molière (Paris: Armand Colin et Cie, 1897).

260 Ibid., p. 11: "The true aim of life, friend, is pleasure."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For my part. I am coming back to earth as a blasé.
I can discover no worries nor mysteries,
No new sentiments, vices nor virtues.
Truly the human heart is a trodden path.
Today your Paris resembles to my Athens
The same morals reign, that the Agora had known.[261]

Aristophanes the hedonist was an influential invention of the Belle Epoque, marking theatrical interpretation well into the twenties. By 1925, however, it was time to go back to the ancient sources, and come up with a new invention. Indeed, Dullin would soon start exploring the potential of Attic comedy as théâtre du peuple, moving in a similar direction to the Moscow Art Theatre's experimentation with Lysistrata on the aftermath of the October revolution. However, the very first modern political interpretation of Aristophanic drama originated in France, at the close of the eighteenth century. Oddly enough, Aristophanes' appearance in Paris in 1897 had a precedent. Exactly a century earlier, in 1797, he had again taken part as a character in an Aristophanic pastiche entitled Athènes pacifiée by Cailhava.[262]

In a brief introduction to his work, Cailhava mentions that Aristophanic drama can serve as a "model" for the writing of modern political comedy.[263] The portrait of the Greek dramatist at the close of the 18th and the 19th centuries is strikingly different. The earlier play, clearly under the influence of the French revolution, presents Aristophanes as a morally and politically concerned poet, passionate enough to join a chorus of honest citizens demonstrating for peace, including Lisistrata, Prazagora and Blépyrus. They confront a belligerent chorus of clergymen, profiteers

---

261 Ibid. p. 10.

262 Jean François Cailhava, Athènes pacifiée, comédie tirée des onze pièces d'Aristophane (Paris: Ch. Pougens, 1797)

263 Ibid., p. iv.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and their mistresses who, with divine intervention are eventually turned into stone. Aristophanes vehemently declaims the manipulation of the people by the ruling classes. In a long, impassioned address to the people, he urges them to realize their situation: "Until when will you pretend, that in abandoning all your confidence to your adulators, you are obliged to follow their perverted tastes, ... to let them devour the public resources, giving you only the smallest portion?"[264]

At the end of Athènes pacifiée, Aristophanes exits to write a play about the popular insurrection he has experienced. A century later, finding that nothing had changed, the ancient dramatist decided to give up engagement and to simply have a good time in Paris, writing for and about pleasure. I will not venture a prediction on how he will re-emerge from the underworld at the close of the twentieth century. He is bound to make a comeback though, for his Gallic connections are strong and fertile: Aristophanes loves Paris and Paris loves Aristophanes!

---

[264] Ibid., p. 52.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

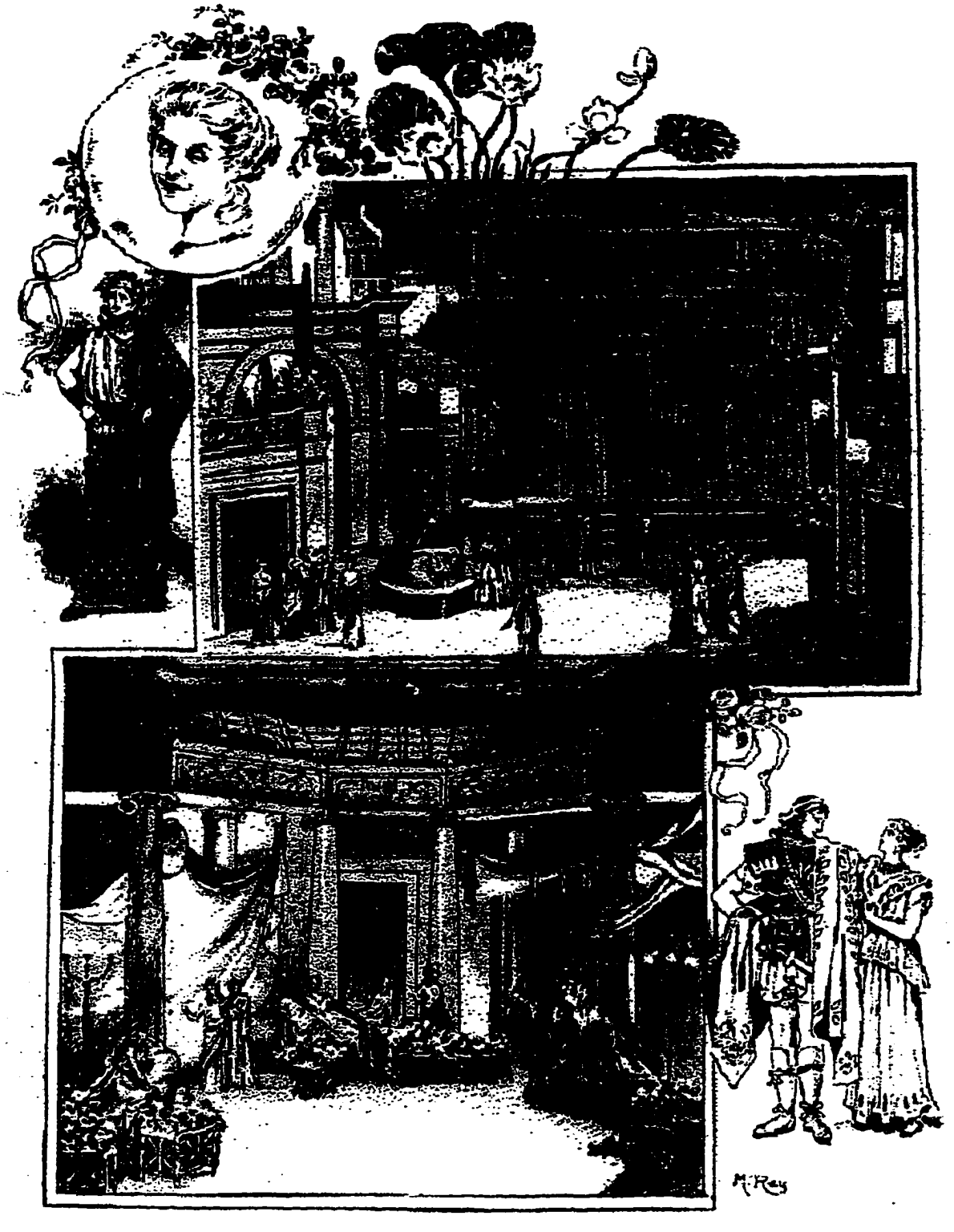

Fig. 1-1 An impression of M. Jambon's first set for the original production of Lysistrata (1892) by M. Donnay: the public square and surrounding buildings.

Fig. 1-2 An impression of M. Jambon's second set for the original production of Lysistrata (1892) by M. Donnay: Salabaccha's salon.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

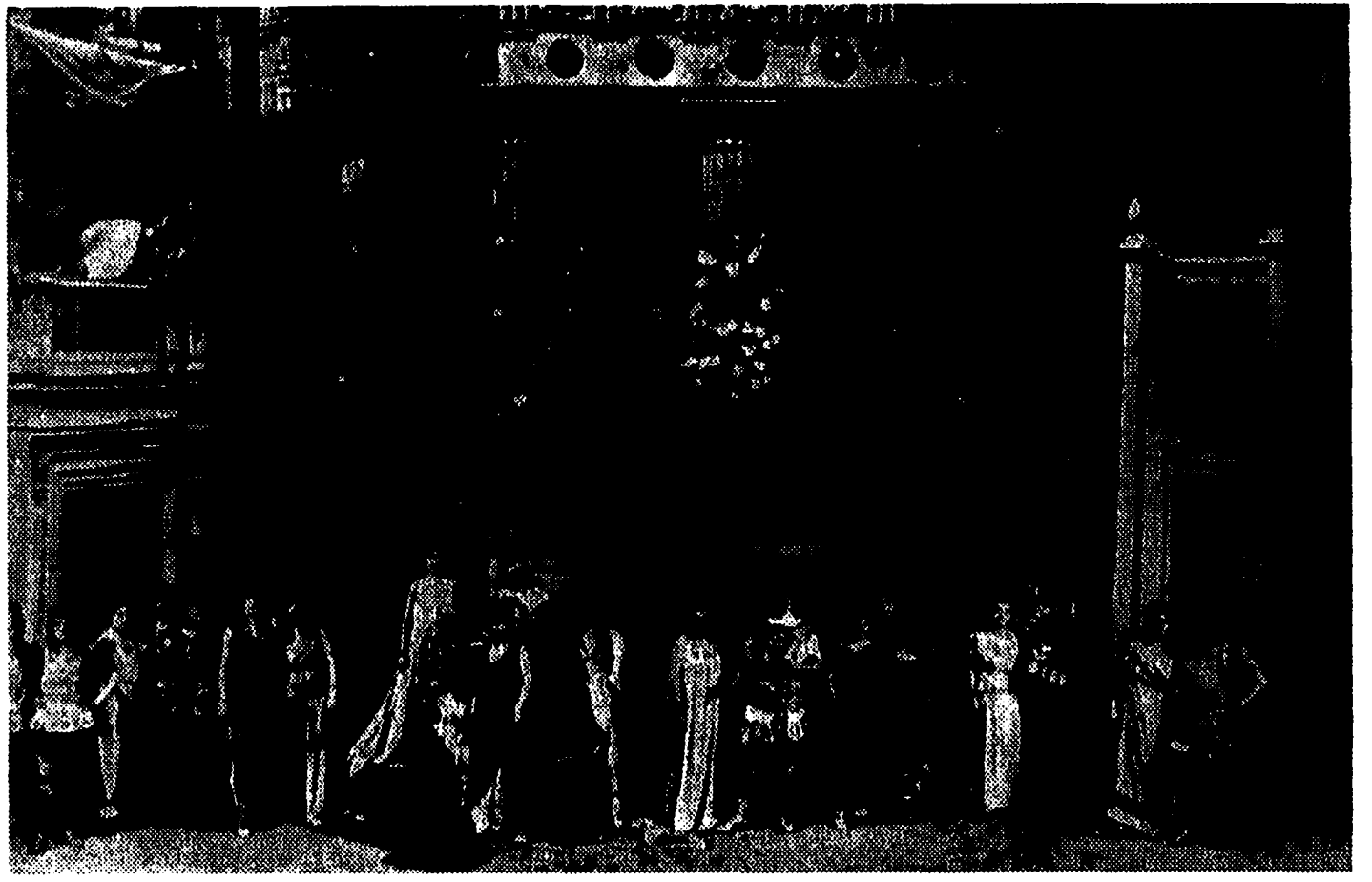

Fig. 1-3 The cast of the original production of Lysistrata (1892) by M. Donnay: foreground center, Aimée Tessandier as Salabaccha, Gabrielle Réjane as Lysistrata and Lucien Guitry as Agathos.

Fig. 1-4 Gabrielle Réjane as Lysistrata, in the 1896 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-5 An Athenian woman in costume, in the original production of M. Donnay's Lysistrata (1892).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

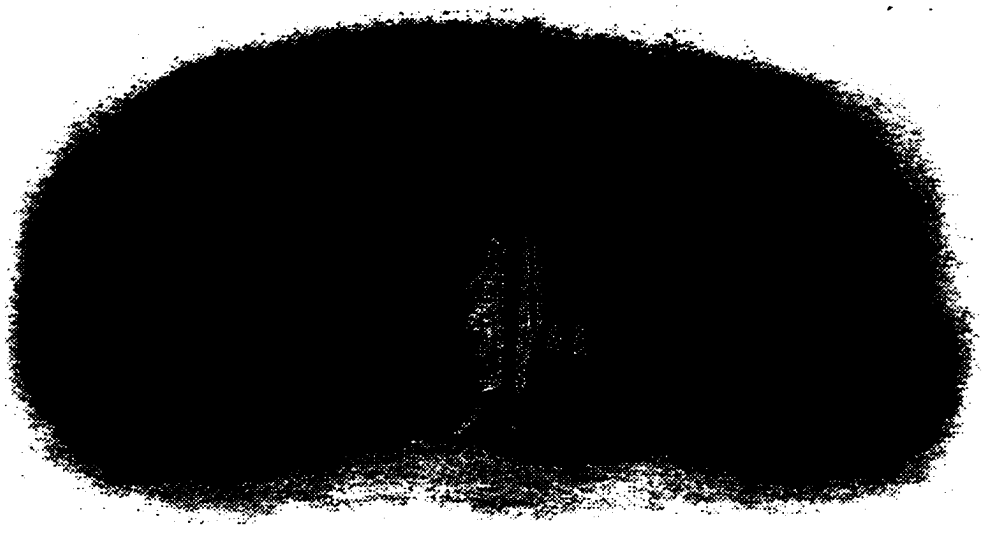

Fig. 1-6 The Prologos character, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-7 Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata, addressing the women in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-8 The principal male characters, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata: at the center, Agathos (M. Karl); to his left, Lycon (M. Hasti) and further back, Nicostrate (M. Terestri).

Fig. 1-9 Lampito (F. Lavigne) and her husband, Taraxion (M. Bouthors) in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-10 Lysistrata (Cora Laparcerie) and Agathos (M. Karl) before the temple of Artemis in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

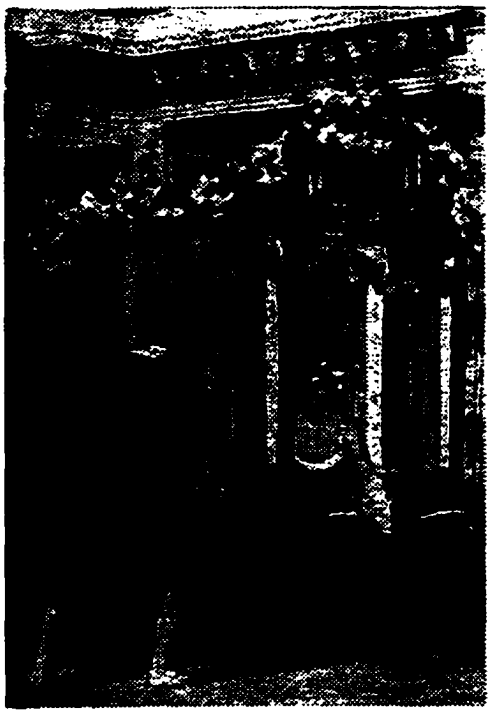

Fig. 1-11 Salabaccha (R. Félyne), seducing Lycon (M. Hasti) in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-12 Salabaccha's salon, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata. Far left, Salabaccha (R. Félyne), leaning on Lycon (M. Hasti).

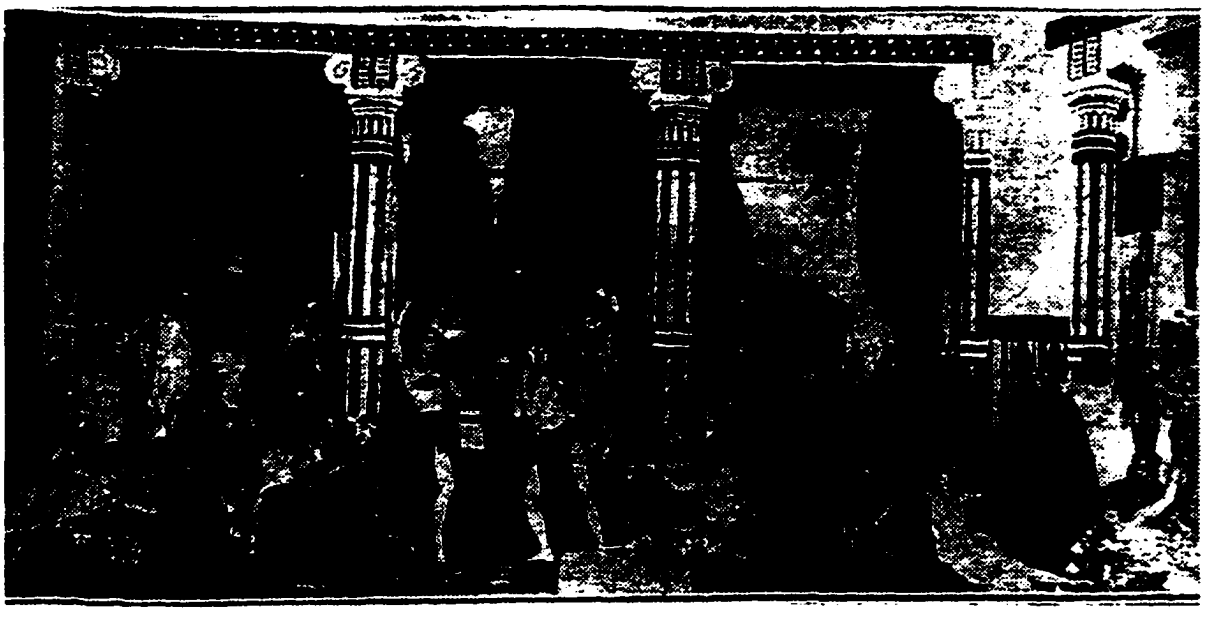

Fig. 1-13 Salabaccha's salon, in the 1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-14 The miracle scene. Foreground center, Lysistrata (Cora Laparcerie) and Agathos (M. Karl) in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-15 The finale, as interpreted in the1909 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata. On the terrace, Lysistrata (Cora Laparcerie); foreground center, Lycon (M. Hasti) and to his left, Agathos (M. Karl).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-16 Drawing of Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata, in her costume for the first act, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-17 Drawing of R. Félyne as Salabaccha in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-18 Caricatures of Marguerite Lavigne as Lampito and Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

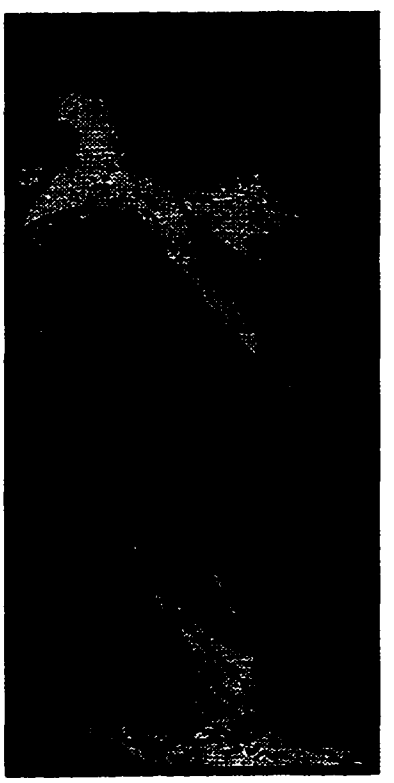

Fig. 1-19 Drawing of Cora Laparcerie as Lysistrata, in the 1909 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-20 The secret rendezvous of Lysistrata (Jeanne Provost) and Agathos (Jean Worms) in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Fig. 1-21 Close-up of Lysistrata (Jeanne Provost) and Agathos (Jean Worms) in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's play.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-22 Caricature of the principal actors, in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

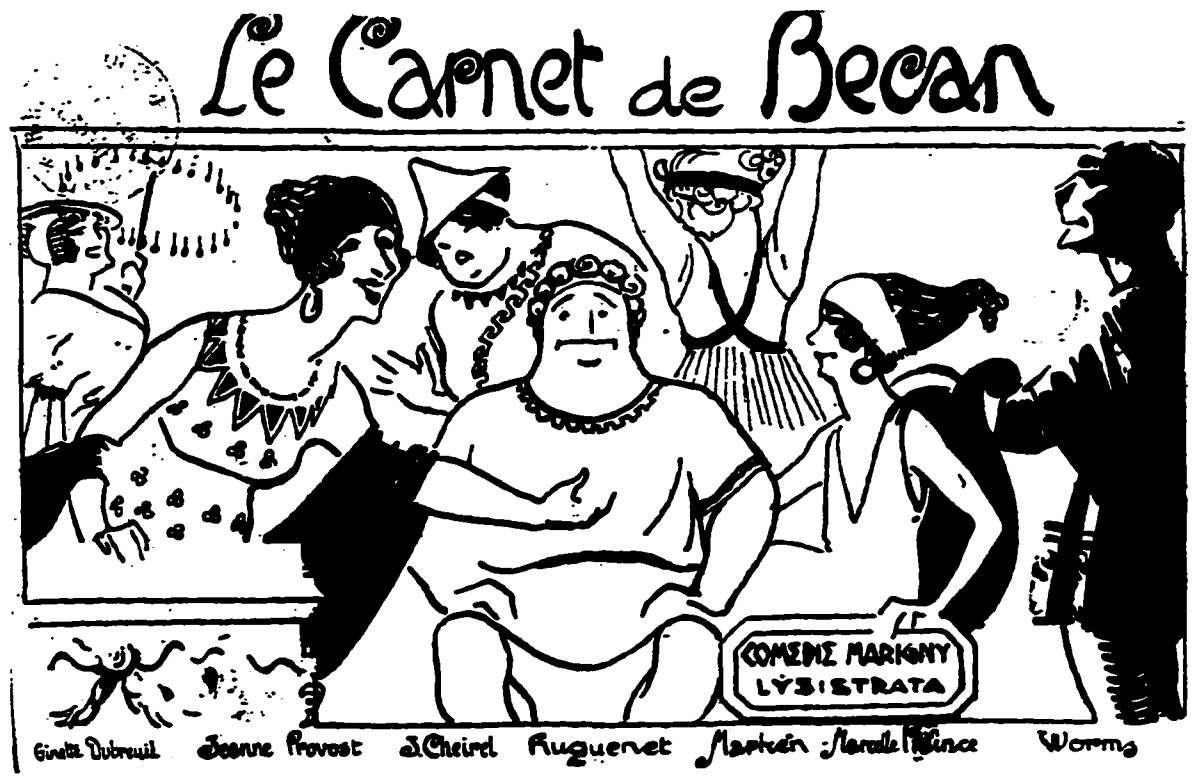

Fig. 1-23 Caricature of the principal actors, in the 1919 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 1-24 The finale, in the1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Fig. 1-25 Lysistrata (Cora Laparcerie) addressing the women, in the 1924 revival of M. Donnay's Lysistrata.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter II

Fun and Games on Reinhardt's Staircase: Aristophanes Ludens

Max Reinhardt's Lysistrata premiered at the Kammerspiele, on October 27, 1908. Hugo von Hofmannsthal had written a prologue for the occasion, delivered by "a dramatist" character before a drawn curtain.[1] The audience was encouraged to let themselves enjoy the comedy not as a literary work, but as a wild, swirling dance. Then, the curtain went up to reveal one of the earliest architectural sets in modern theatre history, centrally featuring steps. The Aristophanic dance was to take place on a grand architectural staircase, stretching across the entire width of the stage.

Lee Simonson was impressed by the innovation of setting the drama on steps and even accuses Edward Gordon Craig of plagiarizing Reinhardt's idea in Towards a New Theatre.[2] Besides the architectural set, the production also had other experimental credentials. It featured ensemble acting and a unified mise en scène, in which all aspects of production integrally served the play's interpretation. Moreover, with Lysistrata, Reinhardt had the chance to perform his first experiments on a large scale with the direction of the chorus, widely considered a hallmark of his work on Greek drama. The venture was also successful with the public. Lysistrata was in production intermittently for two years, until 1910. It had a popular run in Berlin and was also taken on tour to Budapest, Breslau, Frankfurt, Vienna and Munich.[3] In the summer of 1920 it was revived and adapted for production at the

---

[1] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Prolog geschrieben für die erste Aufführung der 'Lysistrata' des Aristophanes im Deutschen Theater," in Paul Legband, ed., Das Deutsche Theater in Berlin (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909), pp. 78-81.

[2] Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 343.

[3] J. L. Styan, Max Reinhardt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

colossal space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus.

Reinhardt's Lysistrata is the first major attempt in Germany to put Attic comedy on the stage. In the 19th century Aristophanes' works were mainly employed as models for the writing of philosophical or satirical plays, intended for reading. Ludwig Tieck, August von Platen and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel have all written comedies of this type.[4] Translation of the Greek originals similarly had a literary orientation. In the years 1835-1838, there appeared a seminal translation into German of the Aristophanic plays by J. G. Droysen. In his introductions to the comedies. Droysen primarily emphasizes their poetic value.[5] Interest in Aristophanic production begins to be clearly discerned only towards the end of last century. The Attic playwright is predominatly staged in adaptation or free translation. Lysistrata and The Birds are the two most frequently produced plays of the period.[6] A popular adaptation of Lysistrata was Ludwig Anzengruber's Kreuzelschreiber (1872).[7] Improvising freely, the author has included a central character who finds his 50 year old marriage shaken, as a result of the women's mobilization. Donnay's adaptation of Lysistrata was also well known in Germany and had even stirred up production interest. Attempts to stage the play, however, had been severely hampered by censorship.[8] In Berlin, a notable production of the Attic comedy appeared in 1900. This was directed by Paul Lindau, at the Berliner Theatre, in a free translation by U. Willbrandt. Lindau's Lysistrata was directed primarily towards an exclusive literary

---

[4] See Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo. Aggiornamento 1955-1965, s. v. "Aristofane."

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Norbert Falk, "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908.

[8] Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

audience and had no theatrical pretensions.[9]

Reinhardt's Lysistrata would be different. To begin with, the prologue had been written especially for production. Significantly, it was not included in the published edition of Greiner's adaptation, in 1908.[10] The text is addressed to the audience. Its purpose is to draw attention to the theatrical, as opposed to the literary, or theoretical interpretation of Aristophanes' work. An intriguing inspiration is that the prologue is delivered by a man of letters par excellence, the dramatist. Reversing the traditional subservient relationship of theatre to literature, the dramatist here appears in the weakened position of an intermediary, speaking in the name of the actors.

The dramatist argues for a complementary relationship between the dramatic and the theatrical art. Drawing attention to his kinship with actors, he mentions they all live in the same household. Far from being self sufficient, the dramatist is here presented as lacking a central ability, uniquely bestowed on actors. He is unable to give life to fictional characters, simply by imagining them in the privacy of his study. Actors, though, can transform themselves and actually become the characters they are playing. Their gift for transformation reveals an understanding of a play's essence, that they convey to the audience in performance. Indeed, at times it appears "that their very body is a means of opening wide the length and width of worlds, that only they or their equals can penetrate the essence of Aristophanes ..."[11] It is noteworthy that, minimizing the importance of the word, Hofmannsthal makes no references to the actors' vocal assets. Rather, he insists on physical attributes, emphasizing their strong sense of rhythm: they have the blood of dancers and

---

9 See "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

10 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata. Komödie frei nach Aristophanes (Verlag Dr. Wedekind & Co., Berlin 1908).

11 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Prolog," p. 80. Unless otherwise specified, translations of German passages in this chapter are my own, prepared in collaboration with Sandra Ketikoglou.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

acrobats in them.

Actors have decided to make the dramatist their apologist, primarily because their power of transformation scares them. Their understanding of Aristophanes is instinctive. The dramatist has a different means of approaching Attic comedy: he envisions its essence and can articulate his insight. Thus he can supply an explicative background to the actors' unconscious, bodily apprehension.

The dramatist's vision of Aristophanes is derived from 19th century German romantic philosophy. Following August Schlegel, Hofmannsthal insists on the playful nature of Attic comedy. He primarily characterizes the genre in terms of mood, which he depicts with charming vividness. The dominant, recurring feature in his images is movement. Aristophanic comedy is likened to a frenetic dance encompassing not only Attic nature, culture and myth but also the entire cosmos, with all its inconsistencies and antitheses, so endearing to the romantics. "Somewhere in the treasury of my innermost being," muses the dramatist, "lurks the vision of a comedy, a giant, cosmic comedy in which men, beasts, gods dance pell-mell, rashness and grace embrace ... "[12]

As in Schlegel, gloom and melancholy are entirely out of place in this dance of nymphs, where "the entire burden of life is ... transformed into swirling movement ..."[13] Similarly, moral and utilitarian ends are totally ignored. Emphasizing delight in play, Hofmannsthal likens Attic comedy to a top, "spun by wild children."[14] However, parting company with August Schlegel, Hofmannsthal sides with Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger in suggesting that play is not an end in itself, but a means of momentarily catching a glimpse of an eternal reality; this insight is inextricably

---

[12] Ibid., p. 78.

[13] Ibid., p. 79.

[14] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

linked to the ironic realization that transcendence is unattainable. In Attic comedy, "supreme Form is fulfilled, only to be destroyed again in divine mirth."[15]

Hofmannsthal's interpretation of Aristophanes is essentially a charming poetic musing, composed of romantic elements. It lacks not only originality but also the precision of an integrated philosophical theory. Romanticism is noticeably watered down in a later description of Aristophanic essence as "a crux of raw humanity, conjuring tricks, idyll, the closeness of the sea and the stars."[16] However, the purpose of the prologue is not to present a definitive interpretation of Aristophanes, but rather, to shift the focus from a literary to a theatrical appreciation of his work. The central emphasis on the sensuous nature of Attic comedy is intended primarily to link it to performance, rather than to German romantic philosophy.

Whereas Hofmannsthal expounds at length on the qualities of the dramatist and the actor, he is totally unconcerned about fixing the identity of the third term of the relationship, the audience. The persuasive, rhetorical character of the address leads to the indirect inference that the audience has misconceptions about the primacy of the dramatist over the actor that need to be rectified. The dramatist delivers an attractive eulogy of actors, mentioning frequently how much he loves and is fascinated by their talent, even in spite of himself. Their performance supplies the opportunity to comprehend a text in a way that is unique and irreplaceable by reading. At the end of the prologue, the dramatist sums up his points, emphasizing that in a theatrical interpretation "a gesture is of equal value to a word and an entertaining antithesis to a truth."[17]

Interestingly, he subsequently adds a new element, untouched on earlier: "Excuse

---

[15] Ibid., 78.

[16] Ibid., p. 80.

[17] Ibid., p. 81

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the isolated," he bids the audience, "for the sake of the whole. We are full of zeal and anxiety to create something whole and living, that's all!"[18] The concern over the production's unity, indirectly evokes a fourth term in the relation between dramatist, actor and audience: the director. However, the idea is thrown out just as the dramatist is about to disappear from the stage and is left hanging. Throughout the address, the theatrical representation is essentially equated with the actor.

Central ideas explored in the prologue were at the forefront of avant garde theatrical research at the beginning of the century. Hofmannsthal has been decisively influenced by the theories of the symbolist innovators, Adolphe Appia and especially Edward Gordon Craig. Indeed, there was vivid interest for their work in Germany, at the period. The first edition of Appia's work, Die Music und die Inscenierung had been published in German in 1899. Craig's On the Art of the Theatre came out simultaneously in an English and a German edition, in 1905. However, it was Richard Wagner who had the original inspiration of conceptions later developed by Appia and Craig.

Wagner called for a reunification of the arts into an organic whole, the universally meaningful, Gesamtkunstwerk, which had originally been achieved in ancient Greece. The separation of the arts in modern society has resulted in their degeneration. Thus, drama has been reduced to the dead form of literature. Wagner insists that the arts are complementary by nature.[19] Hofmannsthal has a similar concern, narrowing his focus, however, to the arts of dramatic literature and acting. His visionary presentation of Attic comedy as a synthesis, encompassing word and gesture, Greek culture in its entirety and the cosmos, has close affinity, in the breadth of its range, to the Gesamtkunstwerk. An important difference, however, is

---

[18] Ibid.

[19] See Richard Wagner, Prose Works, translated by William Ashton Ellis, Vol I (London: Kegan Paul, Trübner & Co., 1892).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that Hofmannsthal has totally ignored the Volk, who are of central importance to Wagner's conception: the theatrical representation is an expression of an integrated community and aims at reinforcing its unity.

Appia and Craig also stress the holistic nature of theatre, with a new emphasis on visual elements. In On the Art of the Theatre, Craig draws a distinction between literary, including dramatic works, written for reading and works written for performance.[20] Whereas the former have a self sufficient completeness, the latter only become complete when performed. In avowing his dependence on actors, Hofmannsthal's dramatist is obviously a disciple of Craig. The prologue even bears a structural resemblance to On the Art of the Theatre. The earlier work is written in the form of a platonic dialogue between 'an expert' and 'a theatregoer.' Just like the dramatist, the expert aims at enlightening the theatregoer and eradicating his misconceptions about the nature of a dramatic text. However, whereas the audience is passive in Hofmannsthal's prologue, in Craig's work, its representative assumes the role of the questioner.

Both Appia and Craig assign central importance to the director for the achievement of an integrated production and mistrust the actor. Impersonation and its habitually attendant emotionality threaten the unified conception. By contrast, Hofmannsthal ignores the director and idealizes the actor's ability to impersonate, as vitally important to the theatrical completion of a dramatic text. He is aligned to the innovators, however, in presenting the actor as a dancer, emphasizing physical and ignoring emotional expressivity.

To sum up, in Hofmannsthal's prologue, Aristophanes is placed within the context of, on the one hand the German romantic tradition, and on the other, avant garde theatrical innovation. Lysistrata is presented as an appropriate text to receive

---

[20] Edward Gordon Craig, On the Art of the Theatre (Chicago: Browne's Bookstore,1911)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production organized according to modernist principles. The novel perspective of viewing the Attic comedy as incomplete renders its theatrical interpretation desirable and necessary. Thus Aristophanes is recovered from the libraries to be placed back on his natural habitat, the stage.

Hofmannsthal's text is in an interesting dialectic relation to Donnay's prologue to the French Lysistrata.[21] Both have the form of a parabatic address to the audience, placed before the play, to indicate its central importance. Furthermore, in both, the text is delivered by an intermediary. In the French interpretation, the Prologos character speaks in the name of the dramatist. In Hofmannsthal's version the dramatist is representing the actors. The device of the intermediary achieves a distancing effect, serving the purpose of idealizing the agents. Both Donnay's author and Hofmannsthal's actors are presented as privileged interpreters of Aristophanes. However, there is clearly a difference in prestige between them. The author in the French version simply wishes to coquettishly reinforce his authority, whereas the actors are in sore need of recognition.

As for the two intermediaries, Prologos is a mouthpiece, echoing his master's voice. The dramatist of the German version, on the other hand, is an established authority, just like Donnay's author. However, he is willing to step down from the pedestal and to share his prestige with actors fairly, as they also contribute decisively to the interpretation of a dramatic text. The intermediaries in both prologues adopt a variety of persuasive rhetoric devices. Corresponding to the different needs of their agents, Prologos is lighthearted and charming, whereas the dramatist adopts a more earnest, confessional tone to prove his sincerity.

A central concern, alluded to in both prologues, is to make the classical text accessible to the modern audience. Accordingly, Attic comedy is interpreted through

---

[21] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1895), pp. 1-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recourse to dominant ideological and aesthetic conceptions of the early modern period. In the French version, it is explained that Aristophanes will be viewed through the naturalist microscope. Focus falls on the accurate, detailed painting of manners. By contrast, in the German version, Aristophanes is to be presented through the magnifying glass of romanticism. His work emerges as sweeping in style and breadth of interest, affording a metaphysical view of reality. The dramatist's vision, in Hofmannsthal's prologue, is to be complemented by the insight of the actors, in performance. In the French version, the author's interpretation of Aristophanes is definitive and performance has merely an illustrative function. Finally, both versions employ the Aristophanic device of the parabasis outside the play, aiming for an optimum result, the French of naturalist illusion and the German of a unified composition of impressions. In both interpretations, disruption of continuity would be undesirable.

Lysistrata was adapted for the German production by Leo Greiner, known also under the amusing pseudonym "Dionysus Tod." He was a writer and lyricist with a taste for parody, who had been intimately associated with the celebrated Munich cabaret, Die Elf Scharfrichter.[22] Greiner acknowledges that his work is based on an earlier, literal translation of the play by J. J. C. Donner.[23] Following the original, the modern play is set on the Acropolis. Almost all the Aristophanic episodes have been included in the adaptation, in their original sequence. They are organized in two acts, comprising several scenes each. The first act ends with the debate between Lysistrata and the Proboulos. For the most part, the German text is a paraphrase of the original. However, certain scenes have become more elaborate by the addition of

---

22 See Harold Segel, "Berlin and Munich: From Superstage to Executioner's Block," in Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 119-182.

23 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata (Berlin: Bücher des Deutschen Theaters, 1920), p. ii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

new comic elements, while other plot material has been abridged or cut. Finally, the list of characters has been expanded with new arrivals in the service quarter: there is Sosias, secretary to the Proboulos, Manes, Kinesias' servant, as well as numerous policemen and messengers.

The most striking alteration in the modern play is that all of the original choral material has been discarded, with the token exception of the elderly male chorus' initial appearance and the ensuing first choral battle with the opposite sex. Even these, however, have been greatly modified. The female chorus in the German version is composed of young, instead of old women. Greiner has symmetrically added a chorus of young men. Moreover, new choral material has been inserted, to substitute for the loss of the original text.

Aristophanes' Lysistrata is a playful work. The conception of the female sex strike is a utopian scheme that allows for the exploration of multiple fantastic and colorful possibilities. There is an affinity to children's play in Aristophanes, in that the comical episodes evolve thematically around physical, primal needs. Intellectuality is not only ignored, but also deliberately undermined. Indeed, casting strategy and planning to the winds, men are blindly driven to reconciliation at the end of the play by their enormous erections. The simplicity of the plot facilitates unrestrained immersion in play. Preposterous situations, scatological and sexual jokes are exuberantly piled up, multiplying glee and delight. The battle between the old men and women with all the kicking and the showering, the dressing up of the Proboulos in women's clothes, Myrrhina's invention of delays to put off Kinesias, the men's efforts to hide their erections, all are jestful and enjoyable in and of themselves.

However, play also has an important ironic dimension, as it takes place within the context of polis. The playground in Lysistrata is the politically charged space of the Acropolis and the game between the sexes is also cleverly set up to function as a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

confrontation between citizens and non citizens. It is precisely the trespassing of non citizens, the women, on to a space expressing the fundamental values of democracy and citizenship that gets the ball rolling. Indeed, the numerous choral battles focus centrally on the incongruity of the female presence on the Acropolis. The women's anomalous assumption of a political role is the kernel of comic effect in Lysistrata. However, besides amusement, the incongruity also supplies a novel ironic context. within which the fundamental problems of peace and war can be creatively reflected on.

Greiner's adaptation emphasizes Lysistrata's playfulness. Characters are conceived as players and the episodes are set up as amusing games. The addition of material is primarily motivated by the concern to make the original more entertaining. Interest in play is all pervasive, inspiring a wide ranging exploration of comic styles, from lighthearted jesting to grotesque farce. The central theme of all games is eros, presented here in a Dionysian guise. To make no mistake however, the power of eros is kept firmly within control and not allowed to darken the permeating spirit of lightness and well being, in this interpretation. For the same reason, the political content of the original has been entirely ignored. Finally, another noteworthy feature of the adaptation is the theatricality of scenes, which argues for the direct influence of Max Reinhardt and of the performance on the shaping of the text.

Lysistrata and her consorts form a jolly, mindless company. In the German version, the meeting is flooded by a large female chorus, enhancing the scene's colorfulness and vivacity. Though successful in persuading the women to strike and to keep their resolution, the heroine has lost in the adaptation her remarkable eloquence and political sense. Proboulos characterizes her in Nordic terms as "a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

white witch, ... a blue eyed scarecrow, ... a wolf with a shrewd, child's smile."[24] Clearly, this portrait owes more to the Brother Grimms' fairy tales than to Aristophanes. Indeed, Lysistrata is sweeter than in the original, more colorful and excitable. She exudes warmth, frequently addressing the women in endearing terms: "Be patient just for a moment women,/ You hasty children!"[25] However, she has no intention of being authoritative. The heroine is not the fairy tales' granny but, rather, the miraculous child who can make things happen just because she is a little more gifted than her friends.

Thus, she has figured out at the beginning of the play that the war will eventually destroy not only the enemy, but also the Athenians themselves. Kalonike cannot take it and breaks down into hysterics: "You are only saying this -No, not our own men, no! /Say no! Say that you are lying! Say something!"[26] However, Lysistrata's sense of the war is just as rudimentary: "Yes, if only we could find a means,/ my sad children, to end this mean war."[27] Myrrhina elaborates, "Who steals our men."[28] War must be personified into a mean character if women are to grasp its destructive force.

Later, in explaining how abstention would work, the classic Lysistrata tells the women that they only have to sit at home in their finery, powdered and trimmed, repelling the men's advances.[29] The modern heroine spells out the plan, in a way

---

[24] Ibid., p. 55.

[25] Ibid., p. 22.

[26] Ibid., p. 16.

[27] Ibid., p. 24.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Aristophanes, Lysistrata, translated by B. B. Rogers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), l. 149-151, p. 18. Henceforth, this work will be referred to as "Loeb," in this chapter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that would certainly arouse interest in kindergarten: "We would murmur a song softly and would swing in rhythm/ -and then, the man would implore: only your mouth./ only your forehead, sweet: we would escape from him/ and yet one more time, again and again/ and we would laugh ..." Like a good fairy, Lysistrata does not omit to add at the end that "our wish would then be fulfilled."[30] The women can only acquiesce to abstention if persuaded that it will be fun.

The political significance of the capture of the Acropolis is similarly beyond their comprehension. The bright Lysistrata simply sees it as an opportunity to "prove" that "we are clever."[31] Before delivering the news of the citadel's seizure, she childishly takes time to enjoy her victory. Thus, she first asks supposedly innocent questions about who owns the treasury, instead of going straight to the point, as does her ancient prototype.[32] Upon hearing the news, in an interpolated passage, the women excitedly ask for their share from the treasury to buy clothes and ornaments.[33]

Indeed, the women are so scatterbrained that they constantly stray away from the original, seizing every opportunity to play games. Thus, whereas in the ancient play Lysistrata is only asked twice to begin her address, in the German version the plea is repeated seven times and by several speakers.[34] The chorus asks in unison, "Speak, dear, speak! Oh dear speak, come on, speak."[35] Myrrhina then adds charmingly that she feels a tickling on her soles and Lampito, on a contrastive note abruptly cuts the

---

30 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata , p. 28.

31 Ibid., p. 31.

32 Loeb, l. 240-242 , p. 27: "That's the thing I said./ They've seized the Acropolis, Athene's castle,/ Our comrades have."

33 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 32.

34 Loeb, l. 94-96, p. 14.

35 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fluttering: "My patience is at an end."[36] Since the women are unable to use their brains, they might just as well be given something to do that is theatrically interesting.

Lysistrata is certainly the cleverest of the bunch, but the long and eloquent, pro-feminine arguments in the debate with the Proboulos prove too much, even for her. Greiner has scrupulously removed all references that might appear ideologically charged in a modern context. Thus, Lysistrata's sophisticated use of the metaphor of weaving to highlight the importance of unity between the warring states has been omitted, probably as too thoughtful for a woman.[37] Similarly, the heroine's explanation about how the female population decided to undertake action has been removed. Indeed, it dangerously suggests that the women have political awareness.[38] In the original, the female activism is almost presented as an organized mobilization with clearly defined political goals: "We women met in immediate convention and passed a unanimous resolution: to work in concert for safety and peace in Greece."[39]

Greiner has given Lysistrata only a single longer passage, in which she develops an emotional argument about the war's destructive force. This is more in keeping with her female nature: sons are massacred, married women are left husbandless and virgins wither without ever knowing a mate.[40] Typically, the heroine expresses herself in one sentence interjections. The entire debate has been shaped into stichomyhtia, in which the two parties are quarrelling perkily over trivialities. Thus the German Lysistrata has the new inspiration to ask for ransom for the policemen

---

36 Ibid.

37 Loeb, l. 567-570 and 574-586, pp. 58-60.

38 Loeb, l. 522-528, p. 52.

39 Loeb, l. 525-526, p. 52.

40 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 58.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

who are now captives within the Acropolis. This gives the chance to the chorus to also intervene. The women are greedily asking for more money and for fine clothes.[41] As for the Proboulos, in this version he preposterously instructs his stupid scribe, Sosias, to write down all the insults hurled against him, further disorienting the scene from political issues.

At some point, the Proboulos finds Lysistrata's proclamations so outlandish he can no longer understand them. Thus, Sosias is employed as an intermediary. For example, the heroine claims that the policemen are to be delivered only if the war comes to an end. The scribe repeats: Sosias: "She is of the opinion that the war must first come to an end." Pro: "The war? What war?" Sos: "She is asking what war?" Lys: The war in Greece."[42] This comic device has the effect of further dissecting the fragmentary nature of the arguments, entirely hampering, through quotation the appreciation of content.

The Proboulos in this version is so ridiculously stupid that he cannot make a persuasive impression of a State representative. The women then fail to make a political point, as they do not really come up against state authority in confronting him. At the end of the play, Lysistrata puts her scarf on the Proboulos after yet another playful, heated quarrel over whether the women are going to save him or not, transposed from an earlier context.[43] The old men interpret this action as a sign that the state is shaky and rush to take the scarf off. However, Proboulos, incensed, actually proceeds to dress himself up in women's clothes, in this version, to make a sensational point about Athens' doom at the council. Thus, transparently, he appears like a cabotin in the role of a civic official.

---

41 Ibid., pp. 59-60.

42 Ibid., p. 61.

43 Ibid., p. 62; Loeb, l. 501-503, pp. 48-50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In Aristophanes' play, Lysistrata has two stratagems for achieving peace: sexual abstention from the men and the occupation of the Acropolis. The latter goal supplies the political background to the women's activism and motivates central scenes in the original, namely, the debate with the Proboulos and the choral battles. Greiner's version lays central stress on the sexual strike. The adaptation of the debate is a characteristic example of the radical reinterpretation of scenes connected to the occupation, in the German version, so that they no longer carry political significance. As will be shown later, Greiner has also attempted to conceptually align these scenes to the centrally important erotic theme.

The sexual strike presents an opportunity to demonstrate the power of eros. In this interpretation, eros is projected as a strong natural urge, connected to the intoxicating and irrational Dionysian element. As Proboulos recognizes with hindsight at the end of the play, "Oh Pan, was it then you who imposed these travails on the men?"[44] The featherbrained women, are in fact, as Lysistrata explains, "all powerful in the kingdom of Pan."[45] Like maenads, spurred on by Dionysus, they fuel the men into a wild frenzy. However, the women in the German version are necessarily more in control of their elemental passions than the ancient followers of Dionysus, to comply with Aristophanes' plot. The intoxicating mania primarily affects the men.

Men are eagerly awaited in this version, from very early on. Immediately after the oath, it is announced that the first warriors are already on shore.[46] Again, towards the end of the debate with the Proboulos, the galloping of approaching horses is heard.[47] Later, in the same scene, horns are heard from a distance and women on the

---

[44] Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 114.

[45] Ibid., p. 122.

[46] Ibid., p. 40.

[47] Ibid., p. 58.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ramparts enthusiastically report they see the men's weapons shining at the market place.[48] Visual and aural stimulation is rich and evocative, creating an atmosphere of excitement and eager expectation. Again in an interpolation, at the opening of the second act, the women cheerfully recount men's reactions to the abstention, seven days after their arrival.[49]

Apparently, one week is enough, in this version, for men to enter turn into a frenzied, beastly state. From the Acropolis, women could see them "running like a flock" around the citadel, "noisily, disorderly ..."[50] Their plight, clearly has mythological associations: "Chased by a mysterious mania,/ they cannot find soothing for their woes, neither in caves, nor in temples,/ nor under the shade of the olive tree."[51] Kinesias too, later appears, "chased by the aura of Aphrodite, running like a madman," head on to the castle.[52]

The erotic scene between Kinesias and Myrrhina is the central episode in this version. Evoking again mythological associations, all action for the scene is set by a cave. Kinesias later enters the cave, to wait for Myrrhina, who keeps turning him on and off with delays. The image of Kinesias waiting in arousal in the cave, is distinctly satyr-like. Indeed, the hero is also bow-legged in the German version, to make the association clearer.[53] More civilized than in the original, he does not appear with a visible erection, nor does he make direct references to his penis. Still, the German Kinesias is intensely passionate. He is consumed by the flames of a

---

48 Ibid., p. 63.

49 Ibid., p.70-71.

50 Ibid., p. 71.

51 Ibid., p. 72.

52 Ibid., p. 78.

53 Ibid., pp. 81 and 83.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

great fire and afflicted by the "soaring burn that will soon settle in the city like the plague."[54]

The scene has been considerably expanded by stretching out and elaborating on Aristophanes' original ideas and also by inventing new comic business. The most significant addition to the scene is a novel minor incident, inserted so as to highlight the power of raw instinct. The servant Manes interrupts the erotic game of the couple three times with news concerning an imminent war expedition.[55] The second time, he appears with a messenger and together they try in vain try to reason with Kinesias who is hiding in the cave. The third time, Manes rushes in with armour to dress the warrior, while Myrrhina hastens to anoint him with the wrong perfume. Kinesias breaks down completely from frustration.

The episodes following the tempting of Kinesias have been revised in the German version. The rather diffuse action of the original has been tightly structured to lead to an impressive finale.[56] Revisions are in the spirit of the Aristophanic Lysistrata, in emphasizing the force of the sexual instinct. However, the ironic dimension that the urgency of the raised phallus determines the outcome, supplanting deliberation, has been ignored. This choice is again consistent with the apolitical orientation of the adaptation. Thus, indicatively, the territorial negotiations between the two parties, stimulated by the presence of peace as a sexy girl on stage, have not been included in the German version.[57] This omission also conveniently avoids presenting Lysistrata, who heads the negotiations in the original, in a position of authority and control.

---

54 Ibid., p. 84.

55 Ibid., pp. 94-96, 97-101 and 106-107.

56 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, Act II, scenes iv-viii, pp. 108-123.

57 Loeb, l. 1112-1181, pp. 106-112.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dionysian allusions again abound. Proboulos assumes an intriguing new role towards the end of the play. He functions as an opposing force, aiming to prevent the peaceful denouement. His motivation seems to be simply that the erotic frenzy threatens to dissolve discipline, law and order. Proboulos regards these as supreme values and desperately attempts to enforce them, against all odds. Thus he emerges as a Pentheus figure, determined to oppose the Dionysian mania. In this context, his earlier initiative to dress himself up in women's clothes acquires new significance, as it directly evokes Pentheus' similar behavior in Euripides' Bacchae.

Proboulos' accompaniment by the scribe Sosias, who writes down the women's offences against state authority, can also be interpreted as a desire to keep mania under control, to rationalize it. In the debate, just before Lysistrata puts her scarf on him, he laments in an interpolation, "Gods, how much longer will you put up with this?/ The state is shaky, the order of nature/ is being violated, chaos is looming over us."[58] Like Pentheus, however, ironically, he is himself a victim of the mania he is trying to exorcise.

This interpretation of Proboulos becomes fully convincing in the light of his later conduct. Greiner has added a scene between Proboulos and Kinesias, which takes place immediately after Myrrhina's departure.[59] The state official rushes on to the stage and talks with urgency to Kinesias, who is still in the cave. There has been a mutiny of the slave oarsmen, just as the ships were ready to sail for the new war expedition. Clearly seized by Dionysian mania, the slaves have been heavily drinking, and now, intoxicated, they are filling the air with love songs. "They must be tamed," rages the Proboulos, who is suddenly taken aghast to see Kinesias

---

58 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 62.

59 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, Act II, scene iv, pp. 108-110.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emerge from the cave in his underwear.[60] Beside himself with fury, he delivers a sermon about how "manly discipline has been lost" and "order has been dissolved."[61] "If I alone of all men did not still hold firmly onto the reins," he thunders but leaves the utterance incomplete, as he is seized by an urge to jump up and down.[62] Indeed, there is a lot of uncontrollable male jumping towards the end of the play in the German version, which is the civilized equivalent of the erection.

Whereas in the original Proboulos takes the initiative toward reconciliation, in the German version he is incorrigible.[63] To the very end, he is trying to prevent the erotic consummation, while simultaneously struggling to control his jumping. The situation becomes overwhelmingly difficult for him, as Bacchic crowds of men are progressively asserting their presence ever more strongly on stage. The narration about the mutiny of the intoxicated slaves is succeeded in the fifth scene by a vivid direct report from the assembly: men are furiously shouting that the war must end.[64] Kinesias picks his clothes and leaves running to join the protesters, while Proboulos hastens to prevent "the coup."[65]

In the following scene, the excited crowd's cheering and shouting are actually heard behind the stage. "Come Cypris, golden Cypris come!" thunder the men, annuling the Proboulos' rejection of the Spartan peace offer.[66] Finally, the male chorus rushes on to the stage, led by the satyr-like Kinesias. They form a boisterous,

---

60 Ibid., p. 108.

61 Ibid., p. 109.

62 Ibid., pp. 109-110.

63 Loeb, l. 1009-1012, p. 96.

64 Ibid., pp. 111-112.

65 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 112.

66 Ibid., p. 117.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

colorfully wreathed crowd, accompanied by cymbal and flute players. In Bacchic frenzy they shout, "women appear!" and, in a more romantic vein, "charmers, stop hiding from the sight of love!"[67]

In the final scene, the women, led by Lysistrata, come out of the gates and are eager to join their husbands. Relieved of her duty to conduct the negotiations, the heroine assumes the voice of nature, reminding men of their "duty" towards the state: to provide it with children.[68] She then delivers a long interpolated speech, designed to alleviate any possible misunderstanding concerning the female initiative to bring peace. The woman is put back in her traditional place: the hearth. Lysistrata assures everybody that "When the female kingdom opens, there will not be/ a single one of us, weak women,/ who will not be well protected in the embrace of her beloved man./ to the very one who brought peace."[69] With this proviso, the sexes hasten to let themselves loose to a bacchanal. Men are "heavy from intoxication like the golden fruit of the vine."[70] They rush on to the steps and start climbing on the rocks. Women admit to having been defeated and cry for mercy. In spite of the demonstration of all this passion, however, the bacchic orgy surely follows the order imposed by mainstream ideology.

The new Dionysian orientation of the German Lysistrata has radically influenced the interpretation of the chorus. The emphasis on the powerful sexual urge is paired throughout by a systematic concern to eradicate the political context of the original. The choruses of old men and women interrupting the action and arguing about civic and political issues obviously presented a problem to the German adaptation. Thus,

---

67 Ibid., p. 118.

68 Ibid., p. 121.

69 Ibid., p. 122.

70 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

opting for the simplest solution, all Aristophanic choruses were eliminated, with the exception of the initial appearance of the elderly men and the ensuing first battle.[71]

Even the poor remnants of the ancient chorus have been drastically revised. In the German version, the old men are no longer concerned citizens hurrying to defend the citadel, as the embodiment of Athenian democracy. Indeed, Greiner has removed all of the original's persistent references to the Acropolis, at the initial appearance of the chorus.[72] In Aristophanes' play, the old men present the women as insurgents, who have upset the political status quo: "They've brought Athene's statue to heel,/they've put the Acropolis under a seal,/they've copped the whole damned commonweal/What is there left for them to steal?"[73] Greiner has abridged this passage to "The women have occupied the castle, rash and obstinate."[74] This is in fact the only reference to the occupation and it has been entirely depoliticized. In the adaptation, the female activism is presented as a mischievous trick targeted against the old men, an invitation to play, which is eagerly accepted: "Oh vile sex!/ They want to kill us. This is clear," rages Philurgos, facing the Acropolis. "But are we men or aren't we?/ Ho Hopp!"[75]

The elderly chorus has also been given its own particular games, to substitute for the loss of its lines. The German version overemphasizes the old men's fragility. They appear on stage panting under the weight of logs and heavy pots with lighted coals. Characteristically, their leader keeps repeating the refrain, "only keep a

---

71 Loeb, l. 284-387, pp. 26-38.

72 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, Act I, scene iii, pp. 42-46.

73 Loeb, l. 261-264, pp. 26-28. Translated by D. Parker: Aristophanes, "Lysistrata," translated by D. Parker, in Four Comedies, edited by William Arrowsmith (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 26.

74 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 42.

75 Ibid., p. 43.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

steady pace, only do not shake, heroes!"[76] At every laborious pace forward, Philurgos is forced to turn back and tend to various medical emergencies of the frail chorus members. For example, the following exchange is typical: 4th old man: "Philurgos!" Philurgos: "What is it again?" 4th old man: "Damon is choking. Philurgos!"[77] This routine supplies the major occupation of the chorus, in its initial appearance.

Greiner's primary concern in adapting choral action is to present a unified interpretation of episodic and choral contribution. Thus, the same principles apply to the revision of both types of text. There is throughout an emphasis on playfulness for its own sake, which, importantly, has been rendered totally apolitical. The original's first choral battle has been retained in the adaptation, obviously for the originality of the weapons employed. Bucketfuls of water against lighted pyres promise a particularly playful spectacle. The emphasis on games has dictated the arrangement of the choral text into brief, functional utterances, distributed to various speakers. As in the case of episodic action, verbose, ideologically laden passages have been discarded.

The German Lysistrata presents a modern interpretation of the chorus as a crowd, interspersed with some characteristic individuals to make it vivid and distinct. Thus, the game of the old men's chorus, in its first appearance, is especially designed to let individuals stand out from the multitude. Attention is not only focused on Philurgos, who is the most determined and obstinate among the elderly, but also, periodically, on this and that individual who put on a show of being sick, as well as on those who interrupt the leader to inform him of the emergencies. Similarly, the bacchic male crowd at the end of the play is characteristically headed by the manic Kinesias and

---

[76] Ibid., p. 42.

[77] Ibid., p. 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

includes the frail old men, who contribute a note of contrast.

Occasionally, Greiner also strives for unified choral effects in an attempt to magnify the expression of emotion, to make it resound through space. By far the most impressive choral in the adaptation is the finale. All choruses are on stage, eagerly awaiting the conclusion of peace. Men and women alternately talk in unison, multiplying the frenzy of bacchic erotic desire: Men: "Come on, come on!/ Climb the mountain! Get to the top of the rock!/ Pillage men!" Women: "How fearfully does the enemy breathe! ... We do no longer resist!/ We are defeated! Mercy, mercy, mercy!"[78]

In the modern play, central focus falls on the choruses of the young men and women who are the protagonists of the action and who highlight, through their resounding presence, the concentricity of eros. Both of these choruses comprise large multitudes. Clearly, the larger the chorus, the greater the spectacular effect. The elderly male chorus only contains nine members and its contribution to the action has been marginalized, since it is not directly linked to the plan of abstention.

Multitudes in the German interpretation lack the strong sense of unity and cohesion of the Greek chorus. The centrally prominent young choruses in Greiner's version have been brought together circumstantially. Indeed, their members even have strong centrifugal tendencies. By definition, each member longs to leave the chorus, and to be united to a member of the opposite sex, to form a couple. At the majestic finale of the German interpretation, the signal is given for the dissolution of all choruses. As discussed earlier, for ideological reasons, Lysistrata also finds it appropriate to clarify that the women's chorus has only come together for the duration of the abstention. Henceforth, each woman is to go home and be subject to her man. By contrast, the identity and basic circumstances of Lysistrata's original choruses

---

[78] Ibid., p. 123. See also pp. 40-42, for another example.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

are not affected from the play's outcome. The elderly Athenian men and women will continue to perform their civic, communal functions beyond the play, ever after.

The choral text supplies the clearest evidence that theatricality was a decisive factor in shaping the German adaptation. At every appearance of the chorus, Greiner is always careful to specify with precision the game occupying its members on stage. In many cases, this preoccupation has also led to the invention of new games, radically departing from the original. A game is conceived in physical and spatial terms as an activity that opens up interesting possibilities in performance. Besides the concern to avoid politics and ideology, the drastic adaptation of the original choral text into brief utterances, assigned to various speakers, also serves the primary requirement of theatrical viability.

Performance considerations have also influenced the shaping of character and action, in the original play's episodes. The central characters, freed of the obligation to deliver longer, verbose passages are distinctly more playful than in the original. Minor characters, such as Sosias and Manes have been invented with the sole purpose of allowing the setting up of new games. In some cases, the roles of original characters have been expanded to the same purpose. Thus, Lampito in the German version has fully bloomed into a sturdy, macho woman, whose coarseness playfully contrasts to the general female flimsiness. In the female chorals, she is always ready to stamp her foot and disagree, contributing an amusing and distinctive low tone.[79]

Sensitivity to theatricality is also manifest in a tendency to have scenes merge into each other. A common tactic is to build up impetus for what is to follow, through strategic references and announcements towards the end of the previous episode. Thus, in half of the initial act's six scenes, characters see crowds

---

[79] Ibid., see for example, pp. 22 and 30.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

approaching before they actually appear on stage.[80] The same device is employed towards the end of the play. The appearance of the bacchic male chorus is meticulously prepared in advance through the use of prolonged off stage noise and vivid accounts of the crowd in the preceding scenes.[81] Another theatrical feature of the adaptation is its particular emphasis on conflict. Greiner has sharpened and elaborated on the original's rich stock of opposed actions. For example, the invention of Manes and the reshaping of Proboulos into a Pentheus figure distinctly serve this purpose. The adaptation's performance oriented features will be discussed again later, in relation to the production. The text is replete with scenic directions. which supply clues as to how the 1908 production was actually staged.

Greiner's Lysistrata has important similarities to Donnay's adaptation. Structurally, the primary consideration in adapting the Attic comedy was to create modern plays, sacrificing, if necessary, faithfulness to the Aristophanic spirit. Both authors centrally emphasize the erotic theme and have totally eradicated the political dimension of the original. The German version is perhaps closer to the Attic comedy in linking the triumph of eros, in the denouement, to a primal, physical urge. The French, following boulevardic convention, is more cerebral, presenting the outcome as the result of conscious manipulation. In spite of some variation in the portrayal of female characters, both versions express stereotypical ideological conceptions about women. Similarities cannot obscure a striking difference between the two texts: The French version is a literary play, laying primary emphasis on spirited conversation. The German is a theatrical text, full of stimulating effects that can only be fully appreciated in performance.

Lysistrata's playfulness must have been ideally suited to Reinhardt's jovial,

---

80 Ibid., Act I, scenes i, ii and iii.

81 Ibid., Act II, scenes iv, v and vi.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lighthearted temperament. Already in 1901, at the outset of his career as a director. Reinhardt had a lucid vision the theatre he wanted to create. He aspired to optimistic, colorful and gay work: "I want to show life from another side than that of merely pessimistic negation, yet equally true in its gaiety, filled with color and light ... What I have in mind is a theatre that will again bring joy to the people."[82] Throughout his career, Reinhardt had also emphasized his fascination with theatre as play. He saw the actor, the player, with his magical ability of transformation as the most essential element of theatre.[83]

In 1908, Reinhardt already had a solid reputation as a director. He ran two theatres, the prestigious Deutsches Theater and the Kammerspiele, which he had founded himself in 1906. With keen experimental spirit, he had ventured beyond realism and naturalism, into the exploration of novel staging possibilities. Reinhardt had demonstrated the viability of poetic drama through pioneering productions of symbolist and expressionist playwrights. He was masterful at creating impressionist, atmospheric mise en scènes, in which music and the pictorial arts contributed vitally to the total effect, restricting the traditional primacy of the word. Besides contemporary plays, he had successfully produced the classics, and especially Shakespeare. However, he had little experience of Greek drama when he ventured on Lysistrata. The only other Greek play he had produced had been Euripides' Medea, in 1904.[84] He would subsequently direct the seminal productions of Oedipus Rex and The Oresteia, both of which premiered before World War I.[85]

---

82 Cited in Martin Esslin, "Max Reinhardt, High Priest of Theatricality," The Drama Review (June 1977): p. 9.

83 See Max Reinhardt, "Of Actors," in E. Wellwarth and G. Brooks, eds., Max Reinhardt 1873-1973: A Centennial Festschrift (Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1973), pp. 1-5.

84 The production opened at the Neues Theater, in Berlin, on February 19, 1904.

85 Oedipus Rex premiered at the Musikfesthalle, in Munich, on September 25, 1910

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Kammerspiele, chosen for the original production of Lysistrata, was an intimate theatre, seating 292 spectators. Architecturally, it promoted the unification of the stage and the auditorium. The two spaces were separated merely by three steps. There was no pit and promptbox and the proscenium frame was unobtrusive. The stage was 8 meters wide and overall, almost as large as the auditorium. The house was panelled in oak, and had red leather chairs, all of which offered an unobstructed view of the stage. Luxury necessitated the charging of very high admission prices. Thus, Kammerspiele productions were directed towards an exclusive, intimate audience.[86]

The Kammerspiele was by no means an obvious choice for staging a spectacular play with a large cast. The intimacy of the space induced concentration and was best suited for staging modern avant garde plays. The classics were habitually staged at the Deutsches Theater at that time. Reinhardt's later productions of Greek drama were produced at arena spaces. A year before the war, the director had plans for also staging Lysistrata at the Circus Schumann, later to become the Grosses Schauspielhaus, which, however, were not realized. There does not seem to be any evidence as to why the Kammerspiele was chosen for the original production of the Attic comedy. Perhaps Reinhardt had initially conceived of Lysistrata as an experimental project, which he wanted to test with a small audience. Indeed, this was his first large-scale attempt to produce Greek drama.

Ernst Stern was employed to design the scenery and costumes for both productions of Lysistrata. Stern was Reinhadt's favorite designer and had worked for him from 1906 to 1920. He was responsible for the greatest number of Reinhardt's

---

and was subsequently staged at the Circus Schumann, in Berlin, on November 7 of the same year. The Oresteia first opened at the Circus Busch, in Berlin, in the Spring of 1911.

86 See Michael Patterson, The Revolution in German Theatre 1900-1933 . pp. 36-37.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

productions, and especially for the German and the major foreign classics. His style was distinguished for its uniformity; he took account of the total stage picture and had a predilection for impressionist, highly colorful design.[87] Stern had a good feel for comic plays, as he had also worked as a professional cartoonist.

In the 1908 production, the wide staircase was the dominant feature of the set. It culminated at an impressive facade of the Acropolis, symmetrically divided into two identical parts by a massive metal door. At the top of this structure was placed a large statue of Athena.[88] The door was the focal point of the design. The base of the staircase was raised above the floor level of the stage, delimiting two major acting areas, a frontal and a rear.[89] The frontal was on the lower level and represented a street in Athens. It had two prominent entrances, one on each side of the stage, defined by columns. These were exclusively used by all characters who did not come from the Acropolis.[90] The upper stage was reachable by two symmetrical flights of steps, placed sideways on the lower level. Between these two smaller staircases was Kinesias' cave, hidden by bushes.[91] The rear acting area on the upper level also had entrances to the left and to the right of the stage, for the exclusive use of the female chorus.[92] Characters coming from within the Acropolis would use the

---

87 See A. S. J., "Max Reinhardt and the Scene Designer," in Alfred G. Brooks, ed., Max Reinhardt. An Exhibition Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of his Death. Catalogue (Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1968), pp. 6-8.

88 See Figure 2-1: "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

89 See Figure 2-1: See also description of the set and its use in Leo Greiner, Lysistrata Komödie frei nach Aristophanes (Verlag Dr. Wedekind & Co., Berlin 1908), p. iv.

90 See Leo Greiner, Lysistrata Komödie frei nach Aristophanes (Verlag Dr. Wedekind & Co., Berlin 1908), p. iv.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

front door.[93]

The construction was richly colorful. There were golden columns, black-grey steps and brown-red walls, framed in dark blue.[94] Moreover, the set was heavily ornate with archaic decorative features, strongly reminiscent of Minoan motifs.[95] Indeed, the Acropolis represented in the design is closer in atmosphere to the Minoan palaces, rather than to the Athenian citadel of the classical period. It may not be coincidental that the archaeological excavation of the palace of Knossos in Crete had begun in 1899 and was well under way in 1908. Within the first few years of the new century, the greater part of the palace had come to light and its discovery must understandably have been inspiring to art.

Stern's costuming conception for the original production is well documented. Numerous designs of the dress of individual characters, as well as of chorus members are extant.[96] The originals are in pencil, finished in pen or watercolor. Some include fabric swatches, as well as notes, specifying the parts of an individual costume, the materials to be used in its manufacture and the coloring. All costumes are richly colorful and decorative, creating a vivid, impressionist effect. They are freely inspired from Greek antiquity. Stern mentions that for the female designs he had the Tanagra, Hellenistic statuettes in mind.[97] However, other influences may also be detected. The emphasis on decorative features, patterned fabrics and colorfulness is strongly reminiscent, in some cases, of the Minoan painted frescoes and even of

---

93 Ibid.

94 R. O. F., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 28 February 1908.

95 See Figure 2-1.

96 See Figures 2-1 to 2-17.

97 Ernst Stern, My Life, My Stage, translated by Edward Fitzgerald (London: Gollancz, 1951), p. 78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ancient Egyptian art.[98]

An intriguing feature of the costuming conception is that the bare skin of the exposed limbs was also included in the coloring scheme, as in Minoan painting. Members of the female chorus were to have their skin painted in very light, luminous color.[99] The more sturdy market women had tanned limbs, an option also adopted for the men.[100] Different shades of brown were to be employed for the male characters. Slaves and Spartans had their limbs painted in the deepest brown, which contrasted sharply to the luminosity of the Athenian women.

Elaborate headdresses complemented the decorative effect of painted skin. Chorus women had prominent decorative ribbons and bonnets woven into their hair, creating wonderful, peculiar hairstyles.[101] These were to be fashioned in fine material, such as silk, and were perhaps darker in shade than the garments so as to be prominent.[102] Market women had woolen and perhaps more simply designed bonnets.[103] Kinesias was to appear in a blue woolen wig, while his servant, Manes, has a leather triangular cap on.[104] Other slaves wore sturdy, richly colored woolen wigs.[105] The Spartan ambassador was to be elegant and austere, in a black silken wig.[106] The combination of skin painting and head-dresses probably aimed at

---

98 See for example, Figures 2-9, 2-11 and 2-14.

99 See Figures 2-4 and 2-6.

100 See Figures 2-7, 2-8, 2-14 and 2-17.

101 See Figure 2-9.

102 See Figures 2-4 and 2-6.

103 See Figures 2-7 and 2-8.

104 See Figures 2-12 and 2-14.

105 See Figure 2-11.

106 See Figure 2-17.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

creating an unreal effect, giving the impression the characters had just walked out of an antique fresco.

Stern's primary concern in designing the women's costumes was to have them reflect the erotic theme of the play.[107] He chose transparent materials for the choral garments, which let the lines of the body show through.[108] Women wore long chitons and mantles of generally light, pastel colors.[109] The chitons of the choral leaders combine transparent with opaque materials and are imaginatively cut, affording original views of the female anatomy.[110] The designs for the garments of the market women emphasize practicality rather than sensuality and grace. They wear upper and lower chitons of different colors and some have polychrome scarves tied around their waists or wooden, vividly painted necklaces.[111] There were about 12 market women in a female chorus of approximately 60 members, contributing a more gristly element, to offset the sensuality of their colleagues.[112]

Like the women, men also wore chitons.[113] The warriors had knee length tunics and heavy weight metal armour, again emphasizing decorative features.[114] They are not fearful or masculine; rather, they make a gay, humorous impression. Kinesias the bow-legged was to appear as an eery comical figure, with his white sandals, yellow tunic and blue woolen wig. In full armour he simply becomes more colorful, wearing

---

107 See Ernst Stern, My Life, My Stage, p. 78.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid., p. 80; see also Figures 2-2 and 2-4 to 2-7.

110 See Figures 2-4 to 2-6.

111 See Figures 2-7 and 2-8.

112 See Figure 2-7; Ernst Stern, My Life, My Stage, p. 78.

113 See Figures 2-3, 2-10 to 2-14, 2-16 and 2-17.

114 See Figure 2-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a richly patterned mantle.[115] The costumes of the servants were similarly intended to add vivacity to the scene. They wear sturdy polychrome woolen chitons over tights and have wooden painted necklaces on, creating the impression of mobile color blotches.[116] Perhaps a more restricted color range was adopted for the Spartans. Their ambassador's black cap was combined with a green mantle over a grey chiton.[117]

Stern's costume designs for the 1908 production are complemented by a series of sketches that capture the spirit of the adaptation.[118] He emphasizes playfulness. humor and vivacity. Individual characters are drawn in caricature, with comically exaggerated facial expressions and gestures. The figurines appear like children in play.[119] Indicatively, the curious woman watching Proboulos and his servants has brought a hoop with her into Aristophanes' play.[120] The choral battles are presented as extremely energetic games. Women are having great fun laughing, running. showering and kicking the old men off the staircase.[121] The adaptation's central emphasis on eros as a primal, Dionysian force is reflected in a drawing of the Kinesias episode.[122] The couple is enlarged beyond proportion and placed centrally in the midst of chaos. People and buildings in the background are caught in a whirlwind and only Kinesias' weapons are prominent on the lower left side,

---

115 See Figures 2-12 and 2-13.

116 See Figures 2-11 and 2-14.

117 See Figure 2-17.

118 See Figures 2-18 to 2-22.

119 See Figures 2-19 to 2-22.

120 See Figure 2-21.

121 See Figures 2-19 and 2-20.

122 See Figure 2-18.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

highlighting the moral, "make love, not war."

Coincidentally, a symmetrical distance of six years separates the two productions of Lysistrata from WWI. The first production is associated with the most fervent phase of Reinhardt's creativity, while the second with its decline. In 1920, Reinhardt was past his prime. He had recently added to his theatres the Grosses Schauspielhaus, where he had successfully produced Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Romain Rolland's Danton. However, his work at the new space was uneven. Some productions were stimulating, while others appeared run down or repolished.[123] Reinhardt was now disinclined to experiment with avant garde work. A few months after the opening of Lysistrata, the Fall of 1920, he would abandon, for economic reasons, artistic and managerial responsibility for his Berlin theatres. His resignation, however, actually signalled that his reign had ended.[124]

The revival was staged at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, a theatre designed to accomodate the masses. The space had opened in1919 and had a seating capacity of 3,300. Seats were arranged in horseshoe rows around an arena, behind which rose a conventional proscenium stage. The semi-circular positioning of the audience, surrounding the action, evoked the classical amphitheatre and was intended to induce a similar communal experience. The cost of spectacular productions to justify the arena was very high and to make matters worse, the theatre had opened at a time of inflation. Thus, to save money, increasingly, conventional proscenium productions were staged there. For Lysistrata, though, the entire space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus was employed.

Reinhardt had perhaps initially intended to use a set similar to the 1908 original, adapted to the needs of the larger theatre. This is clearly indicated in his drawings

---

[123] See Walther Volbach, "Memoirs of Max Reinhardt's Theatres 1920-1922." Theatre Survey 8 (Fall 1972): pp. 1-92.

[124] See Michael Patterson, The Revolution in German Theatre 1900-1933 . p. 39.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for the first act. in Lysistrata's 1920 Regiebuch.[125] The director planned to use the proscenium, as well as the thrust stage of the arena. Indeed. the chorus of the old men is shown fully employing the area of the thrust stage.[126] The original design would be adapted into the proscenium. All main features of the 1908 raised acting area have been incorporated in Reinhardt's later spatial conception. There is the grand, wide staircase occupying the entire area of the proscenium, with the massive door and the statue of Athena as the focal point.[127]

The set employed in the 1920 production, however, is radically different from the original.[128] The two stages of the Grosses Schauspielhaus were segmented into innumerable parts, capable of being raised and lowered to form platforms, moving surfaces and steps. The frontal and symmetrical facade of 1908 has been replaced by sundry temples, towers, walls and rocks. In contrast to the original's focalization. the later design aims at a diffuse effect. Characteristically, it is not easy to locate the door of the Acropolis, which is now incorporated into the irregular arrangement of geometrical masses.[129] The new design is very austere, almost totally lacking decorative features. Even the irregular shapes of the rocks are geometrical.[130] The sheer multitude of vertical and horizontal lines irregularly arranged, gives the

---

125 Reference to the Regiebuch follows the page numbering of Leo Greiner's 1908 edition of Lysistrata, prefixed by 'R.' Discussion of Lysistrata's 1920 Regiebuch is based on a copy of the original, included in the Max Archives, deposited at the State University of New York, at Binghamton, New York.

126 See R, p. 42

127 See See Figures 2-24 and 2-25. The drawings in R, pp. 17, 19 and 20, indicate that women are mainly positioned on the staircase, as in the original, 1908 conception.

128 See Figure 2-23.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.. extreme right.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

impression of an abstract composition, almost undermining representationalism. The new Acropolis is now closer to the actual classical monument, filtered, however, through a Bauhaus lens.

It is highly probable that the costumes of the original production were also employed in the revival. Evidence is supplied by a 1920 production photograph of the Proboulos scene.[131] Women appear to wear the very chitons of the 1908 designs. The garments are free flowing, cut in individual and original styles. Moreover, all female characters wear headdresses. Sosias, standing on the left platform in the foreground, wears a costume similar to that worn by the servants, in the designs: very short tunic of sturdy material over tights. Moreover, he has a wig on and his face appears tanned. Proboulos standing on the right, is richly wrapped in an ample tunic and mantle, as in the original design of the character. He wears a cap, as do also the eight old men in the foreground. Another, indirect indication that the original costumes were also used in the revival is supplied by the Lysistrata 1920 Regiebuch. This contains no information on costumes, with the exception of an interesting addition to the female apparel: a cape of multiple significations in performance, to be demonstrated presently.

The Regiebuch affords some insight into Reinhardt's conception of the revival. It consists of the printed text of the 1908 edition, interleaved with blank pages for the director's notes, which are in manuscript.[132] H. Herald, Reinhardt's dramaturg and close associate, likened a Regiebuch to "a closely-woven rug."[133] Ideally, in Reinhardt's words, it aimed at providing a "complete optical and acoustical vision

---

131 Ibid.

132 See Figure 2-25.

133 Cited in J. L. Styan, Max Reinhardt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 123.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[of the play]."[134] Lysistrata is not among the most thorough Reinhardt Regiebücher. Nevertheless, annotation is detailed enough, to allow for speculation of how Reinhardt visualized choral action.

The recorded material includes information on the expression and intonation of speech, including indications of intervals. The effect of an utterance on the interlocutor is also frequently noted. The crossings and positions of the actors are meticulously specified and indicated by drawings. Furthermore, there are notes on the change of scenes, on off stage noise, on the female costume and on the lighting. Of special interest are the choral passages, conceived rhythmically. Reinhardt records in detail the musicality of speech patterns, specifying the crescendos, the pauses and the different tempi.

On the evidence of the Regiebuch, the director lays primary emphasis on the rhythmic and plastic qualities of the choral ensemble. He is not so much interested in the content, as in the form of choral expression. Thus, in the adaptation, Lysistrata's question about whether the women yearn for their husbands, receives the response from the chorus: "Whether we yearn for them?/ Oh Lysistrata, whether we yearn for them?"[135] In the Regiebuch, the reply has been considerably expanded.[136] A drawing indicates that the principal female characters are on the steps, with Lysistrata standing at the top, while the chorus is mainly arranged sideways on the greater area, at the foot of the staircase. Reinhardt imagines that first, all chorus members stand still, looking at Lysistrata. Then, the question, "Whether we yearn for them?" is successively repeated with slight variation in tone by several individual choral members, the ensemble at the left, as well as the few women at the center.

---

134 Cited in Martin Esslin, "Max Reinhardt, High Priest of Theatricality," Drama Review (June 1977): p. 15.

135 Leo Greiner, Lysistrata, p. 23.

136 See R, p. 20.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Subsequently, the entire chorus in unison repeats the phrase, first poignantly and then sadly. Finally, each choral member pensively poses the question to herself. The multitude then, supplies ample opportunity for interesting vocal orchestration, which Reinhardt exploits to the maximum.

The theme of the female longing for the men, however, is also expanded on visually. In place of the synoptic stage direction in the adaptation, "they all embrace and begin to cry," Reinhardt has choreographed an elaborate dance. First, he specifies movements for eight individual members of the chorus. Subsequently, the entire ensemble is to join in: "the hands are extended, the head thrust backwards, the upper part of the body is rocking, first softly, and then progressively, more strongly. Finally, the women wrap themselves up in their mantles and let their heads fall."[137]

Similar examples of choral composition can be found throughout Act I, scene ii. The theme of this scene is the women's meeting. Searching for a means to end the war, claiming individual shares on the civic treasure, quarreling over how to swear, are all transformed into elaborate aural and visual play, almost as in a musical.[138] The scene ends on a crescendo of joy, as the women are entering the Acropolis.[139] Gaiety is largely conveyed by the women's energetic running up the stairs, and especially by their laughter, which is again musically composed. Mirth is initially provoked by the misunderstanding that the approaching elderly are the young men. As soon as the women realize their mistake, they look at each other and frown slowly, before breaking into joyous laughter.

Again, the stage is converted into a playground. The women shout gayly, run, thrust the upper part of the body backwards and then bend it deeply forward.

---

[137] Ibid.

[138] See R, pp. 21, 29, and 31-32.

[139] See R, pp. 35-38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Laughter subsides through Lysistrata's last speech in the scene. Then, it picks up again as the women are running up the stairs, waving their veils and parodying the old men's walk. Cheering and singing complete the auditory effect. Laughter climaxes when all the women are on the top of the staircase, in front of the gate. The highest point of mirth coincides with a metal knock on the door and then gradually starts to fade.

Similarly to the female multitude, the staging of the elderly chorus is carefully set to rhythm and choreographed.[140] Reinhardt specifies that the old men walk on stage lined up one behind the other, in the strut of the goose. They are burdened with the incendiary apparatus and are panting heavily.[141] The two semi-choruses are frequently set against each other, as at the quarrel over burning the women.[142] First, three pairs of individual voices are successively heard for and against the proposed action. Then, the entire chorus starts shouting in confusion, "we will set fire" and "we won't." Eventually, they are broken up into two camps. Those on the left support the motion, while those on the right are against it. As soon as smoke starts rising, the group is unified again in coughing. At the same time, they are trying to communicate with gestures about the cause of the new crisis. An old man continues to cough after all others have stopped.

The examples presented show clearly that Reinhardt saw the chorus as a rhythmic ensemble and was primarily interested in projecting formal qualities. He arranged voices musically and orchestrated the players with the precision of a chorus in opera. Movement, too, is carefullty choreographed and synchronized to the vocal patterns. Monotonous uniformity is generally avoided. Reinhardt aimed at a well-varied,

---

140 See R, pp. 38-42.

141 R., p. 38.

142 R., p. 41.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

polyphonic and polygestic effect, and employed sophisticated means to achieve it. Typically, the focus on individuals, as well on smaller groups within the ensemble allows for sharply defined antitheses or for the progressive scaling of emotion.

Reinhardt's choral interpretation aimed primarily at achieving an effective and spectacular performance. The female chorus' visual splendor was to be theatrically enhanced in the 1920 production, by an imaginative conception of costume.[143] The women's dress is calculated to create three distinct impressions. The colorfulness of their chitons expresses, for Reinhardt, the female "insistence on minute, worthless things."[144] In contrast to the differentiating impression of chitons, the coloring of the mantles should aim at uniformity. When women are tightly wrapped in them, Reinhardt visualizes "a monochrome picture of complete accord."[145] Mantles are to be lined on the inside in bright red fabric. The lining is also intended to be visible in performance.

The three color impressions of the female garments have multiple significations. The polychrome chitons are prominent at the beginning of the women's meeting, when they are all chatting lively about trivialities. Later Lysistrata's tough abstention terms affect the general mood negatively. This is immediately indicated visually by projecting the monochrome solemnity of the mantles. Red is reserved to highlight exulted moments. When women are running up the stairs to shut themselves up in the Acropolis, they are raising their mantles, letting the red show through. Reinhardt visualizes, quite literally, the entire scene on fire. For the oath, they create a spectacular effect by taking the mantles off and trailing them behind

---

143 See R, p. iv.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"like red rails."[146] At the conclusion of the ceremony, women, in a circle, wave the red linings triumphantly to and fro; mantles are transformed into celebratory flags.[147] The director then envisions that in performance, mantles take on the function of stage props, or even of scenery. Indeed, Reinhardt's conception appears to perfectly exemplify an intriguing statement by Norman Bel Geddes: "costumes are scenery worn by actors in and around the setting."[148] It is uncertain whether his imaginative idea was eventually employed in the 1920 production.

The Regiebuch also supplies evidence on Reinhardt's concern to achieve a unified production by smoothly blending one scene into the next. As shown, this possibility is already provided for in the adaptation. In the Regiebuch, however, the director has considerably elaborated on the textual material. Thus, the arrival of the women is prepared at the end of the scene between Lysistrata and Kalonike by vivid off stage noise, coming from a distance.[149] Lively female chatting and laughter is heard coming from all sides. Lysistrata moves towards the right and starts looking for the women, who are still off stage. Kalonike searches for them more energetically, running from side to side. She points towards her approaching friends off stage and calls them. Finally, women flood the stage, waving their veils and greeting each other lively.

As discussed previously, the appearance of the old men is similarly prepared in advance towards the end of the second scene.[150] Women again see them approach from a distance and mistake them for the young men. This game is skillfully

---

146 R., p. 32.

147 R., p. 35.

148 Norman Bel Geddes, Miracle in the Evening (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960), p. 262.

149 R, p. 16.

150 R., pp. 35-38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

employed in building up liveliness, while the women are retreating to the Acropolis. When all have entered the citadel, the door is closed and bolted with a heavy noise.[151] Polyphonic laughter can still be heard fading. Then there is silence and the stage remains empty for a moment. Only the monotonous, shuffling pace of the old men and their heavy sighing can be heard. The scene begins as soon as all nine men are on stage.[152] Clearly, offstage noise is exploited to the maximum, to vividly convey in advance the spirit of the following scene.

The Regiebuch allows for an identification of Reinhardt's principal concerns in staging the chorus, in Lysistrata. Spectacular mass action, unified effects, musical and plastic qualities are integrally important to his interpretation. Probably, this conception does not radically differ from his original interpretation of the play. Indeed, Reinhardt generally appears to take into account in the Regiebuch the stage directions of the 1908 text. In many cases, these have been underlined, indicating the director's intention to employ them unchanged in the revival.

The most pervasive similarity between the stage directions of the adaptation and the Regiebuch is in the conception of the elderly chorus, in its first appearance.[153] The entire scene has been left unchanged in its essentials. Reinhardt exactly follows the original design of the old men's laborious advance as specified in the adaptation.[154] The steps forward, the pauses for breath occur at the same places as in the text. Expressions of fatigue and of emotion have also been left unchanged. There is only minimal expansion, following, however, the spirit of the original stage

---

151 R., p. 38.

152 Ibid.

153 R., pp. 38-42.

154 See for example, R., p. 38: "(the procession halts, he [Philurgos] is wiping his sweat):" p. 40: "(the procession again moves one step forward)." third old man: "(softly, with an expression of great earnestness)," Philurgos"(who cannot turn)."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

directions. Thus, when Philurgos at some point gathers new impetus to step forward. Reinhardt has added that the chorus immediately pauses again: "all are trembling, all are exhausted and immobile."[155]

Reinhardt's standard practice in the Regiebuch is to vividly elaborate on the original, 1908 stage directions. For example, the women's argument over how to swear is simply indicated in the text by: "The women (in confusion), "Yes, No, No, Yes." In the Regiebuch, the issue has been magnified into a heated, rhythmic quarrel.[156] Individual chorus members are set against each other and some new text has been added, to make the opposition more poignant. Thus, besides 'Yes' and 'No,' individuals are proposing 'wine!,' 'water!' 'sheep!', 'shield!' and so on. Moreover, there is a lot of choral movement, not indicated in the adaptation. Most examples of lengthy expansion in the Regiebuch concern choral activity. These additions do not necessarily indicate a change in Reinhardt's conception of choral action. Even though the 1908 text is rich in stage directions, it is not a Regiebuch. The director's complex orchestration of the chorus strictly concerns performance and could not readily have been included in the adaptation.

Generally, Reinhardt does not appear to have any radically new ideas for the staging of the chorus departing drastically from the specifications of the 1908 stage directions. A possible exception is his color signification for the female costume, discussed earlier. The similarity of choices also extends to his outline of blocking, even though the spaces provided for the two productions were entirely different. As shown, Reinhardt originally probably intended to employ the set of the original production at the Grosses Schauspielhaus. On the evidence of his diagrams for the first act, the staircase is reserved for the exclusive use of the women, just as is

---

155 R., p. 39.

156 R., p. 32.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

described in the stage directions of the adaptation.[157] Likewise, in contrast to all other characters who are confined to the base of the staircase, women have the flexibility to use both spaces.[158] Even the direction of entrances and exits is generally left unchanged in the Regiebuch.[159]

Apparently then, there is close similarity between the choral conception of the 1920 production, as outlined in the Regiebuch and its interpretation in the 1908 production, as inferred from the stage directions. This suggests that Reinhardt did not approach the revival from a new perspective, but rather, sought conservatively to repolish the original production. The employment of the same costumes and the original intention to use the same set also argue for a close similarity in conception between the two productions. Obviously, some readjustment must have been necessary to adapt Lysistrata to the new set. Possibly the choral orchestration was more elaborate in 1920. Indeed, Einar Nilson, a composer and close associate of Reinhardt, mentions that musical sounds were used to the limit at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, as the vastness of the space required filling.[160] Perhaps in response to this concern, Reinhardt commissioned a new score for the revival from Freidrich Hollaender. However, he eventually used the original score.[161] Music for the 1908 production had been written by E. Humperdinck, a pupil of Wagner. It was composed

---

157 See R, pp. 17, 19 and 20.

158 For example, the elderly chorus and Proboulos are at the base of the staircase, as is indicated in R., pp. 42, 44 and 50. In the first act, women are both on the steps, as in R, pp. 12, 16, 19 and 30, as well as on the ground area, as in R, pp. 17, 20, 28, 30, 44 and 50.

159 See for example, entrances of: Lysistrata, R. p. 9; Kalonica, R. p. 9; elderly chorus, R. p. 37.

160 Einar Nilson, "Music under Reinhardt," in Oliver Sayler, ed., Max Reinhardt and his Theatre (New York: Brentano, 1924), pp. 124-130.

161 Hans Tessner, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for a small orchestra of blow instruments.[162]

The hypothesis on the similarity between the original staging and the revival will later be tested against the evidence of the two productions' critical reception. On both occasions, Lysistrata was warmly received by the public. The Kammerspiele 1908 production reopened the following year on October 5, running a total of 76 performances. No doubt, the success at home was the main incentive for including the production in the international tours of Reinhardt's company, in 1909 and 1910. In 1920, the original Lysistrata had left a memory of a dazzling success.[163] The revival opened at the Grosses Schauspielhaus on June 11, 1920, as the grand summer finale of the season.[164] Lysistrata held the stage for 55 performances and was considered "pure joy, more entertaining than any other comedy offered in Berlin during those months."[165] There was manic, thunderous clapping at the theatre of the three thousand.[166] Moreover, the audience would persistently call for Reinhardt to appear on the stage at the end of the performance, every night.[167] Critics, too, were favorable towards both productions. Their enthusiasm though, was qualified and more restrained.

In 1908, there is consensus that the greatest problem in staging Aristophanes is

---

162 Fuhrich-Leisler, Edda and Gisela Prossnitz, Max Reinhardt in America (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1976), p. 186.

163 Conrad Schmidt, "Lysistrata," Vorwärts, 12 June 1920.

164 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

165 Walther Volbach, "Memoirs of Max Reinhardt's Theatres 1920-1922," Theatre Survey 8 (Fall 1972): p. 24.

166 See P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920; Fritz Engel, "Grosses Schauspielhaus, 'Lysistrata,'" Berliner Tageblatt, 13 June 1920; Fritz Köpp, "Lysistrata," Die Post, 12 June 1920.

167 Fritz Köpp, "Lysistrata," Die Post, 12 June 1920; Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his gross, licentious humor.[168] Critics appreciate that the uninhibited expression of the original has immediacy, clarity and innocence. Faithful translation of the robust satire though, renders it vulgar, or at least unfit for production.[169] The alternative of translating the original freely, circumventing the lewdness, is considered hazardous. Willbrandt's free translation of Lysistrata, mentioned earlier, was criticized for sacrificing the original's humor.[170] Sexual jokes had been purified to the point that they had become unrecognizable and grossly farcical scenes had been removed. The translation illustrated the danger of the purifying approach. As the critic of the Berliner Morgenpost vividly explained, by overpolishing the play's hue, one is eventually left only with the scaffolding.[171]

Critics tend to focus uniquely on the appropriation of licentiousness in a modern context, ignoring other central features of Attic comedy. Strikingly, they are totally unconcerned about the chorus' viability in modern versions of Lysistrata. While the chorus is ignored, the Kinesias episode is unanimously regarded as the play's most brilliant scene: it is "a timeless, imperishable specimen of human eroticism."[172] Its

---

168 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908; Norbert Falk, "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908; Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

169 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria; Norbert Falk, "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908; "Kunst und Wissenschaft," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

170 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria; "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908; "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

171 "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908.

172 "Theater und Musik," Reichsbote, 29 February 1908.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

grotesque erotic humor is considered "unsurpassed in world literature."[173] Obviously, critics are attracted to this scene for its closeness to the modern dramatic sensibility. Indeed, this is one of the play's very few episodes in which the chorus does not participate in the action.

As a free, purified translation, Greiner's Lysistrata is considered bolder and more vivid than Willbrandt's earlier version.[174] There is consensus on the satisfactory adaptation of the Kinesias scene. Still, Greiner's work is not humorous enough. His sweetened style is criticized for failing to capture the Aristophanic pungency. Thus, the critic of the Vossische Zeitung has little sympathy for Greiner's free fantasizing, "which now tends towards the operetta and now is garbed in suffocating romanticism."[175] Both styles are foreign and inferior to the original's "naive and blunt satire."[176] Scenes not readily amenable to sensualization, such as the choral battle, are closer to the original and therefore more successful. As the critic amusingly remarks, there is no way the showering of the old men can be sensualized. The critic of the Berliner Morgenpost similarly finds that Lysistrata has been oversweetened.[177] He remarks ironically that Greiner has replaced the pungent jokes with "drawing room piquancy," achieving at best only "conventional equivocation and feeble embellishment."[178]

The mise en scène was received primarily as a dazzling spectacle. "Never

---

173 "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908.

174 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria; "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

175 "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

176 Ibid.

177 "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908.

178 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

before. in the 2,300 years of its existence, has Aristophanic comedy been produced with such grandeur," concluded the critic of the Berliner Börsenblatt.[179] He presents Lysistrata as a popular show, directed towards the large public.[180] Effects aim at impressing the audience and at creating a sensuous atmosphere. Yet the critic respectfully admits that the mise en scène is in good taste, rich and original. Max Epstein disagrees that the production was tasteful and artistically sound. In his book on Reinhardt, published in 1918, he maintains that the director sacrificed artistic principles to the goal of achieving a great box office success.[181] Following his tactic in mounting popular operettas, he filled Lysistrata with beautiful, sexy girls, and "substituted the charms of Aristophanes with delights of another kind."[182]

While no critic in 1908 was as extreme in criticizing the production as Epstein, many felt that the heavy emphasis on spectacle left much to be desired. Thus, in the Schaubühne, the production is vividly described as a hunt for wild boars, whose teeth have previously been extracted: painless and boring.[183] The reviewer recognizes the difficulty of moving and tastefully arranging crowds on the Acropolis. Yet he finds that Reinhardt lays too much emphasis on the Dionysian, intoxicating effect of colors and forms, to the detriment of exploring the play's spiritual values.[184] In the Vossische Zeitung, another lively metaphor is employed, to highlight the Lysistrata's shortcomings. The production is likened to a capricious game of the charming,

---

179 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

180 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

181 Max Epstein, Max Reinhardt (Berlin: Winckelmann und Soehne, 1918).

182 Ibid., pp. 107-108.

183 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908.

184 A similar opinion is expressed in "Kunst und Wissenschaft," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sparkling muses, who vainly flirt with their admirers, only to let them down in the end.[185] The ancient play is a comedy, yet the production offers little successful satire. The desire to impress has led to an overloading of the production with effects, obfuscating the play's comic features.

Lysistrata's spectacular effects were wholly credited to the theatrical presence of the female multitude. In Bühne und Welt, the critic remarks that the play's protagonist is not Lysistrata, as the title implies, but the female mass.[186] There were about 60 women in the chorus, who evidently had little relation to Aristophanes' earthy wives. Rather, they resembled more etherial ballerinas. "Not one of these women could have been regarded capable of running a proper household. They were ballerinas, wailing for their woes in clothes of high taste," commented the critic of Schaubühne with annoyance.[187]

Still, even though reserved about the production's emphasis on dazzle, most reviewers were charmed by the spectacle. Beautiful, stylized images swiftly followed one another, creating the effect of continuous mobility.[188] The women "would now revolt obstinately, in imposing cohesion, and the very next moment they would flutter around like a startled swarm of pigeons."[189] They would swirl in space, "coquettishly laughing and prattling in a meddle," while at other times they would

---

185 "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

186 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

187 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908; see also "Kunst und Wissenschaft," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

188 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

189 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emit "an elemental orgiastic cry."[190] The movement of the veils is noted with delight by many critics: "The folding, unfolding and waving of the 100 fine, polychrome silk veils is truly intoxicating in colorfulness."[191]

Critics recognize that the chorus has been carefully choreographed and orchestrated. Female movement is frequently described as balletic in style. Thus, the critic of the Berliner Börsen-Zeitung admires the "wonderfully designed, sophisticated ballet movements" women were making with their colorful mantles.[192] They would wrap themselves up in them coquettishly or wave them in the wind. Ostensibly random vocal effects are the result of complex orchestration: "the intensity of the babel of voices, rising and subsiding, the passionate outbursts are all musically synchronized."[193] Synchronization is also obviously apparent in the rarer moments when the chorus articulated in unison, "sharply and clearly." The vocal sound gave the impression of coming from a single mouth.[194]

Bruno Walter, was highly impressed by Lysistrata's orchestration. He recognizes a kinship to Reinhardt, characterizing him "a conductor .. of actors:" "[He] has exactly the same intention that I have when I conduct a musical piece and strive to convey its atmosphere and style."[195] Lysistrata is analyzed as a model of

---

190 Ibid.

191 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908. See also Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria; "Kunst und Wissenschaft," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

192 Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

193 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

194 Ibid.

195 "Gesprach über Max Reinhardt mit Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Alfred Roller und Bruno Walter, 1910," in Hugo Fetting, ed., Max Reinhardt Schriften (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1974), p. 384.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reinhardt's "excellent rhythmic sense."[196] The director approaches the drama as a symphony, making sure to scale the dynamic of rhythm, even to the most delicate point. Walter is particularly fascinated by Reinhardt's musical approach to speech. He singles out the old men's refrain, "only do not shake, only with a steady pace," for its "pulsating rhythm."[197] The articulation is so sharp and skillfully forged, that the words "have the effect of a grotesque military march."[198]

Another noteworthy feature of Lysistrata for Walter is "a hovering between speech and a rudimentary type of melody which rises to a sonorous accordo at peak points, as in the address 'Pallas Athena,' during the oath."[199] In his analysis of Reinhardt's choral direction, Berthold Held mentions an additional interesting effect frequently employed in Lysistrata: unexpected happy or sad news would cause "a paralysis."[200] "Bodies are immobile, voices are stuck; then, after a pause of relaxation, the situation is resolved with a shout or a sudden laughter or laughter that begins timidly and climaxes, becoming unrestrained."[201] Clearly, the sophisticated vocal and visual choral effects encountered in the Regiebuch were already in place in the original production.

The German interpretation's emphasis on the erotic theme was expressed by a grand, overwhelmingly impressive choral finale. All choruses were present on stage, manifesting "the many and varied emotions of the inhabitants of the delivered city,

---

196 Ibid.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid.

199 Ibid.

200 Berthold Held, "Massenregie," in Hugo Fetting, ed., Max Reinhardt Schriften (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1974), p. 375.

201 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which has been handed back to Eros."[202] Huntly Carter has left a vivid description of the finale, considered, in the pre-war period, as "the high-watermark of Reinhardt's stagecraft:"[203]

> Colours race all over the scene, lines (formed of dancers) advance and recede, entwine, break and joyously melt away. There are shouts of laughter, singing and every expression of pent-up emotion. In the background, at a distance, are seen the lights of the condemned town: from afar come cries and murmurs, mixed with laughter and shouting, which gradually increase until they merge with the others in one mighty climax of joy, and the curtain falls on one of the finest pantomimic climaxes provided by Reinhardt.

In her memoirs, Helene von Nostitz, Hofmannsthal's friend and correspondent, draws an entirely different picture of the finale. She presents it as more visionary and etherial. Interestingly, she gives no sense of the abundance of effects which impressed Carter: "suddenly, he [Reinhardt] sent hundreds of pairs of garlanded lovers streaming down the high staircase. On and on, into eternity it seemed, the long train descended and filled the world with love and beauty."[204]

Commentary on the choral performance was almost uniquely focused on the women, in the reviews. The elderly chorus is hardly mentioned. A broadly farcical, grotesque style had been adopted for the old men, which contrasted to the aestheticized stylization of the female ensemble. The critic of the B. Z. am Mittag found that rambunctiousness aptly and timely balanced stylization, preventing the production from becoming monotonous.[205] The female chorus was also given priority

---

202 Huntly Carter, The Theatre of Max Reinhardt (London: Frank and Cecil Palmer, 1914), p. 220.

203 Ibid.

204 Cited in Gottfried Reinhardt, The Genius: A Memoir of Max Reinhardt by His Son (New York: Knopf, 1979), pp. 70-71.

205 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the reviews, over the discussion of the principal parts. At the opening, these were all held by notable actors of Max Reinhardt's theatres. For the duration of the production at the Kammerspiele, an average of three actors in succession supported each of the play's speaking parts.

Originally, Lysistrata was played by Gertrud Eysoldt, a gifted actress who had worked with Reinhardt since the days of the Kleines theatre. Her most memorable parts had been Puck, in Midsummer Night's Dream, Electra in Hofmannsthal's version of the Sophoclean tragedy and Lulu, in Wedekind's Earth Spirit and Pandora's Box.[206] In the role of Lysistrata, Eysoldt is described as "spirited, cheerful, vivacious, mobile."[207] She is frequently likened to a cat, to highlight the physical flexibility and shrewdness she brought to the part: "This stealthy, cat-like lying in watch, is particularly suited to this actress. Her mobile game captures the eye, yet it is always artistically sound; Eysoldt knows how to artistically justify the expansion of her gestures."[208]

The swift, cat-like Lysistrata was not perceived as a comic character. Among the women, it was Hedwig Wangel, as Lampito, who stole all the laughs. She played the Spartan woman in a grossly exaggerated, grotesque style, comically emphasizing the character's masculinity.[209] Her low pitched, coarse voice, was effectively employed in the choral parts to create a comical, contrastive effect to the

---

206 Walther Volbach, "Memoirs of Max Reinhardt's Theatres 1920-1922," Theatre Survey 8 (Fall 1972): p. 87.

207 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

208 "Theater und Musik," Reichsbote, 29 February 1908. See also "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908; "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

209 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

harmonious feminine prosody of the ensemble.[210] In Bühne und Welt she is praised for conveying best of all actors the tone of Aristophanic burlesque.[211] The critic of Vossishe Zeitung, however, perhaps more aptly makes a modern reference: "Over the stout Spartan hovered the spirit of Offenbach."[212]

Even though the parts of Proboulos, Sosias and Philurgos were played by competent comic actors, they were not perceived as particularly amusing. The tempting of Kinesias was unanimously regarded as the production's most successful comical scene. Critics praise it for admirably balancing boldness with decency and restraint.[213] Sentimentality is paired with recklessness, coyness with bacchic intoxication.[214] The two partners functioned effectively and contrasted with one another. R. Schildkraut played Kinesias in an exaggerated, broadly farcical style. "He was hopping all around, like a satire who has swallowed Spanish flies (!)."[215] Indeed, the actor's likeness to a satyre is commonly emphasized in the reviews. C. Eibenschütz as Myrrhina tempered excess with refined grace and coquettishness. She was "as charming as she was decent and in this way she prevented the particularly daring scene of the cave from becoming offensive."[216]

Strangely enough, Stern's innovative set did not attract much attention in the reviews. There are no comments on the architectural conception of the grand

---

210 Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

211 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

212 "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908.

213 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908; "Theater und Music," Vossische Zeitung, 28 February 1908; "Theater und Musik," Reichsbote, 29 February 1908.

214 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908.

215 "Aristophanes bei Reinhardt," Berliner Morgenpost, 28 February 1908.

216 "Theater und Musik," Reichsbote, 29 February 1908.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

staircase. The reason for this, is probably that the actual construction did not give the impression of being three dimensional. The emphasis on colorfulness and decorative features made the citadel look unreal, like a toy cut out of paper. Thus the critic of Schaubühne admires "the Acropolis made of cardboard."[217] Similarly, in the B. Z. am Mittag it is mentioned that "The walls and columns lacked solidity: they were not of stone and metal but of cardboard and glossy paper. Especially the side buildings, dangerously risked comparison to cut out paper models in a child's room, or to Chinese trinkets."[218] Apparently, the vivid colors chosen for the set contributed to this impression.[219] The structure probably also failed to appear architectural on account of its disproportionate dimensions. The narrowness of the space forced the perspective to develop vertically. The height of the structure was out of measure, creating the impression the staircase was just "jutting out" of the building.[220]

In spite of appearances then, Stern's set is not intimately related to the innovative architectural work of Craig. In his study on Max Reinhardt, Carl Niessen points out that the staircase was a familiar element in the baroque theatre of the period.[221] He appears to regard the structure as remarkable solely on account of its dizzying height: "Never before had we seen on stage such an Acropolis, protruding on top of an

---

217 "Lysistrata," Schaubühne, 5 March, 1908.

218 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

219 Ibid.

220 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

221 Carl Niessen, "Max Reinhardt und seine Bühnenbildner," in Knut Boeser and Renata Vatkova, eds., Max Reinhardt in Berlin (Berlin: Frolich and Kaufmann, 1984) pp. 228-237.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

immense staircase."[222] Similarly to contemporary critics, Niessen does not appreciate the set as an architectural construct. The staircase is merely regarded as a device for increasing spectacular effect: "One couldn't have one's fill of spectacle when the women, with their members dimly showing through the sexy clothes are furiously moving about on the steps."[223]

Even though critics mention that all action is set on the staircase, they do not discuss this structure as an integral element of the play's interpretation: "The very mobile and the occasionally less tumultuous scenes, all take place on these steps: masses swirl up and down."[224] Similarly, in Bühne und Welt it is mentioned that "in front and on the steps of the ... protruding staircase, unfolds the war of the sexes."[225] Unfortunately, these references are too general. They do not allow for an identification of patterns of scene movement on the steps.

To sum up, the original production was appreciated as a rich, tasteful spectacle, rather than as a hearty comedy. Even though critics had reservations over whether Reinhardt's Lysistrata aptly expressed the Aristophanic spirit, they were generally charmed by his desire to impress. Central emphasis in the reviews fell on elaborate descriptions of the sophisticated choral direction. The effectiveness of comic episodes was generally limited, with the exception of the Kinesias scene, perceived as the production's crowning comic highlight.

Allowing for minor adjustments to the immense space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus, the revival was composed of the same ingredients as the original production. However, the attitude of critics towards Lysistrata's spectacular effects

---

222 Ibid. p. 229.

223 Ibid.

224 "Vor den Kulissen," Berliner Börsenblatt, 28 February 1908.

225 Bühne und Welt 1907/1908, p. 514, file on Lysistrata, Max Reinhardt Forschungs und Gedenkstaette, Salzburg, Austria.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had changed in 1920. Admiration is now set at a distance and is even ironically undermined. Yet overall the production is judged to be entertaining. Indeed, perhaps it was more comical than in 1908.

The critic of Berliner Tageblatt generously characterizes the revival as "a juicy roasted meat on the silver tray of joy."[226] Similarly, in Vorwärts, it is judged that "the mirth and cheerfulness of this impertinent Aristophanic comedy ... were brilliantly expressed in Reinhardt's production ..."[227] Lysistrata's high spirits even succeeded in "warming," for the first time since its founding, the Grosses Schauspielhaus.[228] The immensity of the space was well suited to the broadly farcical acting style adopted for the comic scenes. This was combined with the etherial, romanticized mise en scène of the sexy female chorus, producing a mixture that readily brought to mind theatrical popular genres of the period.

In 1920, critics clearly and without any hesitation describe Reinhardt's Lysistrata as a light, amusing show for mass consumption. Analogies to popular spectacles are frequent and range in scope from Offenbach and Viennese operetta to the circus. Thus, the critic of Tägliche Rundschau vehemently accuses Reinhardt of having turned Lysistrata into "an Offenbachiade."[229] The groupings of beautiful girls reveal a trafficking of eroticism while the comic antics "exude the stench of the stable."[230] Though amusing, the farcing and the clowning has denuded Attic comedy of its sublimity. Aristophanes has been brought down to the level of the circus arena. The

---

226 Fritz Engel, "Grosses Schauspielhaus. 'Lysistrata,'" Berliner Tageblatt, 13 June 1920.

227 Conrad Schmidt, "Lysistrata," Vorwärts, 12 June 1920.

228 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

229 "Aristophanes im Grossen Schauspielhaus," Tägliche Rundschau, 12 June, 1920.

230 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

critic of 8 Uhr Abendblatt is more congenial. The production's spirited finale reminded him of "good Viennese operetta."[231] "Perhaps the Aristophanes that Greiner and Reinhardt have produced has really been created by Lehàr," he speculates.[232]

Greiner's text is aptly likened to a libretto. Thus, the critic of the Neue Berliner Zeitung remarks that Lysistrata has been shaped into "a dramaturgical libretto for Reinhardt's particular use."[233] The director is viewed as a composer: "He composes music, for this libretto, ... tailoring it to the bodies and movements of hundreds of beautiful women. He has them wailing for the man, cheering, wining flirting, jumping and dancing."[234] Obviously, this rigmarole is a long way from Attic comedy. The critic sarcastically concludes, referring to Aristophanes, "Poet, dig up your grave, you are superfluous."[235]

The dramaturgical tailoring of the text to the requirements of the mise en scène was a major feature of Greiner's adaptation. However, this point was not brought up by reviewers in 1908. Perhaps it became more obvious in 1920, in the context of the production's comparisons to operetta. For the rest, the critics' attitude towards the adaptation remained unaltered after the war. Reactions range from tepid praise for avoiding the original's vulgarity, to criticism for distorting the robust Aristophanic

---

231 "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" 8 Uhr Abendblatt, 12 June 1920.

232 Ibid.

233 Leo Rein, "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" Neue Berliner Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

spirit.[236]

The omission of the original's choral passages is still ignored or tersely regarded as "entirely justified."[237] This is perhaps strange, considering that critics in 1920 are dissatisfied with Reinhardt's conception of the female chorus. Women are ironically presented as society ladies, dressed "according to the best fashion magazine of antiquity,"[238] "who view in war only an annoying disruption of life's pleasures."[239] The female meeting is just too long and boring and the effect of the vivid chatting is "hypnotic."[240] Another complaint was that the rhythmic conception of the female chorals was unsatisfactory: "the wining of the chorus — there is no articulation — sounds unnatural. It has destroyed the charming versification of Aristophanes ..."[241]

The critic of Vossishe Zeitung is bored and impatient with the women's eurhythmics.[242] He points out ironically that Reinhardt has measured out all possibilities in steps. Yet the gentle beckoning and waving are foreign to the coarseness of the original Aristophanic spirit. The spicy girls have more affinity to the London Music Hall and could have made "any [its] frequenters among the audience feel at home."[243] Similarly, in the B. Z. am Mittag, an apt comparison is

---

236 See for example, Fritz Engel, "Grosses Schauspielhaus. 'Lysistrata,'" Berliner Tageblatt, 13 June 1920; Monty Jacobs, "Lysistrata," Vossische Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

237 Conrad Schmidt, "Lysistrata," Vorwärts, 12 June 1920. See also Leo Rein. "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" Neue Berliner Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

238 "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" 8 Uhr Abendblatt, 12 June 1920.

239 Conrad Schmidt, "Lysistrata," Vorwärts, 12 June 1920.

240 "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" 8 Uhr Abendblatt, 12 June 1920.

241 "Aristophanes im Grossen Schauspielhaus," Tägliche Rundschau, 12 June, 1920.

242 Monty Jacobs, "Lysistrata," Vossische Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

243 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

drawn to Offenbach's Belle Hélène.[244] Lysistrata, standing out in the sea of female heads is directly reminiscent of the operetta's diva among the chorus girls. Stretching the comparison further, the critic finds that Else Heims, who played Lysistrata in 1920 was graceful and even forward enough to be Helen.[245]

Indeed, Heims is also praised by other reviewers for her grace and "regal posture."[246] Eysoldt's intensely physical, feline mobility appears to have been replaced by a more poised approach to the role. Some critics found this distasteful. In the 8 Uhr Abendblatt, Heims' correct, clear articulation and her charming batting of the eyelashes are made fun of.[247] Lysistrata appears just like a well brought up pupil of a private school. In Reichsbote, Heims is criticized for interpreting her role in the "thrivingly mischievous tone of Shakespearean comedies."[248] As a result, Lysistrata at times sounds like a governess, while at others, she gives the impression of calling friends, lost in the forest.[249]

The most appreciated actor in the revival was Emil Jannings, who played Kinesias. He let his character "spread on acres upon acres of humor,"[250] winning the audience's heartiest laughter and applause.[251] His acting style combined clowning, grotesque, burlesque and buffonic features. The actor exuded boisterous

---

244 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

245 Ibid.

246 Fritz Köpp, "Lysistrata," Die Post, 12 June 1920. See also Conrad Schmidt, "Lysistrata," Vorwärts, 12 June 1920; Hans Tessner, "Die 'Lysistrata' des Aristophanes," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

247 "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" 8 Uhr Abendblatt, 12 June 1920.

248 "Lysistrata," Reichsbote, 12 June 1920.

249 Ibid.

250 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

251 "Lysistrata," Reichsbote, 12 June 1920.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

physical energy in the role, prompting the reviewer of Reichsbote to comment, "Jannings was not a man but a bull."[252] Indeed, his performance also featured crawling on all fours and emitting inarticulate grunts.[253]

Critics delighted in describing his comical appearance. Over a red wig he wore a large metal helmet, richly decorated with "a forest of feathers."[254] He had an exaggerated bow-legged walk and appeared on stage holding a baby of rags clumsily in his arms. The bundle of rags was crying mysteriously, while he was desperately pressing it against his naked breast. "An ancient Greek of Daumier," commented the critic of the B. Z. am Mittag.[255] The reviewer of Reichsbote was reminded of Toto the clown, running around the circus arena with a doll, which he would suddenly throw at an audience member.[256] The scene of Kinesias demonstrated that clowning was ideally suited to the space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus, which had originally been a circus.[257]

The performance of other parts was unremarkable. Jannings overshadowed Else Eckersberg who played Myrrhina. Though charming in the role, she was not a strong enough partner for him. Philurgos and the chorus of old men were also generally ignored. An interesting comment in the B. Z. am Mittag, however, is that the elderly had the faces of Japanese masks.[258] In 8 Uhr Abendblatt it is tersely noted that the

---

252 Ibid.

253 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920; Monty Jacobs, "Lysistrata," Vossische Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

254 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

255 Ibid.

256 "Lysistrata," Reichsbote, 12 June 1920.

257 Ibid.

258 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

chorus of old men was once more amusing.[259] As in the original production, Proboulos was not interpreted successfully. Max Gülstorff who held this role was criticized for acting too spasmodically.[260]

However, P. Grätz was greatly appreciated in the miniscule part of Sosias. He is described as "exquisitely parsimonious"[261] and reminded critics of the Palisedenkart character he used to play at the Schall und Rauch cabaret.[262] L. Stein who played Lampito in the revival, was a weak substitute for the dynamic H. Wangel. The loss of Lysistrata's female comedian is noted with regret. As is vividly explained in the Vossishe Zeitung, within the pink cloud of the sugary chorus girls, Lampito's humor would have acted as a stomach tonic, preventing indigestion from too much pastry.[263]

Generally, critics found that the large space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus was better suited to presenting the Attic comedy than the Kammerspiele. After all, "Aristophanes did not write works of chamber room atmosphere" and Lysistrata was cramped at the Kammerspiele.[264] Aristophanes' broad, unrefined farcing could be very effectively projected at the larger space. Indeed, the Kinesias scene, in which Jannings exploited the possibilities of the arena space, giving full play to exaggerated, farcical acting, was extremely successful in the revival.

Mass scenes, too, were skillfully expanded at the Grosses Schauspielhaus. The new set, with its numerous constructions spread across the proscenium, gave the

---

259 "Theater und Kunst. 'Lysistrata,'" 8 Uhr Abendblatt, 12 June 1920.

260 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

261 Ibid.

262 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

263 Monty Jacobs, "Lysistrata," Vossische Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

264 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

impression of limitless width.[265] Reinhardt had exploited this effect, arranging the female chorus in an impressively vast area. Thus he had the women enter the Acropolis in numerous battle lines, spread all across the proscenium, creating a strong impression.[266] The set's tower was also effectively employed in performance to give the illusion of vast height. A woman, placed on guard at the top of the tower would shout the news of the men's arrival against a bright blue sky. The scene was admired for its beauty, and also appreciated as greatly entertaining.[267] For the finale, Reinhardt exploited the entire space of the theatre, as he had the men enter fiercely from the depths of the arena.[268] The floor of the thrust stage had been slanted, functioning as an obstacle to their ardent advance. These were novel touches, inspired by the space of the Grosses Schauspielhaus.[269]

Stern's architectural design did not receive much attention in the reviews. The critic of the Berliner Börsen-Zeitung comments negatively that the Acropolis was too bulky and "almost too pompous."[270] However, in Reichsbote it is mentioned that Stern had alleviated the austere architectural form of the set with the employment of planks and linen fabric.[271] These were prominently visible, as was also a thorny aloe bush surrounding the Acropolis.[272] In his memoirs, Volbach sides with the critic of

---

265 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

266 Monty Jacobs, "Lysistrata," Vossische Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

267 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

268 P. W., "Lysistrata," B. Z. am Mittag, 12 June 1920.

269 Emil Factor, "Lysistrata," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 12 June 1920.

270 Hans Tessner, "Die 'Lysistrata' des Aristophanes," Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 12 June 1920.

271 "Lysistrata," Reichsbote, 12 June 1920.

272 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reichsbote; he remembers Lysistrata's set as lightspirited in atmosphere rather than bulky: "Athens looked Greek, but in a slightly exaggerated manner, as though sketched with tongue in cheek."[273]

The critical survey of the 1920 production reveals that Reinhardt restaged the play relying on the central features of his original Lysistrata. On an architectural setting, he combined romanticized aesthetic effects with earthy robust humor, creating a unified production that was both spectacular and entertaining. The employment of the larger space was positively received; it allowed for the projection of scenes, enhancing Lysistrata's aesthetic and comic assets. Thus, even though the later staging closely followed the original conception, there was enough variation to ensure the revival's freshness. In 1920, humor was possibly more emphasized in production. In any case, it was more appreciated than the elaborate mise en scène of the female mass scenes, criticized for being too refined and foreign to the Aristophanic spirit. Spectacle had lost its dazzle.

Reinhardt was not put off by the ironic commentary. After all, no matter what the critics wrote, the revival was successful with the public. In 1930, the director was ready to restage Lysistrata as a grand spectacle. The production would be part of a musico-dramatic festival that would take place at the Hollywood Bowl, during the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Reinhardt submitted a proposal for the event with his collaborator, Einar Nilson.[274] The Attic comedy is combined in the program with performances of the Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as with a Mozart concert. Lysistrata's choruses were to include 200 women and 100 men. The project

---

273 Walther Volbach, "Memoirs of Max Reinhardt's Theatres 1920-1922." Theatre Survey 8 (Fall 1972): p. 24.

274 "Gründung der Kalifornischen festspiele: 'Ein Sommernachtstraum' auf drei Schauplätzen," in Edda Fuhrich-Leisler and Gisela Prossnitz, Max Reinhardt in America (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1973), pp. 180-188.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was finally not realized.

It is now time to go back to Hofmannsthal's Prologue, to establish whether the dramatist's promises to the audience were kept. The public of the premiere had been prepared for an experimental production, that would afford a uniquely theatrical, non-literary insight into Attic comedy. Even though not experimental, the production was indeed organized according to modernist theatrical principles. The dramatist's romantic interpretation of Aristophanes determined the central emphasis on playfulness in the adaptation. Significantly, playfulness also fulfilled the requirement of treating Lysistrata as a theatrical text, to be completed in performance. As promised, Lysistrata was a unified production, fully and effectively exploiting the entire apparatus of the stage, in interpretation. The production's theatricality and unity exemplified the central importance of the director in presenting an integrated interpretation of the play.

Reinhardt then was effective in producing Lysistrata within a modern theatrical framework. However, his interpretation distorted central features of the Attic comedy. The emphasis on unified impressionist effects is alien to the original's revue-like, episodic structure. Furthermore, impressionism aimed chiefly at spectacle, further disorienting the production from the robust comic flair of Aristophanes. Apparently, the impressionist aesthetic also obfuscated the set's architectural form. Moreover, the innovative staircase was centrally employed as a means of enhancing spectacular effect. The presence of the multitudes on stage contributed effectively to the same purpose.

Ironically, Reinhardt first removed almost all of the original's choral material and then cramped the stage with crowds, to compose beautiful pictures that have no relation to Attic comedy. The ancient chorus' significant political contribution to action has been totally ignored. The German interpretation totally shifted the play's focus from politics to eros. However, the Dionysian erotic fervor of choruses, is not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interesting enough: elemental passion has been romanticized to conform to the taste and ideology of the mainstream. In spite of the avant garde rhetoric in the prologue then, Reinhardt adopted a facile approach to Aristophanes, geared towards attracting the large public. Indeed, critics in 1920 clearly discerned this aim, aptly likening Reinhardt's Lysistrata to operetta and other popular genres.

In this respect, the German interpretation shares common features with the French. As discussed in the previous chapter, Donnay's Lysistrata too, has a strong kinship to popular genres. Indeed, it was even argued that the text has been directly influenced by Offenbach's Belle Hélène. Moreover, both adaptations have a common interpretative direction: they depoliticize the original, centrally emphasizing the appealing and innocuous theme of eros. As regards the mise en scène, spectacle was of major significance in both interpretations. Similarly to the German, French productions of Donnay's play made sure to include numerous beautiful girls in sexy, transparent clothes.

Similarities, however, should not obscure important differences between the two interpretations. In France, the Attic comedy was produced exactly like a typical play of the boulevard theatre, employing all the traditional devices for staging the genre. In spite of the objections raised earlier, Reinhardt's Lysistrata does reveal sensitivity to finding the appropriate style for staging the original. Indeed, the German production should be recognized as the first major attempt to stage Aristophanes in the modern theatre.

The arrangement of the play's action on the staircase did not aim solely at spectacle. It should also be viewed as an imaginative attempt to provide a modern space, in which the ancient comedy's playfulness can be theatrically viable. The emphasis on games, the incessant, dance-like mobility, the colorfulness of the set and the costumes are congenial to the child-like gaiety and cheerfulness of the original. Reinhardt's inspiration of combining exaggerated comic styles for some

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scenes also appears to be well suited to Aristophanes' gross, uninhibited humor. The satyr like Kinesias and even the grotesque elderly chorus were highly effective in providing robust entertainment. It is the romanticized spectacular effects that are foreign to the Aristophanic spirit. However, in spite of the distortion of the original choruses, Reinhardt must be credited for exploring ways the comedy's crowds could be effective on stage. As will be shown in the following chapters, whether faithful to the original or not, the director's choices were challenging and influential. With Lysistrata, Reinhardt had cast the die for theatrical experimentation with Attic comedy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

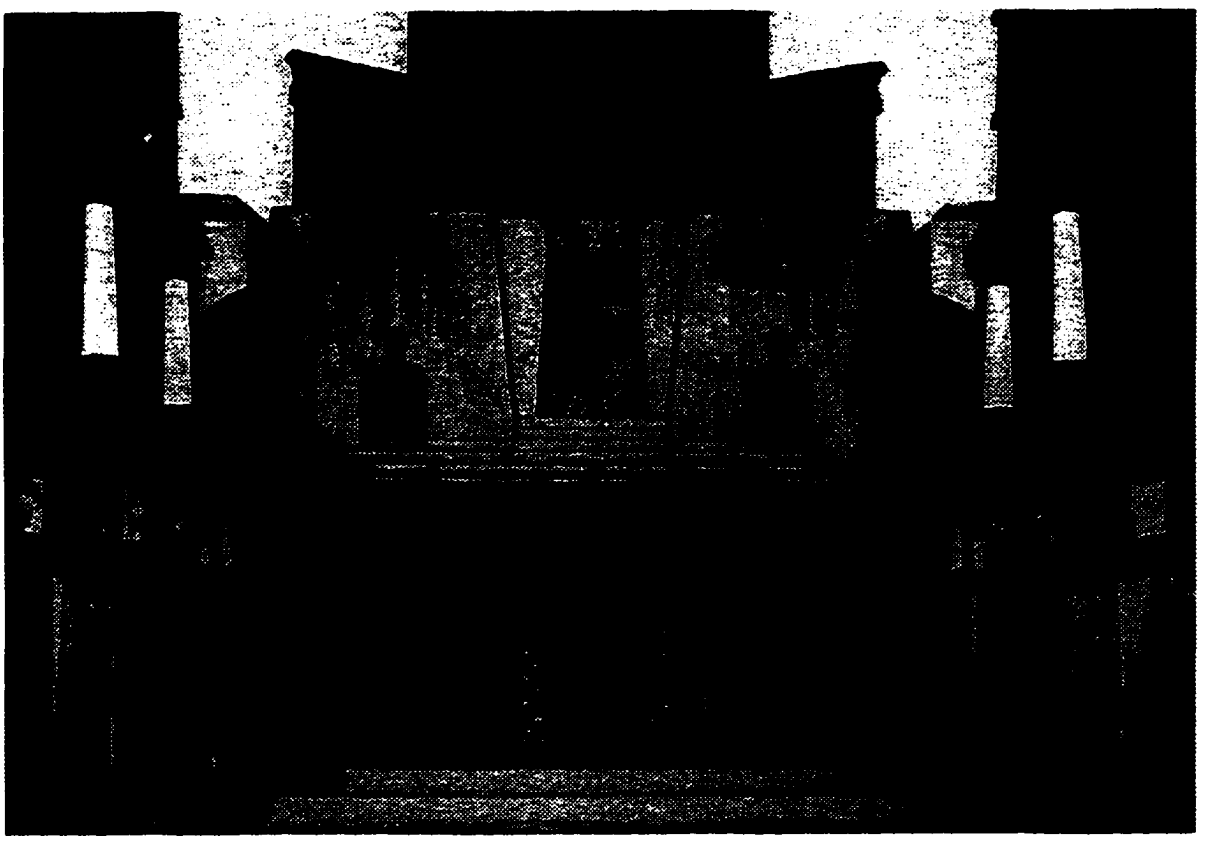

Fig. 2-1 The set design by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

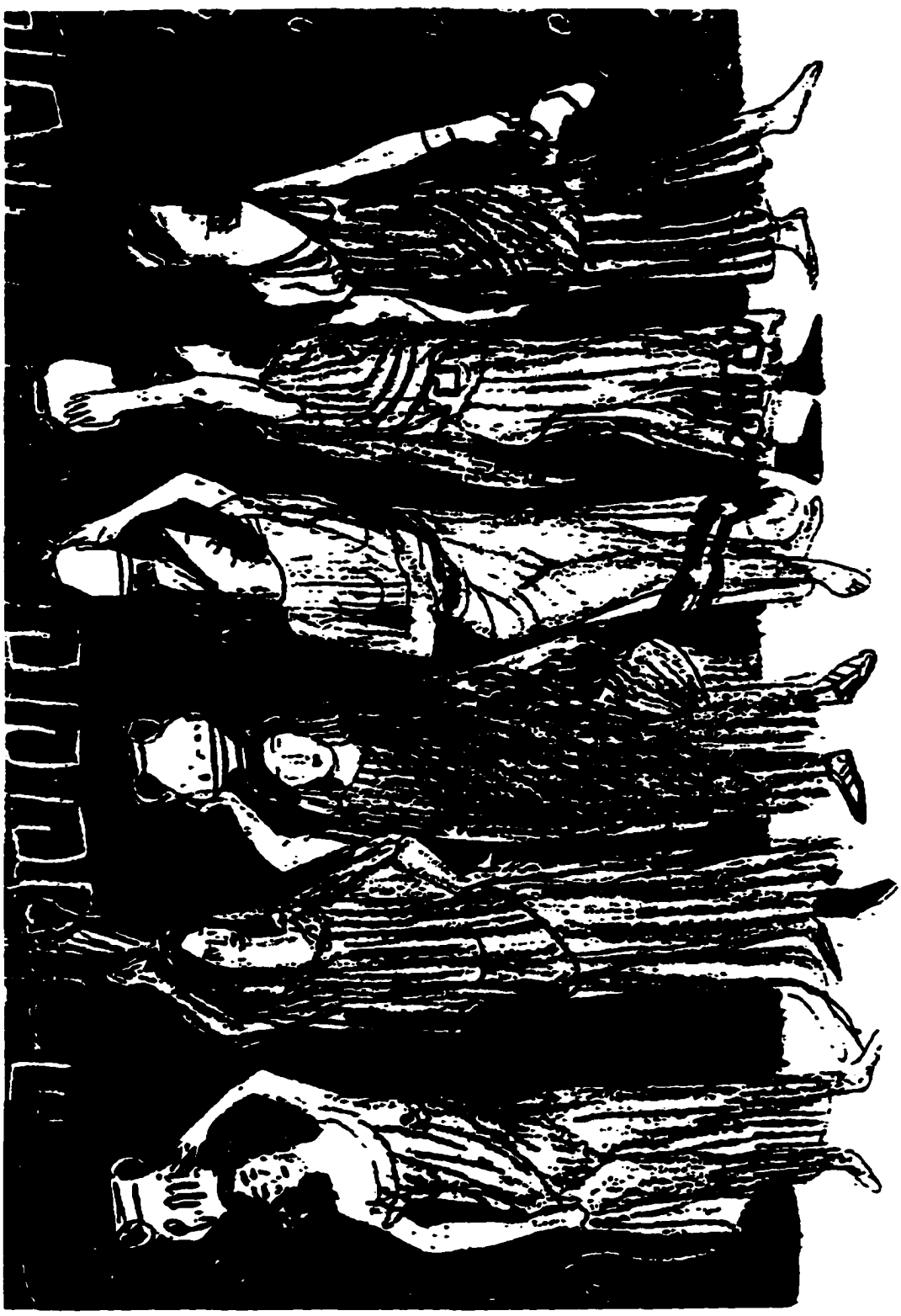

Fig. 2-2 Costume designs for the chorus women by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

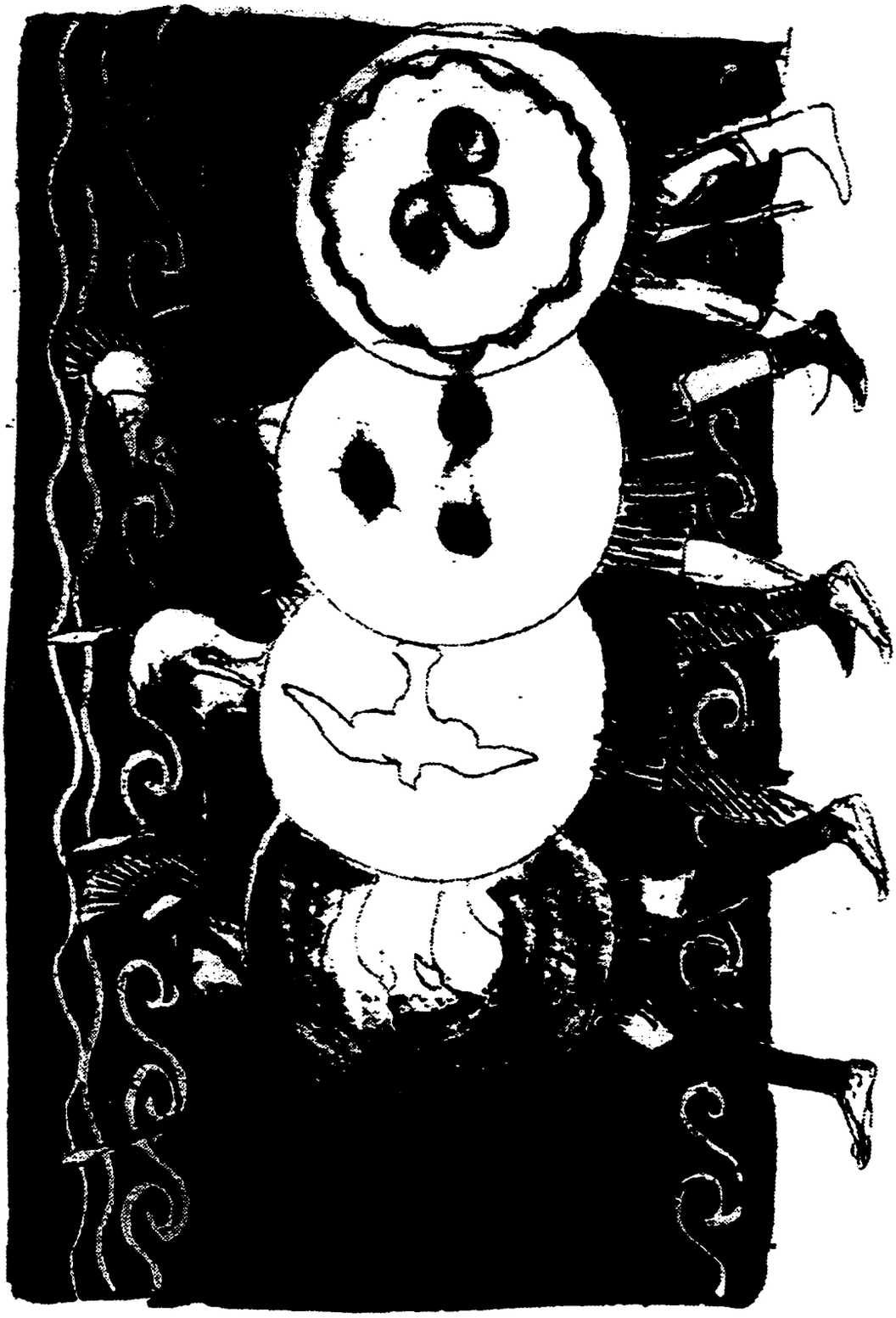

Fig 2-3 Costume designs for the warriors by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-4 Costume design for a female chorus leader by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig 2-5 Costume design for a female chorus leader by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-6 Costume design for a female chorus leader by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-7 Costume design for a market woman by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-8 Costume design for a market woman by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

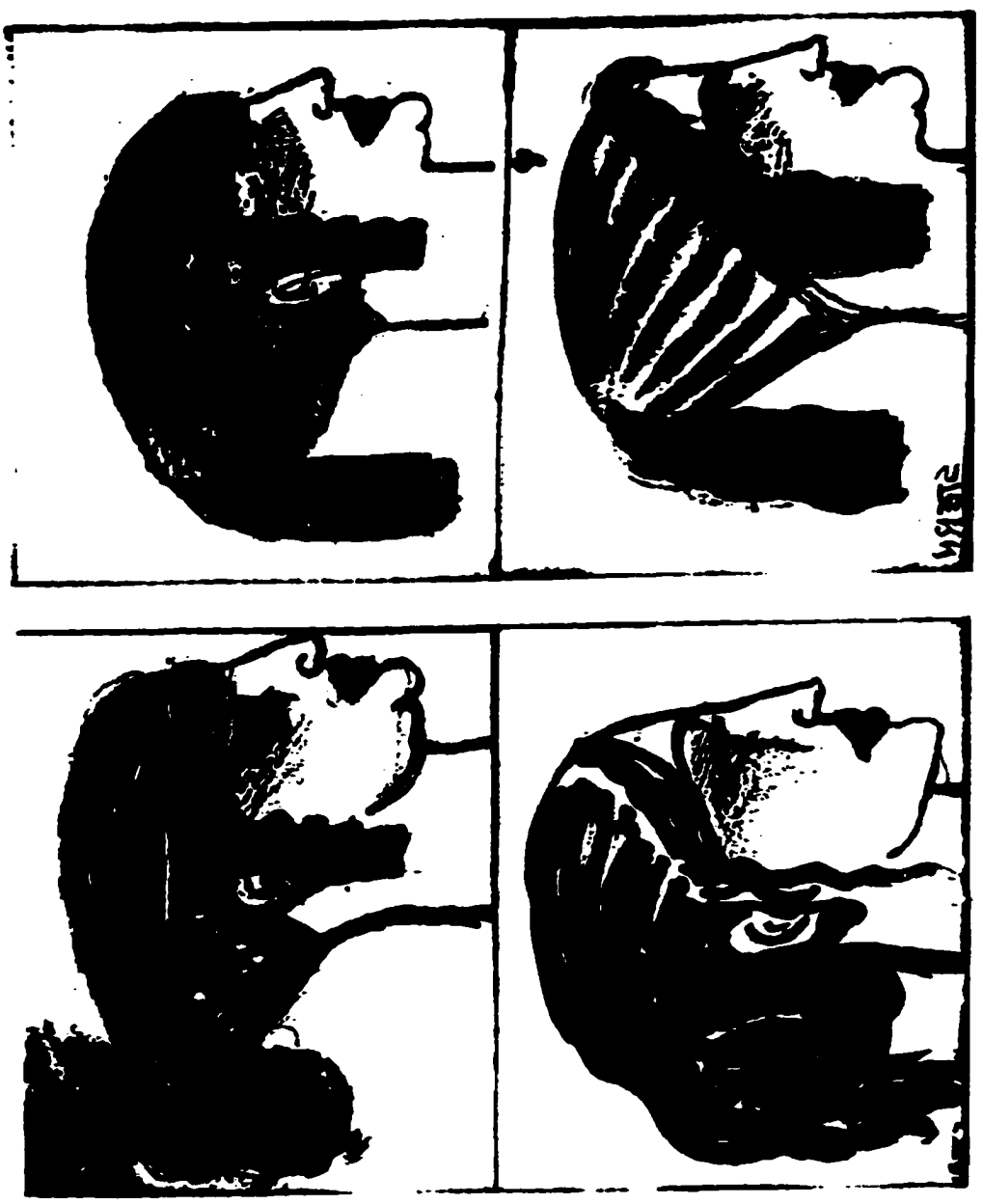

Fig. 2-9 Designs of female head-dresses by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-10 Costume design for the Proboulos by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-11 Costume design for a servant by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-12 Costume design for Kinesias by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-13 Costume design for Kinesias by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-14 Costume design for Manes, Kinesias' servant, by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-15 Costume design for a dancer by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-16 Costume design for a Spartan herald by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig 2-17 Costume design for a Spartan envoy by Ernst Stern, for Max Reinhardt's 1908 production of Lysistrata at the Kammerspiele. Pencil, pen and watercolor.

Fig. 2-18 Drawing conveying an impression of Lysistrata, by Ernst Stern. Pencil, pen and watercolor (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-19 Drawing conveying an impression of the first choral battle in Lysistrata, by Ernst Stern (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2-20 Drawing conveying an impression of choral battle in Lysistrata, by Ernst Stern (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

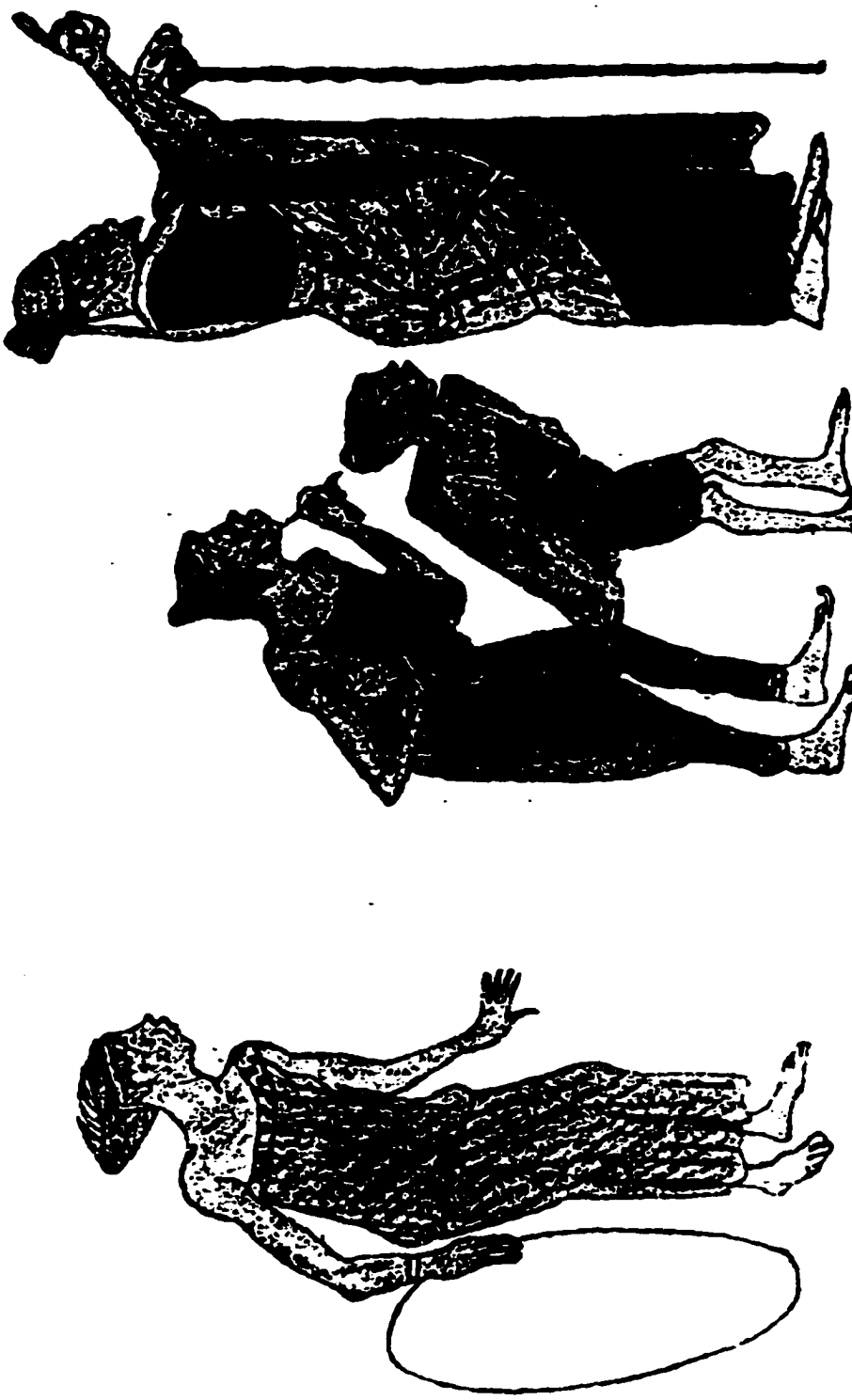

Fig. 2-21 Drawing of figures inspired by Lysistrata, by Ernst Stern (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lyſiſtrata: Figurinen

Fig. 2-22 Drawing of figures inspired by Lysistrata, by Ernst Stern. (1908).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

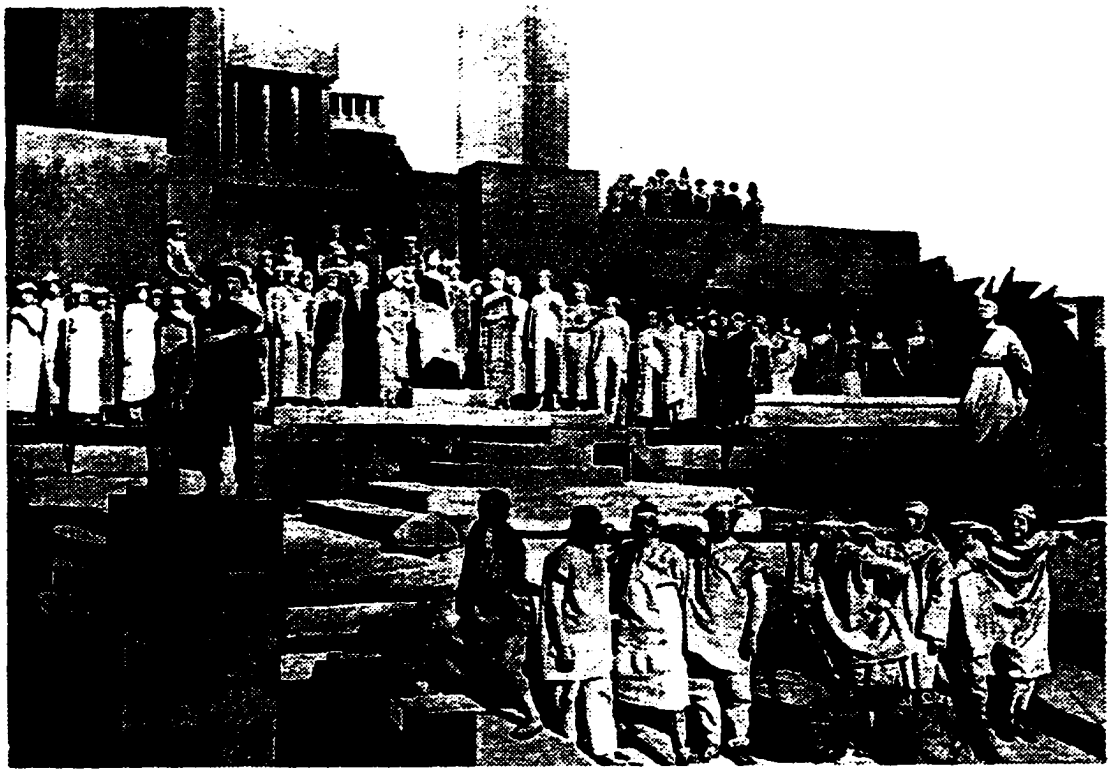

Fig. 2-23 Scene from Max Reinhardt's 1920 production of Lysistrata at the Grosses Schauspielhaus.

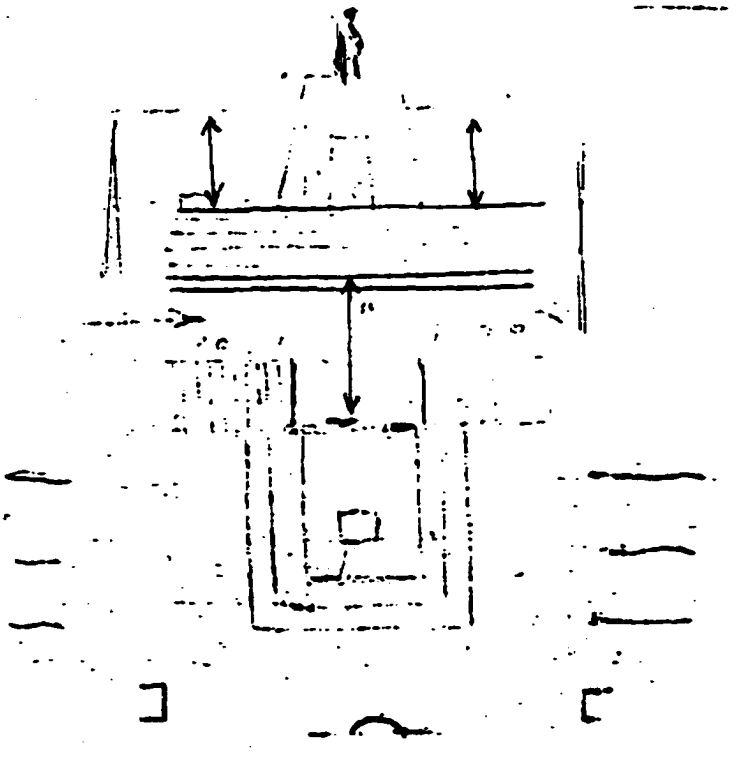

Fig. 2-24 Drawing of the spatial configuration for Lysistrata, by Max Reinhardt, from the director's promptbook for the 1920 production.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

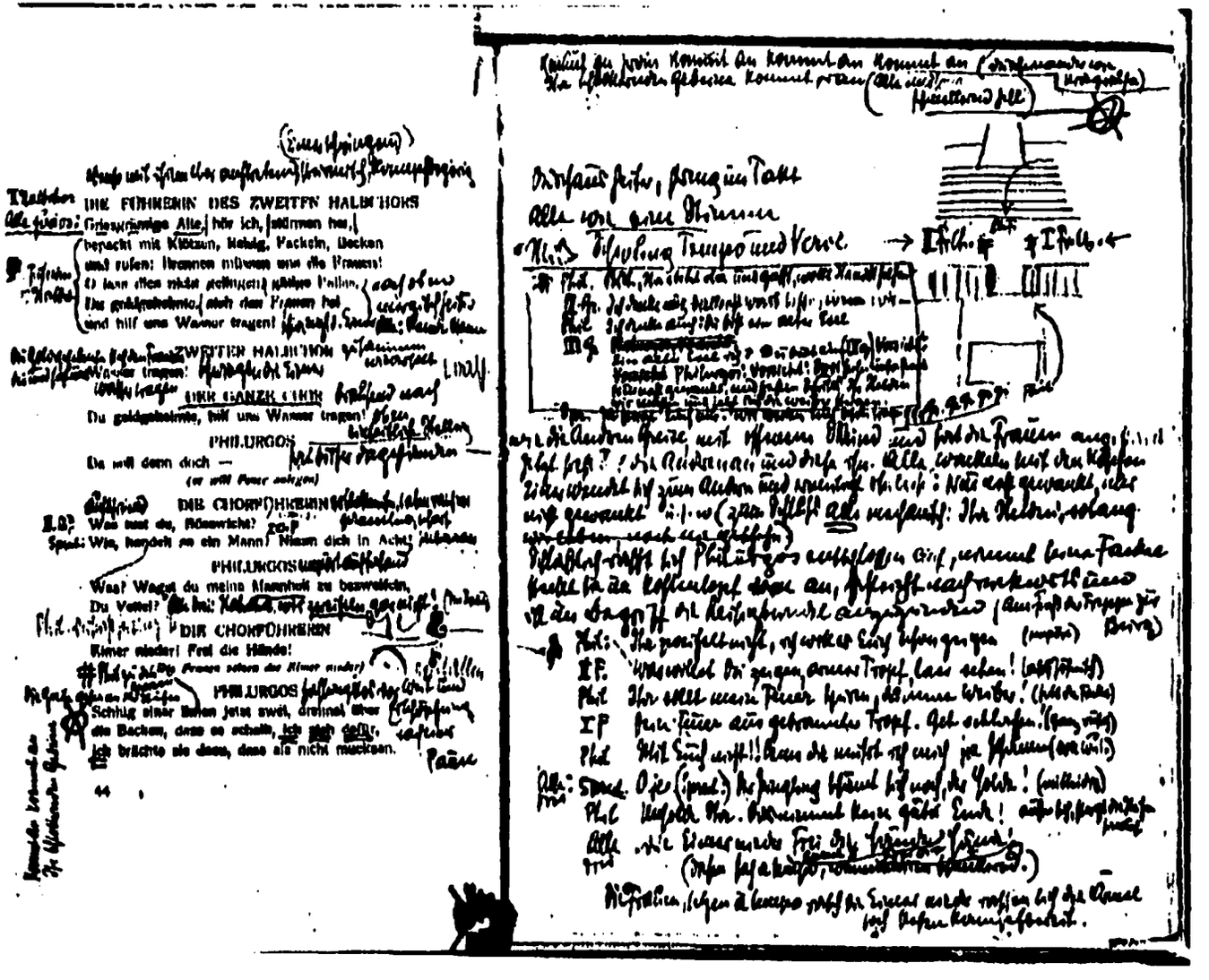

Fig. 2-25 Sample of Max Reinhardt's annotation in the Lysistrata promptbook for the 1920 production.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter III

Lysistrata as Théâtre du Peuple: The Impact of the Soviet Revolution

On May 16 1925, Lunacharsky, the first People's Commissar of Education of the newly founded Soviet Union sent a glowing letter "To the National Artist of the Republic, Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko,"[1] praising his work as director of the Moscow Art Theatre's Musical Studio. In particular, he singled out Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata production as "an achievement of very great importance," adding "The reviewers on our daily newspapers did not fully comprehend its importance, but of course it will be understood by the historians of our contemporary theatre."[2]

Modern Western scholarship on the Soviet theatre has generally ignored this production without apologies. I intend to show that Lysistrata was indeed a project of major significance, not only to the stage history of Aristophanes' plays but also to the development of the Soviet theatre in the 1920s. The production will be presented as an exemplary model of the new revolutionary theatre, especially as envisioned by Lunacharsky, the official representative of state policy on culture at the time. Indeed, Lysistrata exhibits remarkable evidence of the right wing theatre's convergence towards the left in the Soviet period, opening up interesting paths for future research. I also argue that Lysistrata deserves greater attention in the West as the Moscow Art Theatre's (MAT) first successful attempt to respond to the aesthetic and ideological concerns of the early post-revolutionary period. This production also reveals particularly interesting aspects of Nemirovich-Danchenko's creativity. On the

---

[1] Letter cited in Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1925), pp. 225-228.

[2] Ibid., p. 226.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

evidence of Lysistrata, I show that Nemirovich-Danchenko has been unjustly ignored in Western criticism and that he deserves to be studied independently of Stanislavsky, as a director in his own right.

Rehearsals for Lysistrata started in the fall of 1922. Stanislavsky and the main company had already left in September on the celebrated tours to Europe and the United States which would keep them abroad until August of 1924. Nemirovich-Danchenko had stayed behind in Moscow with only the apprentices of the studios. The MAT was in dire circumstances. Five years had elapsed since the October revolution and it had still not managed to secure its position as a significant force in Moscow's cultural life. Critics of all leanings mercilessly attacked its ideological and artistic principles which now seemed dated and irrelevant. As the director of the Theatre Section of Narkompros, Meyerhold had launched the "Theatrical October," threatening to close down academic theatres as reactionary. Meyerhold scorned the MAT's naturalism as petit bourgeois and antitheatrical and warned that it "contaminated" the audience of workers, peasants and soldiers.[3] Even though generally supportive of the theatre, Lunacharsky too had expressed concern that its offerings "were too refined for a proletarian audience ... [who] perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied."[4] The delicate sensibility of the MAT's approach was futile and disorienting, even decadent, as it forced the spectator "to be immersed in triviality."[5] The Narkom thought it essential for the MAT to unburden its art of meticulous attention to detail. In 1922, Jury Sobolev, a critic traditionally loyal to the MAT,

---

[3] V. E. Meyerhold, "La dramaturgie et la culture du théâtre," in Écrits sur le théâtre, edited and translated by Béatrice Picon-Valin (Lausanne: La Cité, L'Age d'Homme, 1975), p. 60.

[4] Anatoli Vassilievitch Lounatcharsky, "Le théâtre et la révolution (1921)," in Théâtre et révolution, edited and annotated by Émile Copfermann (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), p. 93, my translation.

[5] Ibid., p. 93, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

could still not see any signs of progress:

> A revolution occured in Russia, it swept by in blizzards and stroms, ... but the Art Theatre remained just as it was under the pressure of the theatrical waves. It gave very few signs of its participation in revolutionary contemporaneity. Too quickly it has become a sort of museum, a monument to past culture, carefully preserved and protected."[6]

Nemirovich-Danchenko had been the target of more abusive attacks than Stanislavsky in the early post-revolutionary period. In 1919 he founded the MAT's Musical Studio with the aim to explore the art of lyric drama and to train "synthetic performers" who could act, as well as sing and move in rhythm.[7] By 1922 he had mounted two operettas, Ch. Lecocq's The Daughter of Madame Angot and J. Offenbach's La Périchole. In both productions, Nemirovich-Danchenko had timidly attempted aesthetic innovations, especially in scenic design. Moreover, he had reshaped both librettos, inserting discreet references to political actuality. Leon Trotsky was impressed by the immediacy and vividness of the audience's response to these allusions.[8] However, Meyerhold was ready to reject the audience of "all these petty two penny idylls"[9] as "leftovers of the bourgeoisie who couldn't manage to get the boat out ."[10] In the important article "the Solitude of Stanislasky" (1921), he

---

[6] Cited in Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, translated by Roxane Permar and edited by Lesley Milne (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), p. 52.

[7] For information on the MAT's Musical Studio see Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre.

[8] Leon Trotsky, "Revolutionary and Socialist Art," in Literature and Revolution (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 239.

[9] V. E. Meyerhold, "La solitude de Stanislavsky," in Écrits sur le théâtre, p. 64, my translation.

[10] Cited in Jean Benedetti, Stanislavski: A Biography (London: Methuen, 1988), p. 248.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

relentlessly pours scorn on Nemirovich-Danchenko for his vulgar, indiscriminate taste and opportunism.

Nemirovich-Danchenko's correspondence in the early twenties reveals him as much more reflective and sensitive than Meyerhold could appreciate. In January 1923, when Lysistrata was already in rehearsal, he wrote a letter to V. Kachalov, reviewing the course of the MAT in the post-revolutionary period. He states problems lucidly and honestly and at the same time conveys a sense of confusion, even despair about the future. The letter affords a vivid inside view of the demoralized spirit that characterized MAT in the early post-revolutionary period:

> Five years, it is now the sixth year we have been disoriented. Five years ago, we thought that in two or three years ... we would adapt to life's novel circumstances. And yet, the sixth year is now running and we are still a long way from having clear plans of even our most immediate future conduct. Apparently, we are now standing more firmly on our feet, yet frequently, we still attach everlasting value to what has run its course and, on the other hand, we often take the ephemeral sensation for a new goal.[11]

Indeed, a central problem of the MAT in the post-revolutionary period was the forging of a new artistic identity. Nemirovich-Danchenko was eager to study how other directors responded to the novel circumstances. In April 1922 he had been strongly impressed by the solutions E. Vachtangov had adopted in the Princess Turandot. In his congratulatory letter to the director he wrote:

> The director of this production knows exactly what to discard from the old and what is to remain intact and knows how to do it. Yes, the gentle and bold hand is here functioning instinctively, confidently fleshing out the course of tomorrow's theatre.[12]

---

[11] Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. I. Kachalovu, January 23, 1922, Izbrannye pisshchma, Vol. II (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979), p. 266, my translation, prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky. The letter to V. I. Kachalovu, dated July 17 1921 is also revelatory of Nemirovich-Danchenko's sensibility. Ibid., pp. 230-245.

[12] Ibid., letter to E. B. Vakhtangovu, April 7, 1922, p. 256, my translation, prepared

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Princess Turandot was part of a string of comic productions that flooded the theatre in 1922. Meyerhold's Magnanimous Cuckold, A. Granovsky's The Sorceress and A. Tairov's Giroflé-Girofla which all appeared in that year, celebrated theatricality and delighted audiences with their optimism and humor.[13] The civil war had ended and the fiercely polemical attacks of "Theatrical October" against the academic theatres had died out. Summing up the more relaxed, optimistic mood in 1922, Lunacharsky wrote:

> We are experiencing a period of some relaxation after the nervous fit in which everyone lived during the heroic years of the revolution. ... People want to laugh and seek relief in impressions far removed from that which has disturbed, tormentd and enraptured them. Russian citizens have a basic right to a pleasant, cheerful hour of light, carefree amusement.[14]

Nemirovich-Danchenko's decision to mount Lysistrata appears to have been partly influenced by the cheerful theatrical atmosphere of 1922. In October of that year, he noted in his correspondence the turn of theatres towards lighter offerings shrewdly remarking: "Academic theatres are responding to the audience's wishes to see cheerful productions, with Lunacharsky's approval."[15] Even though at the lowest ebb of despair, confessing: "I am ready to quit," Nemirovich-Danchenko was far from giving up. In the same letter he revealed that "I will probably produce

---

in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

[13] F. Crommelynck's Magnanimous Cuckold, directed by Meyerhold, R. S. F. S. R. Theatre I; A. Goldfaden's The Sorceress, directed by A. Granovsky, GOSET; Ch. Lecocq's Giroflé-Girofla, directed by A. Tairov, Kamerny Theatre.

[14] Cited in Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 104.

[15] Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to F. N. Mikhalbskomu, October 24, 1922, Izbrannye p. 260, my translation, prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aristophanes' Lysistrata, for which I will write chorals and songs."[16]

Apparently, Nemirovich-Danchenko's desire to produce Lysistrata had been fermenting for a long time. The directors of the MAT had been planning to include the play in their repertory as early as 1899,[17] perhaps under the influence of two semi-amateur stagings in Petrograd and Moscow, that had attracted considerable attention in 1898.[18] The Moscow production had been characterized as "the most interesting offering of the season"[19] and was revived in 1901. The text employed in all of these early productions was a drastic adaptation of the original in rhyming verse. Lysistrata had been interpreted as an anti-war satire and all sexual jokes and allusions had been eliminated. This version ends in the same way as M. Donnay's revised adaptation of 1896, perhaps suggesting direct Frech influence: in a final interpolated monologue, the heroine made a plea for peace which was warmly applauded in the first Moscow production, prompting a reviewer to comment: "Lysistrta is a contemporary heroine, one of the active women propagating, 'down with war!' "[20]

Two more important Aristophanic productions, both appeared in 1910. The first was a staging of Lysistrata directed by N. A. Popov, in Kiev. German infuence on this venture is indisputable. The version employed was a Russian translation by A. Dalinov of Leo Greiner's adaptation for Max Reinhardt, whose production of

---

16 Ibid. p. 260.

17 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody (Moscow: Vserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1962) Entry for July 10, 1899, p. 371.

18 Lysistrata: July 19 1898, Pavlovsky Theatre, Petrograd; December 10 1898, M. S. Romanov Hall, Moscow.

19 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes, translated into modern Greek by M. Garides (Athens: Mokhlos, 1957), p. 212, my translation.

20 Ibid. p. 212, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata was still touring in Eastern Europe in 1910. Following the German prototype faithfully, the Russian production began with Hugo von Hofmannsthal's prologue. A reviewer commented: "Even though spoiled, Aristophanes is still splendid."[21] The second Aristophanic production was an amateur staging of Women in the Assembly in Petrograd, notable for the participation of M. M. Fokine as choreographer. The production attempted to recreate the spirit of ancient Greek theatre performance and ended with an impressive bacchanal.

Immediately after the October revolution, in December 1917, the play was staged at the Kommissarjevsky theatre, in Moscow. This interpretation emphasized erotic rather than socio-political elements in a farcical, caricatural fashion. The director had incorporated Hugo von Hofmannsthal's prologue and had ommitted the choral parts and the parabasis. Reviewers found the choice of play appropriate, commenting on Lysistrata's social contemporaneity.[22] This production, which was revived in 1919, appears to be the only major staging of the play before Nemirovich-Danchenko's.

From the earliest post-revolutionary period Aristophanes had been claimed as an agitational writer, whose plays could be directly related to actual political and social circumstances. In 1917, Lunacharsky had expressed the wish that "timely Aristophanic comedy will find its place in the workers' theatre."[23] Indeed, in 1919 there appeared a new edition of a late nineteenth century adaptation of Plutus by D. P. Averkiev, entitled The Golden Grandfather. In this text, the original characters have been replaced by Russian peasants and the action takes place in a village near Moscow. The editors recommended this version as appropriate for performance in the

---

21 Ibid. 216, my translation.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid. p. 218., my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

amateur stages of Russian villages. They hoped that Aristophanes could reconquer in modern times an audience of peasants.[24] The Attic dramatist had also attracted the attention of Meyerhold. As director of the First Theatre RSFSR, he had announced in 1920 the inclusion of Women in the Assembly in the repertory's program. However, he never staged this or any other play by Aristophanes, even though he had expressed high regard for the political and artistic value of his comedies.[25]

In accord with revolutionary ideology, Nemirovich-Danchenko saw Aristophanes in political terms. Even if he had been partly encouraged to stage Lysistrata by the general tendency towards cheerful productions in 1922, he was certainly determined not to mount a frivolous comedy. From the first readings of the play, he emphasized that the ancient dramatist was "a great popular poet," making references to his "relentless, healthy and highly moral sarcasm."[26] Lysistrata impressed him as a "brilliant" comedy, of exceptional social, moral and political relevance.[27] Nemirovich-Danchenko opted for an interpretation that would limit the erotic element, characterizing the play as a "popular and heroic comedy."[28]

Lysistrata is a popular play primarily on account of its characters and theme. In his rehearsal notes to actors, Nemirovich-Danchenko clarified that "the characters of this comedy are "the people," as distinct, on the one hand from individuals and on the other from aristocracy: "The life of individuals is of no concern here and it is

---

24 Ibid. p. 217.

25 See V. E. Meyerhold, "La dramaturgie et la culture du théâtre," in Écrits sur le théâtre, pp. 59-60.

26 Cited in Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre (Moscow: Vserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1960), p. 89, my translation, in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

27 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, pp. 91-92.

28 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes . p. 225, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant that there is an emphasis on the popular, not on the aristocratic element."[29] He described the women as "vendors of grain, onions, fruit, poultry" clearly indicating their humble origin.[30] Thematically, the play deals with a mobilization of the people to achieve a worthy political and social cause. Nemirovich-Danchenko's synopsis of the play, printed in the production's program, leaves no doubt as to his reading. There is considerable refinement and variety in the description of the play's action in agitational terms, presenting it as an organized political uprising: For example, "The women ... under the command of Lysistrata conspire to save Greece." To this end, they "form a union of abstinence from men" and are "united in a pan-Hellenic confederation of peace and love." Their "revolt is not only of an emotionally passive character but is also active," as they seize the Acropolis. In the negotiations with the Athenian and Spartan envoys, men "listen" to Lysistrata's "ardent, patriotic plea and conclude peace."[31]

Clearly, for Nemirovich-Danchenko, Lysistrata is not a play about sex. To avoid misunderstanding, he repeatedly emphasizes its moral value. In a letter to V. Loujsky he explains that Lysistrata "appears indecent, but is essentially healthy and highly moral, in spite of the incessant vulgarities."[32] For this reason, he does not find it difficult to mount it with yound ladies.[33] In his rehearsal notes to actors,

---

29 Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre , p. 89, my translation, in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

30 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes , p. 229, my translation.

31 Vl. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko and Sergei Berthensson, "Synopses of the Repertory," in The Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program, edited by Oliver Sayler, 1925. File on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York.

32 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. V. Luzhskomu, April 8, 1923, Izbrannye p. 268, my translation, prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

33 Ibid., p. 268.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Nemirovich-Danchenko describes the main elements of the play in lofty terms as "musicality, laughter, solemnity and beauty," again stressing "and all this is garbed in healthy morality."[34]

The loftiness of tone does not only reveal Nemirovich-Danchenko's desire to distance himself from a sexual reading of the comedy; it is also indicative of his intention to exalt the people's struggle for peace. Lysistrata is a popular play, not only on account of its theme and characters, but also on account of its attitude towards the events it depicts. In Nemirovich-Danchenko's description of the comedy, the terms "heroic" and "passionate" are value judgements, qualifying the characterization "popular." Far from adopting an objective perspective, his interpretation is biased in favor of the insurgents mobilizing for peace, idealistically described in rehearsal as "healthy, strong, life loving."[35] By contrast, the old men represent the reactionary establishment who have vested interests in the continuation of the war. The central axis of Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata is the conflict between the two choruses, symbolizing conservatism and progressive change. Analogies to the contemporary Soviet Union in the early twenties are inescapable. In the aftermath of the bloody strife between communists and whites, Nemirovich-Danchenko had decided to mount a play directly relevant to recent events by virtue of its theme — civil war— and politically correct, as it would celebrate the victorious forces of the revolution.

Nemirovich-Danchenko's reading of Lysistrata signified a bold and important change of policy. In sharp contrast to his own and Stanislavsky's earlier post-revolutionary statements in defense of the MAT's apoliticism, Nemirovich-Danchenko now clearly declared that theatre must be political. In his letter to

---

[34] J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes, pp. 224-225, my translation.

[35] Ibid., p. 229, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Kachalov of July 17, 1921, he had interpreted Meyerhold's removal from the directorial post of TEO as confirmation that "The course we decided on while you were here finally prevails on all fronts. That is, to stay away from politics ... to firmly believe that only real art is necessary, even in the most extreme moments of revolutionary imperatives."[36] The fall of 1922, Nemirovich-Danchenko's views had in fact moved closer to Meyerhold's. In the rehearsals of Lysistrata he asserted:

> Academic theatres are frequently reproached for being backward, for not responding to the times. Justifiably so. We should not keep away from life, nor claim we are apolitical. Total apoliticism, what absurdity! ... Withdrawing into oneself is pure conservatism. The artist lives with his time. Moreover, it is interesting to respond to the demands of a new audience.[37]

Lysistrata also offered an excellent opportunity for Nemirovich-Danchenko to distance himself from the MAT's stigmatized approach to mise en scène, projecting naturalistic detail and somber psychologism. "What does the theatre need today?" he asked actors rhetorically in rehearsal, responding, "it does not need neurasthenia and melancholy but something uncommon, vivid, not morose. We want luminous laughter, brilliant colors, a lifting of the spirit."[38] About a year later, Nemirovich-Danchenko explained that the play had partly been chosen for its apt exemplification of contemporary artistic values. Lysistrata could not be associated to the MAT's traditional offerings, as it completely "lacked sentimentalism and the petit bourgeois mentality."[39] Nemirovich-Danchenko's characterization of the play as a popular

---

36 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. I. Kachalovu, July 17, 1921 Izbrannye p. 240, my translation, prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

37 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for November 25, 1922, pp. 360-361. My translation, prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

38 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes , pp. 224-225, my translation.

39 Ibid., 224, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

comedy then, also applies to its form. Lysistrata is rich in "eternal ideas" such as "nature, war, peace,"[40] clearly and boldly, even crudely represented. Ambiguity and subtlety are swept away by exuberant gaiety, colorfulness and optimism.

Nemirovich-Danchenko commissioned a new version of Lysistrata from the dramatist Dmitry Smolin, which accurately expresses his popular interpretation of the play.[41] Prima facie, little has been changed in the original. The Russian text is close enough to the Greek to invite line by line comparison. The most striking change in the cast of characters is that Kinesias has become the husband of Lysistrata. The plot has been organized into three acts: the first act ends with the debate between Lysitrata and the Proboulos, and the second with the tempting of Kinesias. While the linear development of events has almsot been left intact, the sequential order of the choral parts has been drastically revised. Moreover, there have been importnat changes in the conception of the plot, including the chorus.

In the Greek original, the women's scheme is presented as a comic utopia. The sexual instinct is the overriding, compelling reason to conclude peace. Urgency is emphasized comically with the insistent presence of raised phalluses, forcing the course of events towards resolution. Aristophanes is playful and deeply ironical in identifying the achievement of peace with sexual satisfaction. The conclusion of the treaty between Athenians and Spartans is metaphorically presented as negotiation over the sexual possession of Peace, personified as a beautiful, tempting maiden. In Aristophanes' utopia the sexual instinct reigns, annulling the possibility of political deliberation.

---

[40] Ibid., 224, my translation.

[41] Dmitry Smolin's version was translated into English and published in the United States on the occasion of the Musical Studio's American tour: Dmitry Smolin, translator, Lysistrata, translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes, in Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio. (New York: Brentano's, 1925), pp. 1-78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Smolin has turned the Greek original on its head. In the Russian version, the emphasis on sexual deprivation as a driving force of the plot has been toned down. The resolution is the outcome of meditated and carefully implemented political scheming. Far from falling prey to instinct, characters display admirable reticence and a clear, controlling head. Smolin has tightened the plot and has recast it in almost realistic terms, placing central emphasis on the presentation of an effective political struggle. He closely fleshes out its distinct phases, clearly depicting its nuances and vicissitudes from the initial conception of the scheme to its successful outcome.

The Russian adaptation systematically avoids all sexual allusions and jokes. The original's incessant and crude references to sex are either cut, glossed over or altered with puritanical zeal. Sexual jesting runs the risk of disorienting attention from the struggle for peace or of trivializing it. Smolin's decision to avoid it strengthens the emphasis on the political interpretation of the play's action. Indeed, he has ponderously asserted: "Through Aristophanes it is possible to restore to the frivolous theatre its full weight, value, importance and vitality as well as its human and social function."[42]

The Russian version's focus on politics as opposed to sex is clearly evident in the oath scene. A patriotic Lysistrata bids the women "Why not at once pronounce the sacred oath/Of our allegiance to this weighty cause."[43] All the women, instead of a representative, enthusiastically repeat the oath, replacing the concluding sentences "I will not lift my slippers to touch the thatch/or submit sloping prone in a hangdog crouch" with the synoptical and more resolutely political "I will excite him with

---

42 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 92.

43 Dmirty Smolin, Plays ..., p. 12. Loeb, l. 181-182, pp. 20-21: "Then why not, Lampito, at once combine/All in one oath, and clench the plot securely?"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pretended coldness/And when he's roused I will dictate my terms."[44] Later, the Russian Lysistrata bids Lampito to hurry to Sparta and "start an insurrection there."[45]

At the opening of the second act, Lysistrata reveals to the chorus that she has difficulty in keeping the women from defecting to the men under the pressure of sexual need. In the original this exhchange is set up ironically as a mock parody of a typical tragic scene. In the Russian text, the passage has been recast realistically. Lysistrata now discusses the problem earnestly with an old woman, who, as a dispassionate party supplies the necessary distance from the original's farcical focus. With victorian reticence and the resolution of a military leader, the Russian Lysistrata reveals: "Our women have succumbed to carnal passion", glossing over the original's crude, "we want to get laid." [46]

In the tempting of Kinesias, Smolin has opted to reassign Myrrhina's lines to Lysistrata, thus turning the scene into a demonstration of the popular leader's consonance of word and action. Again, Smolin has cut all direct sexual allusions. The satyr like Kinesias of the original appears without an erection and offers a purse instead of his penis to the woman who will fetch his wife.[47] He is gentler and even romantically inclined as suggested by the interpolated phrazing, "How I worship her!"[48]

---

[44] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 15. Loeb, l. 229-232, p. 24. Translated into English by Douglass Parker, in Aristophanes Four Comedies, edited by W. Arrowsmith (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 23.

[45] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 16. Loeb, l. 243, p. 26: "You, go to Sparta, and arrange things there"

[46] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 43. Loeb, l. 715, p. 72. Translated into English by Douglass Parker, in Aristophanes Four Comedies, p. 51.

[47] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 51. Loeb, l. 861-863, p. 84.

[48] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 53. The Russian version's line has been added to Kinesias' exchange beginning in Loeb l. 885, p. 86.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the third act, all sexual joking revolving around the erect penises of the young men has been cut.[49] Sexual need is distantly alluded to as "starvation" or "weariness."[50] The meeting of the delegations for peace is clearly presented in lofty terms, alien to the Aristophanic spirit. Characteristically, Spartan and Athenien warriors are welcomed to the negotiations as heroes: "Welcome gallant sons of Sparta/Favored land of mighty Zeus/Worthy sons of your fore-fathers,/Bold. audacious and defiant." Atheniens sing as they enter: "With our spears aslant/With our shields on our arms,/With our daggers prepared,/Fearless we come/In the thick of the battle!"[51] This is in marked contrast to the picture of warriors in the original: "Behold our local Sons of the Soil. stretching/their garments away from their groins. like wrestlers."[52] In the Russian version, the personification of Peace as a sexual incitement to negotiation has also been removed. The people's desire for peace is not identified with sexual need.

Indeed, towards the end of the play, the heroine encourages the Athenians and Spartans to convene with their allies before concluding the peace treaty. They respond that there is no need for consultation on widely divergent grounds in the original and in the Russian adaptation. In the former, they allude to urgent sexual need. whereas in the latter. in an interpolated moral sermon, they claim to have realized the value of peace: "Our woes have made a unit of us./We are all parts of one large body,/Aching and crying for peace and love."[53] The women's mobilization

---

[49] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 65-66. Loeb, l. 980-1012, pp. 94-96 and l. 1076-1096. p. 104.

[50] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 65 and 69, respectively.

[51] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp 68-69.

[52] Loeb, l. 1082-1084, p. 104. Translated into English by Douglass Parker, in Aristophanes Four Comedies, p. 75.

[53] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 74. Loeb. l. 1177-1180. p. 112. Kinesias: "Deliberate? Allies?/We're over-extended already!/Wouldn't every ally approve of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is presented as having served a distinct didactic purpose.

Smolin's adaptation of the choral passages also strongly supports the political interpretation of the play. There is a marked distinction in the treatment of the male and the female chorus. The old men's line assignement has been left almost intact by the adaptation, whereas the women's choral lines throughout the play have been redistributed to various speakers. This is clearly evident from the initial appearance of the two choruses. Following the original faithfully, Smolin has assigned lines 254-318 to the 'chorus of Old Men,' who, as indicated by the stage directions, "march in single file," as one body.[54] On the other hand, the original's lines 319-351 of the women's first choral passage have been allocated in the adaptation to several characters: small groups of women, anonymous young and old individuals, as well as Myrrhina and Lampito contribute to a polyphonic diversity.[55] Smolin resorts to the same practice of role assignement in the ensuing battle, which in the original is taken up by the leaders of the respective choruses.[56] In the female camp, in addition to the speakers indicated above, we now also distinguish a "chorus of women," which appears to be a unified defending army in direct analogy to the men's, as suggested by the provocation": "Our numbers overawe you? ... What you see is only a thousandth part of us!"[57]

Smolin constructs a biased picture of the choral battle, presenting it, as it were, from the women's point of view. The rendering of the male chorus as a unified and

---

our position-/Union Now?" Translated into English by Douglass Parker, in Aristophanes Four Comedies, p. 81.

54 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 18-20. Loeb, l. 254-318, p. 26-32.

55 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 20-22. Loeb, l. 319-351, pp. 32-34.

56 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 22-27. Loeb, l. 352-386, pp. 34-38.

57 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

undifferentiated body, functions symbolically as an ironic representation of the establishment. The preservation of the ancient Greek choral conception, which is differentiated from the episodic structure, also serves to underline comically the elders' inefficiency and inability to act. By contrast, the polyphonic presentation of the female camp directs the reader's attention and sympathy towards the women. Moreover, it links their choral parts directly to the action, supporting its development. Indeed, in the Russian version, unified action is primarily important, as it serves the purpose of conveying the political message of the women's mobilization clearly and directly. Far from sacrificing the tightness of the plot, the inclusion of choral passages in the Russian version generally supports it.

The strong connection between the women's choral parts and the action becomes clearly evident when we consider their strategic placement in the Russian version. Passages instrumental to the action's progress, such as the battle of the sexes and the exchange about the defection of the women have been left in their original position and have been incorporated into the development of the plot through the technique of individualizing the chorus.[58] All other choral parts in the Russian version are employed to mark a significant advance in the women's action towards the termination of the civil war. Significantly, most of these passages have been moved to the end of each act. With suitable modifications, they serve propagandistic purposes.

For example, the original's choral lines 540-550, combined with Lysistrata's immediately following response are the epilogue of the first act in the Russian version, functioning as a conclusion.[59] The individualized female chorus celebrates the defeat of the Proboulos and strengthens the morale for future confrontation.

---

[58] For references to the battle of the sexes see footnote 56. Exchange about women's defection, Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 43-44. Loeb, l. 706-728, pp. 72-74.

[59] Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 41-42. Loeb, l. 540-550 and 550-553, pp. 54-56.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Thus adapted, the passage now starts with Myrrhina's celebratory "Now dance. Dance!" followed by an old woman's enthusiastic "With those that are pretty and strong,/With them I will cast my lot!" The propagandistic intent is clearest in Lysistrata's final earnest pronouncement, which has lost all the ironic resonance it carries in the original context: "... be assured that we will be proclaimed/The heroines and the saviors of mankind."[60] In the Greek text, Lysistrata specifies humorously that women will be glorified for stopping men's raids in the market place.[61]

In the third act, the choral passage 1042-1071, sung by both men and women in the original, has been individualized and reassigned to 'Kalonika', 'the women' and 'a woman.'[62] Significantly, it occurs immediately before the arrival of the Spartan embassy for the peace negotiations. The passage has appropriately been changed to convey a rallying message, emphasized by the interpolated incitement, "Today if you but sign the pact of peace," repeated by each speaker. Noteworthy also is that Smolin, bent on conveying the political message clearly, has reversed the paradoxical conclusion of the choral invitation to partake of prosperity. Whereas in the original, anyone wishing to participate in the celebration will "find the only entrance/Locked and bolted too," in the Russian version all are encouraged: "Come to us freely,/The door you'll find open."[63]

The most striking revision of a choral passage for propaganda purposes is the battle of the sexes, immediately following the exit of the Proboulos.[64] In the Russian version it takes place at the end of the second act, after the tempting of

---

60 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 41-42.

61 Loeb, l. 553-555, p. 56.

62 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 67-68. Loeb, l. 1043-1071, pp. 100-102.

63 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 68. Loeb, l. 1071, p. 102.

64 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 61-64. Loeb, l. 614-705, pp. 64-72.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Kinesias, as the final climactic confrontation between the old men and the women before the reconciliation. Smolin has imaginatively revised this choral passage into a parabasis: all speakers directly address themselves to the audience. Moreover, he has transformed the original into a debate, adopting a theatrical form popular with Russian audiences in the first post-revolutionary years.[65] Thus, the ancient Greek device in the Russian version has received an effective interpretation, directly relevant to actuality by virtue of its form.

The theme of the debate also had distinct contemporary resonances. The choruses quarrel over whether women are fit to give advice on the government of the state. This is yet another confrontation between the old and conservative against the new world pressing for change. Smolin follows the same tactic of speaker assignement as in the initial battle, discussed earlier. The chorus of old men argues against the motion, whereas women, individually and collectively argue for it. The long choral passage has been revised into short attacks, clearly establishing points. For example, these can be as brief and succinct as "They have squandered the wealth of their fathers/What can they bring to the temple's treasure?" which a woman puts forward against the old men.[66] The scene thus takes the form of a modern debate, where the rival parties address themselves separately to the men and the women in the audience rallying for their support. The rallying is highly sophisticated. The debaters adopt a variety of tones to secure the audience's support: "Judge for yourselves" indicates a desire for objectivity, "dare to attack us" is

---

65 The staging of reports and debates was a special genre of propagandistic theatre, which first appeared in the Red army units during the civil war. In debates, a polar clash between two views was dramatically presented by characters in costume. Their speeches were frequently illustrated by such features as pantomime, living placards and choruses.

66 Dmitry Smolin. Plays ..., p. 62.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

clearly menacing, while "take warning citizens" plays on the audience's fears.[67] The parabasis has also been revised to carry direct contemporary analogies, as is evident from the obvious anachronisms in the addresses of the women: "dear women comrades," "Citizens do we not render tribute/By giving sons and daughters to the State?"[68]

Smolin's revisions make the contemporary significance of the play everywhere apparent. The subject of Lysistrata could of course directly be related to recent events in the Soviet Union, as it deals with the civil war. In her final long reconciliation speech, the heroine encourages the drawing of analogies: "I censure Spartans and Athenians both/And all of you engaged in bloody strife!"[69] However, direct references to actuality are generally subtle and limited. The adaptation invites contemporary comparison mainly through its depiction of a popular uprising recast in modern terms as a political mobilization against the status quo, that the post-revolutionary audience could intimately relate to. At the center of the action is the conflict between the establishment and women, as the people. Through the biased glorification of the women, Smolin simultaneously glorifies the people's October revolution.

Rehearsals for Lysistrata lasted about eight to nine months. The production opened on June 16th,1923. Nemirovich-Danchenko's rehearsal notes reveal not only his emphasis on the play's political interpretation discussed earlier, but also his willingness to experiment with new artistic forms, unfamiliar to the MAT. From the earliest period of rehearsals, he appears to explore a monumental and physical, non-psychological approach to acting, clearly and unambiguously instructing the cast.

---

67 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., pp. 61-62.

68 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 61.

69 Dmitry Smolin, Plays ..., p. 71. Loeb, l. 1112-1135. pp. 106-108.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"all must be played in an awe inspiring scale. No rationalizations!"[70] Emphasis should fall on passion, broad gesture and feeling as opposed to painstaking refinement. Indeed, concerning the impersonation of the women, he instructs actresses "not to present the sophisticated type of woman, but to convey the lucid voice of the heart, the luminous health, the cry of the body and the explosive force of hot temperament."[71] Nemirovich-Danchenko's insistent description of the people in broadly corporeal terms, suggests that a naturalistic approach would be inappropriate for their portrayal. Apparently, Nemirovich-Danchenko was highly satisfied with the actors' efforts, frequently praising their work in his rehearsal notes and extolling their conscientiousness and passionate devotion to the project.[72]

Nemirovich-Danchenko's experimental spirit also prompted him to commission the set and costumes from Isaac Rabinovich. This artist had started his career during the war and had been strongly influenced by cubofuturism and the work of Alexandra Exter. His designs were noted for their humor and brillinat use of color. His comical constructivist set for the successful production of A. Goldfaden's Sorceress in 1922. led to his Lysistrata engagement. Nemirovich-Danchenko had commissioned a functional set. humorously evoking antiquity, which was ready by mid-January. Rabinovich's abstract work was a novelty for the MAT and there was uncertainty over how the director would receive it: "If [the designer's] work, based on constructivism does not satisfy Nemirovich-Danchenko, we must go again to Simov." noted a collaborator in the production.[73] As it turned out, Nemirovich-Danchenko

---

70 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for November 30, 1922, p. 361.

71 Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre , pp. 89-90, my translation, in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

72 See Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entries for January 20, and "Beginning of February," 1923, p. 363; Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. V. Luzhskomu, April 8, 1923 Izbrannye, p. 268

73 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for January 13, 1923, p. 363. V.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was very impressed by the work, qualifying, "Rather, it is not a set but something constructivist. Thrilling!"[74] Lightheartedly referring to the production in retrospect. he recognized the importance of Rabinovich's influence to stimulating experimentation:

> In the production of Lysistrata a whole series of the canons of the older productions was violated. ... While producing Lysistrata and working in contact with the designer Rabinovich, it was not easy for me to infringe upon my traditions as an old line realist. It all started with the decision to have all the characters make their entrance on the stage through a trap — a violation of the plausibility and the logic of realistic theatre. Having permitted myself one liberty, I proceeded to permit a second and a third. To break is to break!"[75]

In a letter to Loujsky the spring of 1923, Nemirovich-Danchenko conveys thoroughgoing optimism about his project: "You know, when I dream of Lysistrata's production, I have the impression there has not been anything as beautiful in the theatre, in recent years."[76] The opening of Lysistrata was a dream come true: the production was a resounding success. It held the stage of the MAT for 215 performances and was also taken on tour to Leningrad as well as other major cities in the USSR. In the fall of 1925, it was also shown in the West, in a joint bill with other Musical Studio productions. After a brief engagement in Berlin, in October, 1925, Lysistrata opened in New York in December and was subsequently tranferred to Chicago in the spring.

The production was consistent to Nemirovich-Danchenko's reading of the play, as

---

Simov was a more traditional, naturalist designer who had been a close associate of the MAT.

74 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. V. Luzhskomu, April 8, 1923, Izbrannye, p. 268, my translation prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

75 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 97.

76 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letter to V. V. Luzhskomu, April 8, 1923, Izbrannye, p. 268, my translation prepared in collaboration with Nona Molesky.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

expressed in the adaptation, as well as in his correspondence and rehearsal notes. All elements of the staging gave prominence to a popular interpretation of Lysistrata. immediately relevant to contemporary political reality. Moreover, the production exemplified a formal, yet realist style which, far from being idly experimental, organically served the revolutionary ideology of this interpretation.

The popular conception is immediately identifiable in the clothing of the choruses. Rabinovich's costume sketches for Lysistrata are inspired from a popular aesthetic, emphasizing simplicity and lack of sophistication. Indeed, as Nemirovich-Danchenko had specified, characters are not costumed "in rich theatre vestments."[77] Dress is functional, almost without ornamentation, fashioned in sturdy, durable material and looks worn.[78] Chorus members generally wear loose, comfortable chitons and tunics, reminiscent of antiquity.[79] These are discreetly individualized in hue, length or cut, so that the groupings do not create the abstract effect of monolithic uniformity.[80] The designer has avoided the fine detail of naturalistic depiction without losing sight of realism.

Dress is effectively used to create a sharp contrast between the conservatism of the elders and the progressive spirit of the women. The old men's appearance is exceedingly comical. Their chorus created a distinctly grotesque effect, enhansed by exaggerated make up.[81] Exaggerated also is the emphasis on metal in the men's costume, functioning transparently as an ironic comment on the disintegrating old world of wars. Men are heavily armed with shiny helmets and breastplates and carry

---

77 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for March 20, 1923, p. 364.

78 See Figures 3-2, 3-3, 3-7 and 3-12.

79 See Figures 3-2, 3-7, 3-8, 3-9, 3-11 and 3-12.

80 See Figures 3-1, 3-2, 3-6, 3-7 and 3-12.

81 See Figures 3-5, 3-6 and 3-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shields, swords, spears forks and sticks.[82] Helmets are quixotic, designed in antiquated, fancy geometrical shapes, making them look like weird species of birds.[83] The rigidity of the metal in which they are encased obstructs freedom of movement and humorously contrasts to the fragility of the elders. This is clearly apparent in Rabinovich's costume sketches of the old men, to the left and to the right of the young warrior.[84] The character on the left looks pathetic, holding on to his sword as if it were a walking stick. Proboulos on the right has more nerve, yet his shiny armour only serves to expose his large belly and crooked legs, making him look ridiculously pompous. The old men's costume presents extremely effective humorous possibilities in performance. As a chorus in full armour, charging and being thwarted by the women, they look like pieces of garbage, thrown pell mell in a heap.[85] In the course of the play, women progressively succeed to disarm them, symbolically stripping power naked. Indeed, in several other scenes, the old men look unmistakably like satyrs, exhibiting naked torsos, flowing hair and beards. For example Fig. 3-5 is strongly reminiscent of satyr battles in vase painting, conveying the message there is deep seated perversity in the establishment's defense of war.

By contrast to the old men's costume, the women's dress is not designed for grotesque comic effect. Indeed, Rabinovich's sketches for the female chorus are not humorous.[86] Practicality is a major consideration in the women's wear. Dresses are comfortable, allowing for ease of movement. Their costume is generally not beautifying or sexually provocative. Rather, it is primarily intended to make women

---

82 See Figures 3-1, 3-3, 3-4 and 3-6.

83 See Figures 3-1, 3-4 and 3-6.

84 See Figure 3-1.

85 See Figures 3-3 and 3-4.

86 See Figure 3-2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wearing it look strong.[87] Indeed, female chorus members confront the armed old men with the strength of their bare arms and shoulders, evoking the proletariat's raised fist.[88] Make up boldly accentuates the eyes, contributing to a concentrated, determined look.[89] Apparently, women's draperies were used in performance not only with the intention of revealing the female chorus's solidity and force, but also of idealizing it. Lysistrata and some of the women occasionally appeared graceful and statuesque, enhansing the effect by plasticity of gesture.[90]

Rabinovich's popular costume sketches are interesting and stimulating, yet his highest achievement is the set design, remarkable for its aesthetic, functionality and rich symbolism. The designer won the first "grand prize of theatrical decoration" for the set of Lysistrata, at the Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris, in 1925 and is still justifiably remembered for this contribution.[91] His design was an extremely simple, yet synthetic and monumental architectural construction . It consisted of four semi-circular colonnades of draped white pillars, one central, two on the periphery and a lower one at the back, balancing a composition of platforms on four levels, linked by stairs.[92] The entire structure could rotate, as it was set on a turntable. Platforms adjusted to the circular movement of the colonnades. Certain structural elements, such as the central colonnade, could also be manually rotated by the actors. In the absence of a front curtain, all revolutions took place in full view of the audience. The gleaming whiteness of the columns contrasted against a uniform bright blue

---

87 See Figures 3-7, 3-11 and 3-12.

88 See Figures 3-3, 3-7, 3-11 and 3-12.

89 See Figures 3-7, 3-8 and 3-12.

90 See Figure 3-8.

91 See Christine Hamon-Sirégols, Le Constructivisme au théâtre (Paris: CNRS, 1992).

92 See Figure 3-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

background on the cyclorama.

The construction's transparency, as well as the varying levels of the platforms, presented the possibility of setting the scenes in depth. At the same time, the whiteness of the columns against the blue background made the construction look like "some sort of a three dimensional blueprint"[93] and allowed for interesting effects. Indeed, in certain scenes, the pillars acquire the configuration of picture frames, projecting the women as reliefs, an impression frequently enhansed by plastic posing.[94]

The set was highly functional, allowing rapid scene changes without disturbing the continuity of the action.[95] Rotation revealed new configurations, suggesting allusively a variety of distinct locales in the Acropolis, as is clearly indicated in the production's photographs.[96] Throughout the production, the transparency of the structure allowed the audience to visualize not just a specific locale but the entire world of the drama's action, "Hellas" or even "the Universe."[97] At the same time, the non illusionist set challenged spectators to honestly acknowledge it as a theatrical, constructed configuration of steps and platforms.

Besides defining locale and allowing for the uninterrupted use of space, rotation also comprised an integral part of the action within each scene.[98] Movement at

---

93 Winthrop Tryon in the Christian Science Monitor, December 14, 1925.

94 See Figures 3-8 and 3-10. The relief effect has been noted by numerous critics, for example, Abram Efros, "The Scenic Designers of the Musical Studio," in the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program; Herald Tribune, December 15, 1925.

95 See Abram Efros, "The Scenic Designers of the Musical Studio," in the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program.

96 See Figures 3-10 and 3-13.

97 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, 101. See also Pavel Markov, cited in Christine Hamon-Sirégols, Le Constructivisme au théâtre, p. 313.

98 See Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre; Christine Hamon-Sirégols, Le

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

varying speeds was frequently used to reflect the feeling and the moods of the characters. Moreover, it even functioned as an ironic counterpoint to action. For example, at the arrival of the old men, the set moved slowly in front of the actors, humorously emphasizing their laboriousness and fragility. Rotation also heightened the excitement of the battle between the male and the female choruses: "Men rush around the outer stationary rim, chasing the laughing women dancing in the inner columned scene, spinning like a mocking carousel."[99] Frantic whirling in the finale was similarly used to accentuate the exhilaration and enthusiasm of the populace. Yet another function of rotation was to highlight the heroic aspects of the struggle. At one point, the peace signing procession leaping and jubilant, moved in the opposite way to the moving structure, giving the impression of a "Parthenon freeze brought to life."[100]

Rabinovich's set for Lysistrata had highly sophisticated symbolic functions, projecting popular revolutionary ideology. The design is a perfect popular interpretation of the ancient Greek Acropolis as a social institution, emblematic of the demos or city. The work's prominent structural elements highlight its constructed, man made nature. The openended semi-circular colonnades evoke the circle, indicating that this is an incomplete structure. In production, rotation in full view of the audience draws attention to the building process, especially as this is frequently undertaken by the characters themselves. Thus, the set is literally what the people make of it, the embodiment of popular aspiration. Indeed, the people are so closely identified with their construct that they made all entrances and exits in the

---

Constructivisme au théâtre; Abram Efros, "The Scenic Designers of the Musical Studio," in the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program.

99 Abram Efros, "The Scenic Designers of the Musical Studio," in the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir program.

100 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 99.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production through traps in the floor, magically springing in the midst of the structure.[101] The audience does not see the actors in dissociation from the set, entering or leaving it. In the absence of the front curtain, the insistent presence of the structure makes it the focal point of attention, further emphasizing the symbolic significance of the Acropolis as a popular, social institution.

The incompleteness of the structure looks both back to the old men's world, as a crumbling monument of the past and forward to the world of the women and the young, as a building now in the process of construction, or reconstruction. The set can both be viewed as a mock epic, parodying the solidity of the classical Acropolis and as a monument worthy of the people who achieve peace. Thus the structure balances delicately between irony and heroism. In capturing the Acropolis, the female chorus sets out to redefine it as an institution. Throughout the production, the set is entirely under the women's control, who make full use of its capabilities. They move on the steps and platforms as well as on the stage floor, whereas the old men are at all times confined on the ground.[102] The mobility of the set admirably expresses that the world is in flux and that change, "revolution" is inevitable. Significantly, it is solely the women who rotate the movable colonnade on stage, indicating that they, as opposed to the old men are in a position to instigate and to control change.

Rabinovich's nonillusionistic set design projects a utopian conception of the Acropolis as a popular social institution, which nevertheless seemed realizable in the early post-revolutionary period. The transparency of the set invites the play's characters, as well as the audience to know it literally inside out, as they can view it from every angle, both external and internal. Significantly, the old men on the

---

101 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, quoted in Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 97.

102 See Figures 3-3, 3-4, 3-6, 3-7 and 3-10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ground have a more limited perspective. The structure is not only open to full view but also to free and unlimited use. The Acropolis as a popular institution is in the service of the people and its function is in their hands. Mobility also indicates that it is a flexible institution, capable of readily adapting to popular needs. By the end of the production, the women have been able to redefine the Acropolis from an aristocratic into a democratic institution, more open to the masses than ever before.

The performance also served perfectly Lysistrata's interpretation as a popular play. In the discussion of its acting, Russian as well as American critics focus on the chorus, emphasizing collective, as opposed to individual performance.[103] The MAT's familiar representaion of a crowd as an ensemble of varied and distinct character sketches had been abandoned. According to Pavel Markov, individual features of the chorus members were not pronounced, so as not to divert the audience's attention from the whole.[104] The New York Times critic reported that "the action itself is mass movement as the elements of the play are mass emotions."[105]

Mass action is in need of interpretation. It does not refer to a stylized collective, whose members are perfectly synchronized in movement, as is clearly indicated in the production's photographs.[106] The multiple division of choral lines to individuals, groups of speakers as well as to the chorus, also testifies to a non unified polyphonic impression of vocal effects. Presumably, line assignement to the chorus does indicate that, occasionally, prosody and movement were non-individualized. Indeed,

---

[103] The New York Times, December 15, 1925.

[104] Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre, p. 94.

[105] The New York Times, December 15, 1925.

[106] See Figures 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 3-7, 3-10 and 3-13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reviewers have noted the "abundant use of line and gesture in mass formation. attuned voices and rhythmic movement."[107] Moreover, the chorus occasionally formed "an organ of voices."[108] However, choral uniformity was only one among the devices used in performance. According to Pavel Markov, the great achievement of the production was that, while the chorus gave the impression of a uniform whole, its members followed both the common rhythm and their own individual distinct rhythm.[109] This was an essentially realist — though non naturalist — depiction of the chorus, integrating formalist elements into a representational conception.

The cast had successfully mastered an external, non-psychological performance mode, displaying a great variety of styles from popular entertainment. The manner of performing appeared "lusty, vigorous, forthright, rough, loud and unashamed"[110] and there was a rowdy quality to the humor: "the humors are elemental. mass humors. generated in the pit of the stomach rather than the mind."[111] The farcical spirit prevailed in the portrayal of the old men. Buffoonery, burlesque, clowning, horseplaying, all boldly combined to form a grotesque, satyr like chorus. The old men made "creaking" motions and had "cracked," "sqeaky" senile voices that sounded almost inarticulate.[112] Their leader gabbled like a turkey.[113] At other times.

---

107 The Billboard, December 26, 1925.

108 Journal of Commerce, December 15, 1925.

109 Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre., p. 94.

110 The Chicago Tribune, April 24, 1926.

111 The New York Times, December 15, 1925.

112 Ibid.

113 Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre, p. 93.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"the men cavort and bellow as amusingly as clowns in a circus."[114] Miming was also frequently resorted to and greatly appreciated: "Russians are vigorous, magnetic mimes. They lord it over space. They vibrate even in moments of repose. Tawny muscular masters of themselves in relation to their surroundings."[115]

Nemirovich-Danchenko had opted to tone down comic exaggeration in the performance of the female chorus, so as to keep impressions sharply distinct. The advocates of peace had to be presented as heroic, while their opponents were good naturedly reduced to ridicule. Pavel Markov has noted that the men's shaky, clumsy gestures highlighted the women's graceful movements. However, the Russian critic found the choreography of the women's plastic movements ineffective. It had a fake Duncanesque plasticity, evoking sentimentalism completely alien to Aristophanes' spirit.[116] Reviewers unanimously praise the female chorus when its members, forgetting plasticity, vigorously plunged into the fighting.

The popular, revolutionary Lysistrata appropriately emphasizes the confrontation between the choruses as the central incident in the play. The people's collective activity in the battle overshadowed the tempting of Kinesias which here acquired secondary importance. American reviewers were not impressed by this episode and generally found "the content of its sex appeal low."[117] Performance in the choral battles was regarded as the hallmark of Nemirovich-Danchenko's production:

> The battle grew monstrously comical, a milling, electrifying piece of buffa

---

[114] The Billboard, December 26, 1925.

[115] Gilbert W. Gabriel in The Sun, December 15, 1925.

[116] Pavel Aleksandrovich Markov, Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre, pp. 93-95.

[117] Unidentified review in "Clippings, Lysistrata, Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio Production," file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> play.[118] ... At one time the stage was a howling mob of the sexes. The women shrieked and the men bellowed. The women seized saucepans and household materials and pounced upon the men, belaboring them with all their might and main. They jumped into the auditorium; they pranced about the stage; they fell into the orchestra pit."[119] ... [The women] pummel and shower [the men] with pretend water, they kick and tear their shirts. They chase them off the street and up the aisles with the fleetness of deer and the enthusiasm of children."[120]

A typical feature of Lysistrata's popular interpretation, amply exemplified in the battle, is the concern to engage the audience. The production's coarse humor readily draws boisterous laughter, securing the audience's sympathy. At the same time, the dynamism of physical and vocal activity has a compelling force on the spectators: "choral action flows as from a torrent."[121] Indeed, the chorus's appeal is primarily emotional. Reviewers have commented on the "striking way the emotions of the mob were brought out. "Mob feelings were felt, they were real and poignant."[122]

The choral battle takes place onto the whole stage, entirely occupying the spectators' field of view. Moreover, it spreads into the orchestra, openly challenging the audience's autonomy. The direct address to the auditorium in the parabasis is the culmination of a persistent effort to engage the audience. The parabasis was interpreted as a modern political rally. The men on the right and the women on the left side of the stage wildly gesture with outstretched arms, passionately attempting

---

[118] Gilbert W. Gabriel in The Sun, December 15, 1925.

[119] Alan Dale, American, December 15, 1925.

[120] Unidentified review in "Clippings, Lysistrata, Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio Production," file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York. See also Figures 3-3, 3-4 and 3-5.

[121] The New York Times, December 15, 1925.

[122] Unidentified review in "Clippings, Lysistrata, Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio Production," file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to secure the favor of the audience, that they address as "citizens".[123] Significantly, the female chorus is placed in a more advantageous position, standing higher than the men. The audience as the people is rhetorically exhorted to judge the debate and to take sides. Quarelling takes place "almost in the laps of the astonished spectators."[124]

The breaking of the fourth wall convention is organically tied to the popular interpretation of Lysistrata. Indeed, this production employs a variety of techniques for engaging the audience. The absence of the front curtain unifies the spaces of the auditorium and the stage, encouraging the identification of the audience as the people. Spectators view the nonillusionistc set from the women's all encompassing perspective and mentally complete it, just as the women proceed to rotate or build it on stage. Less subtle, more openly propagandistic attempts to engage the audience include the spilling of the action into the auditorium and the intervention of the parabasis.

Even though Lysistrata was a production of the Musical Studio, it only had incidental music. The composer Reinhold Glière had written an original score for the play, which included marches, chorals, prayers hymns and bacchanals.[125] This was not continuous and in fact most scenes were not set to music. Woven into the action, the music gave a rhythmic beat to the spoken word, unobtrusively intensifying its effect. Its function was perhaps to magnify the people's voice, to make it heard. As A. Kugel has observed in Music and Drama:

> Music adds to the dynamic quality of the play. It arises from the rational

---

[123] See Figures 3-11 and 3-12.

[124] The New York Times, October 17, 1925.

[125] Reinhold Gliere (1875-1956), professor at the Moscow conservatory, has composed operas, symphonic chamber and ballet music. Significantly, he wrote music for the first Soviet ballet on a revolutionary theme, The Red Poppy (1927).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> demands of the moment, flowing organically and unpretentiously with the action and giving joy to the ear. ... Its entrances and exits are not abrupt, for it makes its appearance as the extension of the pitched intonation of speech.[126]

Both the instrumental and the vocal contributions were of the utmost simplicity, appropriate to the uncontrived popular expression. Glière had woven the few ancient scales extant, the Dorian and the Phrygian, into his score, "producing an arresting and strangely primitive effect,"[127] enhansed by the offstage use of antique sounding wood and brass instruments, the flute, the drum and the horn. There was little singing, limited to the vow, the final ensemble and a few brief solos. Notably, several choral passages were sung without the accompaniment of music, to great effect. The vocal contribution of the chorus consisted primarily of chants, intonings and some sort of "recitatiff."[128] Choral chanting reflected the people's crude passions. It had "a ruddy Moussorgsky mark," which was "tense and very expressive."[129]

The central features of Nemirovich-Danchenko's popular Lysistrata production are now clearly apparent. Simpicity, a concentration on the essential and monumentality predominantly characterized this interpretation, aiming at maximum receptivity. The restricted palette of primary colors, the uncontrived use of music, the skeletonized, functional set, the physical conception of the acting, projecting large gestures, represented bold formal choices, integrated, however, into a realist conception. The production's essential traits carried a distinct and easily decodable symbolism.

---

126 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 94.

127 The World, December 13, 1925.

128 Alan Dale, American, December 15, 1925.

129 See Gilbert W. Gabriel in The Sun, December 15, 1925; Paul Morris in The Evening W. December 15, 1925.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

expressing the Soviet revolutionary ideology. A central concern was the projection of a sharp antithesis between the two choruses, highlighted by contrastive choices of costume and acting style. On stage, the antithesis was also represented spatially: the women in charge of "revolution" occupied the mobile set, while the elders, weighed down by the metal, were hopelessly left behind by the brave new world.

Indeed, Russian critics received Lysistrata enthusiastically as a contemporary spectacle, directly responding to the Soviet revolution. Yury Sobolev, who had previously criticized MAT for its failure to keep up with the times, now found that "Lysistrata is a spectacle engendered by the revolution, a contemporary spectacle ... because the superb conception of the dissolution of the army is illuminated by the reflection of the great ideas of our revolutionary actuality."[130] Clearly, the production had successfully conveyed a political message relevant to the post-revolutionary audience:

> The impetus of the battle and the intense dynamism of the action are intimately related to our feelings. When the women celebrate victory, coming together in a fervent dance, it is as if the whole of humanity is celebrating with them, free to enjoy happiness; the remnants, the broken chains of the old world, the world of wars are shattered.[131]

Compliance to revolutionary politics only partly explains the production's enthusiastic reception in Russia as a contemporary spectacle. More importantly, Lysistrata's ideological content was expressed in terms of a formal conception, strongly influenced by the theatre of the avant garde, allowing for the identification of the spectacle as a product of the new revolutionary aesthetic. However, there are

---

130 Quoted in J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes , p. 223, my translation.

131 P. S. Kogan, quoted in J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes , p. 223, my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant departures from the avant garde model, indicating that the prototype has been creatively assimilated. Meyerhold, the representative of avant garde theatre par excellence, had originally been officially assigned the task of creating the revolutionary theatre. Though constantly attacked on political grounds, his productions had typified the features of a new style, abundantly imitated in the Soviet theatre of the early twenties.[132]

Audience engagement, boldly emphasized in Lysistrata, was a primary consideration in structuring a revolutionary spectacle. Since the second version of Mystery Bouffe (1920), Meyerhold had rejected the front curtain, letting the action to dynamically spill into the auditorium. In the staging of Dawns (1920), he had explored techniques for drawing spectators into the action to the limit. Challenging theatre's autonomy from the real world, he attempted to recreate in the theatre an actual mass meeting. Among the devices used was the interruption of the action to deliver news from the front, followed by a meeting with the audience, slillfully engaged into participating by actors planted in the orchestra. Nemirovich-Danchenko's employment of a bold avant garde technique such as the direct address. reveals the limits of his experimentation. The exhortations to the male and female spectators to take sides in the parabasis are purely rhetorical; actual participation is neither expected nor forthcoming. Such interaction would upset the continuity of the action, whose structure has been significantly tightened in the Russian version. Moreover, it would destroy the production's chief asset, its fast tempo and dynamism. As adapted by Nemirovich-Danchenko then, the direct address to the audience is kept within the limits of theatrical convention.

Under Meyerhold's influence, revolutionary theatre in the early twenties had

---

[132] I am primarily referring to the two productions of Vl. Mayakovsky's Mystery Bouffe (1918 and 1921), to E. Verhaeren's Dawns (1920), to A. Sukhovo-Kobylin's The Death of Tarelkin and to F. Crommelynck's The Magnanimous Cuckold (1922).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discarded stage decoration as a background to action. Indeed, there was a marked preference for achitectural, functional sets, dominating a bare stage. With the Magnanimous Cuckold (1922), Meyerhold had launched constructivism in the theatre. Rabinovich's set for Lysistrata has many similarities to Liubov Popova's design for F. Grommelyck's play. Both exemplify all the typical traits of a constructivist scenic conception: they are nonillusionist, highly stylized and schematic. Moreover, both define two main areas of performace, the stage floor and the raised levels of the set, reached by stairways and connected by platforms.[133] The two structures are also comparable in function. Both are utilitarian, multipurpose scaffolds, intimately tied to the action. Performance is so tightly structured in relation to the set that the animate and the inanimate almost form a conceptually inseparable whole. Perhaps the most striking similarity between the two constructions is that they both included centrally placed rotating elements which made key contributions to the action.[134] Moreover, certain functions of movement are analogous in the two productions. In the Magnanimous Cuckold, as in Lysistrata, the three wheels placed in the background moved quickly, slowly, separately or together, reflecting the rhythm of the acting. Also, at times the construction itself seemed to perform, adding an ironic comment to the action.[135] Meyerhold's acknowledgement that "much in the tone of the performance was prompted by the constructivist set" also applies to Lysistrata.[136]

However, similarities should not obscure significant differences between the two constructions. Even though Rabinovich had avant garde credentials, Meyerhold

---

133 See Figure 3-16.

134 Ibid.

135 See Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 92.

136 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

never employed him, considering his work too decorative.[137] Popova and Meyerhold insisted on the strictly utilitarian function of the set, characteristically defining it as a "machine for acting." Unlike Rabinovich's work, the earlier avant garde structure was not intended to be aesthetically pleasing. Moreover, it was supposedly divested of all symbolic meaning. Interestingly, however, as Rudnitsky has noted, turning the stage into a working place for actors immediately acquired a symbolic function: in an analogous way to Lysistrata, actors appeared as constructors, building the revolutionary future.[138]

The architectural organization of theatrical space in the early twenties seemed inseparable from an external approach to acting, laying primary emphasis on physical movement. Nemirovich-Danchenko's insistence on physicality in the performance of Lysistrata is essentailly in keeping with avant garde practice. Meyerhold had again pioneered in experimantation with non-psychological acting methods, drawing inspiration from the fairground show, as well as from the circus and the music hall. He gradually developped his own system of acting, biomechanics, which was first publicly demonstrated in the Magnanimous Cuckold. Performance was entirely concentrated on the actor's body conceived in mechanical terms, as a machine. Onstage movement was economical, highly stylized and responsive to the partner. giving the impression the three actors were a single triadic body.

Nemirovich-Danchenko had ecclectically absorbed the avant garde mechanized conception of acting. In Lysistrata, even though the acting is highly physical, it never ceases to be representational. Perhaps Meyerhold's earlier post-revolutionary productions can be more closely related to Lysistrata. The ceaseless clowning of the actors in Tarelkin's Death (1922) who poured water over each other, fought with

---

137 Christine Hamon-Sirégols, Le Constructivisme au théâtre, p. 312.

138 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 92.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sticks and bulls' bladders and struggled with the whims of the set immediately brings to mind the rich physical activity in the battle of the Lysistrata production. The two versions of Mystery Bouffe were also an influential prototype. These productions had demonstrated that acting forms inspired from popular entertainment could be used to great effect in performance.

Mystery Bouffe is also interesting for setting the precedent of adopting sharply contrasting moods to differentiate between revolutionary and reactionary crowds, resorting to the heroic and the comic spirit, respectively. Meyerhold had characterized the play as a "heroic, epic and satiric depiction of the times,"[139] and Mayakovsky had explained that "Mystery" referred to everything that is great, while "Bouffe" to everything comic in the revolution.[140] In production, actors playing the reactionary Clean resorted to an excessively caricaturist, farcical and grotesque acting style which sharply contrasted to the lyrical pathos of the revolutionary Unclean. The latter were dressed in identical workers' overalls, as Meyerhold wanted them to merge idealistically into a single two dimensional placard image of the victorious class. The similarities to Lysistrata's contrastive conception of the two choruses are obvious.

Clearly, Nemirovich-Danchenko then utilized forms already developed by the avant garde to construct his production in the revolutionary spirit. The exuberant theatricality, large gestures, sharp contrasts and fast tempo of the action rendered the play's political message easily decodable as revolutionary. Inspired by left wing theatrical practice, Nemirovich-Danchenko had also resorted to a deliberate simplification of language and imagery to augment the production's receptivity. However, agitation in Lysistrata is more subtle, lacking the poster-like and crudely

---

139 Nikolai Gorchakov, The Theatre in Soviet Russia, translated by E. Lehrman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957) p. 134.

140 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 42.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

propagandistic flavor of the early revolutionary spectacles of the avantgarde. Nemirovich-Danchenko had softened the edges of Meyerhold's style, adapting it into a representational framework.

Significantly, the conception of realism presented in Lysistrata, a synthesis of avant garde and traditional features, appears faithfullly to reflect in practice Lunacharsky's vision of revolutionary theatre. In the early twenties, the Narkom sharply criticized the experimentation of the avant garde, maintaining that its nonrepresentational character imposed on the masses incomprehensible art forms "vague, contradictory, terrifying."[141] Abstraction was therefore unsuitable to express the revolutionary ideology. In 1922 Lunacharsky concluded that, for all its zeal, the avant garde "had not provided a picture, had not been able to provide a drama."[142]

Realism was absolutely essential for the expression of content. However, Lunacharsky did not subscribe to the richly detailed, naturalistic depiction of daily life. Theatre aspired to the interpretation of reality: "to observe the manifestations of life, to represent somehow its pulse, its essence, translating life freely into theatrical forms."[143] This interpretative task could best be served by employing the techniques and methods of the avant garde. The schematic, enlarged drawing of character and action could render a spectacle clear, simple and immediately comprehensible to the proletarian. Moreover, the employment of popular theatrical forms such as farce and melodrama, brought to the fore by the avant garde, added vividness to a production, further facilitating its receptivity. Formal experimentation could be valuable, provided it did not exclude representationalism.

---

141 Anatoli Vassilievitch Lounatcharsky, "Le théâtre et la révolution (1921)," in Théâtre et révolution, p. 101, my translation.

142 Ibid., p. 64.

143 Huntly Carter, The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia (London: Chapman and Dodd Ltd., 1924), pp. 141-142.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lunacharsky termed his conception of style "realistic expressionism" and defined it in 1922, on the occasion of Carmen's production at the Bolshoi, as "a realism that is native and familiar to us in all its determinants, and at the same time is unusual. constructed, so to speak, entirely in the new harmony, at the pitch of modern ideas and emotions."[144] The Narkom regarded his conception as a synthesis or compromise between the academic theatrical tradition and the avant garde. Revolutionary theatre should preserve the former's concern for realistic representation, rejecting however, the naturalist model. A new aesthetic should be developped, adapting abstract avant garde forms to a realistic framework. Lunacharsky defended Carmen as a production of an academic theatre that had successfully incorporated avant garde elements into the staging, such as the set's non-naturalist depiction of Spain. The production was notable as a step towards the right direction theatre should take in revolutionary times. By the mid twenties, Lunacharsky ascertained that the convergent movement he had envisioned between the left and the right theatre could clearly be apprehended in theatrical production. Concerning the rightist theatre he wrote approvingly, "traditional theatre has taken a step forward toward a placard quality, accelerated tempo, a certain stylization of life."[145] He clarified, "since our realism does not in the least abjure hyperbole, the caricature effect, then it is natural that the so called rightist theatre has felt it proper to assimilate some of the achievements of the very latest theatrical efforts."[146]

Lysistrata has a singular place in the development of the Soviet theatre, in that Lunacharsky enthusiastically and unequivocally recognized it as an exemplary model of his conception of the new theatre. On the occasion of the MAT's 25th anniverary

---

[144] Ibid., p. 142.

[145] Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 190.

[146] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the fall of 1923, he gave a vivid description of the revolutionary theatre's aspiration, linking Nemirovich-Danchenko's work to his own vision.[147] Again, he stresssed that traits of monumentality and simple expressionism rendered a production perfectly suitable for the needs of the new revolutionary audience, incapable of grasping nuances and details:

> No detail of daily life ... no bauble or pictorial ornament in a mise en scène image truly fantastic! The simplicity of the poster, certain dominant traits, precious blots of fundamental colors, the enormous expressive force of gesture, the profound contrast of the word! Intensity prevailing, all on cothurns, all on the loud-speaker. That's the theatre awaiting us, especially in the immediate future.[148]

These formal requirements had been perfectly met by the MAT's most recent production: "Lysistrata magnificently exemplifies that the theatre [MAT] has found the way towards the new style of the manifesto and of monumentality, the poignant contrasts, the audacity of scenic movements, attaining whirling force, at times."[149] In the same article, Lunacharsky pointed out perceptively that the production's form contained borrowed elements from the left avant garde. However, he warmly praises the director for creatively integrating them to the MAT's artistic tradition, "by bending them to the requirements of his cultural intuition."[150] Consistent to his views on convergence, the Narkom stressed the importance of preserving tradition as the foundation of progress: "at the same time, having made advances in this new path, the theatre [MAT] does not forget the high level of its own proper culture. ...

---

147 Anatoli Vassilievitch Lounatcharsky, "Le Théâtre d'Art de Moscou (1923)," in Théâtre et révolution, pp. 215-224.

148 Ibid., p. 221, my translation.

149 Ibid., p. 222, my translation.

150 Ibid., my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yes, culture is a burden, but it assures the stability of new conquests."[151]

As mentioned earlier, in 1925 Lunacharsky still had vivid memories of Lysistrata, and strongly maintained that it was a production of historical importance.[152] For the Narkom, its significance lay precisely in the convergence of avant garde with traditional elements, which he had singled out in 1923. As he enthusiastically explained, again referring to the polarly opposed attitudes reconciled in Lysistrata,

> The external shaping and staging of the libretto, in which you managed to surpass the most daring achievements of the "left wing" theatre and in which you passed the play through the prism of refined taste and academic learning in the best sense of the word, is absolutely amazing."[153]

The Narkom also regarded Lysistrata as a landmark in the development of the MAT. Significantly, in 1923 he chose to refer to the production in the official context of the theatre's anniversary, using it as conclusive proof that the MAT had modernized its outlook, responding to the aesthetic and political needs of the revolutionary contemporaneity:

> There is no doubt — and a production like Lysistrata is there to prove it — that a new Art Theatre is succeeding the old, drawing its vitality from elements that have developed in the atmosphere of the studios, which is full of freedom. There is no doubt that this theatre — the sensibility of Nemirovich-Danchenko guarantees it — will take into consideration the demands of the new public.[154]

The MAT had successfully managed to progress by adapting left wing

---

151 Ibid., my translation.

152 See p. 1 of present study.

153 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, pp. 226-227.

154 Anatoli Vassilievitch Lounatcharsky, "Le Théâtre d'Art de Moscou (1923)," in Théâtre et révolution, p. 222., my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experimentation to its realistic outlook, finally freed of bourgeois aestheticism. There was no radical break with its traditional artistic principles.

Lunacharsky was not alone in regarding Lysistrata as evidence of the MAT's development. Impressed critics declared loud and clear consensus on this point. Boris Romashov in Isvestia found that "Lysistrata is the Moscow Art Theatre's first major production responding to contemporary requisites."[155] Similarly, Samuel Margolin wrote: "Lysistrata is the Moscow Art Theatre's extraordinary success, demarkating its enormous progress ..."[156] In a more jovial mood, another reviewer commented, "Lysistrata has lifted the Moscow Art Theatre out of its frame of twenty-five years of tradition, and has whirled it off in a precipitous tempo of joy."[157] E. Bieskin perhaps made the most memorable comment on Lysistrata, significaltly entitling his article, "Burning of the Cherry Orchard," to highlight the significance of the production. He wrote: "The cherry trees are burning in the flames of Lysistrata ..." to which Nemirovich-Danchenko replied, "the orchard may burn, the soil, never."[158]

Following Lysistrata's success, the MAT's future, for the first time since the revolution, definitely looked more prosperous. Lunacharsky's authority was a secure guarantee. The Narkom now unequivocally declared that he supported the theatre not only for its historical importance but also for its promise. Towards the end of his inaugural speech in 1923, he emphatically repeated, "the tendency of a studio, and of a spectacle like Lysistrata give us hence the certitude that the theatre [MAT] ... is

---

155 Quoted in J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes , pp. 222-223, my translation.

156 Quoted in Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for June, 1923, p. 368.

157 Quoted in Sergei Berthensson, "The Story of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio," in The Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program.

158 Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for June 16, 1923, p. 367.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

being reorganized on a new formal conception, capable precisely of receiving the new content."[159] As a result of this development, he concluded, the MAT's anniversary was a festive occasion, marking, not only the theatre's past contribution, but also its future prosperity: "this day appears to us from now on potentially fertile with magnificent fruit."[160] Official approval was also demonstrated, by conferring on the directors of the MAT the title of People's Artist of the Republic, in October of 1923, which Meyerhold had also received a few months earlier.

It is well worth investigating whether Lunacharsky's enthusiastic endorsement had an impact on Soviet theatre practice. Significantly, the Aristophanic production appears to have served as a model for the set design of a major play on the Russian civil war, K. Trenev's. Liubov Yarovaya (1926) at the Maly Theatre. According to Rudnitsky, the directors Ivan Platon and Lev Prozorovsky had borrowed devices from the avant garde, most clearly apparent in Nick Menshutin's set design, that "had an unmistakably leftist look."[161] However, Rudnitsky has failed to notice that the set has been directly influenced by Rabinovich's work for Lysistrata. Similarities are immediately apparent: Menshutin's set was a complex construction of circular forms, colorless and unpainted, evoking the architecture of a southern soviet town.[162] As in Rabinovich's set, the whiteness of the lines sharply contrasted to a uniform bright blue backdrop. Moreover, set changes were effected by means of the revolve, to accomodate the play's episodic structure. Another direct connection to Lysistrata is that Vera Pashennaya, a distinguished Maly actress, had played the title role in both productions.

---

159 Anatoli Vassilievitch Lounatcharsky, "Le Théâtre d'Art de Moscou (1923)," in Théâtre et révolution, p. 224., my translation.

160 Ibid., p. 224, my translation.

161 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 187.

162 See Figure 3-14.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Liubov Yarovaya was as significant to the development of the Maly theatre as Lysistrata had been for the MAT two years earlier: its success brought the Maly, previously buried by leftist critics, to the center of cultural life. Lunacharsky intentionally characterized the production "a real triumph of the leftist theatre," stressing that the avant garde had no monopoly on the revolutionay.[163] However, the similarities in the set design between Liubov Yarovaya and Lysistrata suggest that a source of Maly's modernization was the right wing theatre. The filtering of leftist elements into Lysistrata might have served as a model for the renovation of the Maly in the 1920s. This tentative hypothesis can be confirmed by a close comparative study of the two productions. It would be essential to know how the staging was organized conceptually in the space defined by the resembling architectural set. Also it is worth establishing to what extent the similar theme of the two plays — civil war— dictated analogous choices in the staging. Research should certainly also extend to other productions. For example, the influence of Lysistrata's set can also be detected in the staging of Boris Romashov's The Bridge of Fire, produced at the Maly in 1929. Rudnitsky compares this production to Liubov Yarovaya, detecting influences in A. Arapov's set design as well as in acting style.[164] Similarities in acting style are perhaps to be expected, as central participants in The Bridge of Fire had also taken part in Liubov Yarovaya. The set's prototype, however, should be traced further back, to Lysistrata. By 1929, central features of Rabinovich's design appear to have become typified: a structure containing circular elements set on the revolve, against a neutral background of uniform color.[165]

The staging of Lysistrata also seems to have drawn attention to the full potential

---

[163] Cited in Constantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 187.

[164] Ibid., pp. 266-267.

[165] See Figure 3-15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of Aristophanes as a political dramatist, relevant to the revolutionary period. Echoeing Lunacharsky's famous slogan "back to Ostrovsky," a reviewer of Lysistrata urged, "back to Aristophanes," referring to the "vital need of the contemporary audience for social satire."[166] Other critics similarly found that the MAT "had resurrected Aristophanes," "it had brought close to us a friend of humanity."[167] In the general enthusiasm, the ancient dramatist was viewed almost as a modern writer. since Nemirovich-Danchenko "had found the forms to embody his ideas."[168]

Indeed, Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata was received as a stimulating proposal for staging Aristophanes. In the 1923 season, Moscow had also seen the opening of Women in the Assembly at the Kommissarjevsky theatre. Comparison was inevitable. The Kommissarjevsky production had employed a drastic adaptation. which even included a scene from Shakespeare's Pericles. The adaptation. as well as the production's emphasis on entertainment, were criticized for destroying the socio-political content of the play. Boris Romashov characterized the production a frivolous spectacle that had vulgarized Aristophanes.[169] Interestingly, the critic's proposal for the appropriate way to stage the play appears to be inspired from Nemirovich-Danchenko's conception of the parabasis. He proposed a mise en scène in the form of a trial, in which the audience would directly participate. so that the problem of women's equality "would find wide popular appeal."[170] In contrast to Lysistrata, the Kommissarjevsky production had misguidedly presented the issue as a women's concern, ignoring its wider social context. This solution was incongruous

---

166 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes. p. 219, my translation.

167 Ibid. p. 223, my translation.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid. p. 220.

170 Ibid. my translation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with "the contemporary revolutionary spirit."[171]

As an Aristophanic production, the success of Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata was unparalleled on the early Russian stage. In 1924, there appeared another staging of the play in Leningrad by the avant garde director S. E. Radlov, an associate of Meyerhold. Radlov had intimately explored the popular theatrical tradition in an attempt to establish a new folk theatre. Similarly to Nemirovich-Danchenko, he emphasized political and popular elements in his interpretation. The production bore the subtitle "a feast of peace" and was conceived as a celebratory spectacle, to commemorate the decade since "the onset of the bloody imperialist war."[172] In this adaptation, A. A. Piotrovsky had incorporated excerpts from the The Acharnians, Peace and The Wasps, to emphasize the pacifist appeal of the original. The mise en scène had a distinctly formalist, avant garde flavor, immediately apparent in E. Slovtsova's design, an abstract composition of compact geometrical shapes. The techniques and styles of fairground theatre and the circus were fully exploited from a left wing theatre perspective, giving free rein to theatricality. Characteristically, the production's credits included the "instructor in acrobatics."[173] In contrast to Nemirovich-Danchenko's, Radlov's Lysistrata was received by the public "without applause" and quickly disappeared from the repertory.[174]

The MAT's popular conception of the play thus remained unchallenged on the early Soviet stage. Curiously, in spite of its success, this Aristophanic interpretation did not have substantial influence on Aristophanic theatrical practice in Russia.[175]

---

171 Ibid. my translation.

172 Ibid. p. 231, my translation.

173 Ibid.

174 Ibid. p. 230, my translation.

175 Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata had a hasty unimpressive revival at the MAT in 1927.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Production of the ancient dramatist throughout the Stalinist period appears to have been extremely limited. On the celebratory occasion of the 2400 years since the birth of Aristophanes in 1954, the MAT's Lysistrata was still regarded in the Soviet Union as an unsurpassed achievement, "the most important Aristophanic production on the Russian stage."[176]

Lysistrata's reception in the United States in the 1925-26 season was enthusiastic, as in its home country. The Musical Studio was brought to America by Morris Gest, an energetic entrepreneur who had previously arranged the transatlantic theatrical tours of distinguished Europeans, including Eleonora Duse, Max Reinhardt and the MAT's dramatic company headed by Stanislavsky in 1923 and 1924. Gest had set up an enormous publicity campaign months before the Musical Studio's New York opening, in December of 1925. Sensational details were circulating in the press about the titanic nature of the enterprize. The American public learned that there had been more than two years of negotiations with the Russians and that Luncacharsky had finally given his permission for the Musical Studio to tour abroad in response to an American petition of 24,000 (!) signatures.[177]

Lysistrata was chosen for the opening night in New York, on December 14, 1925, set up as a dazzling social event. The receiving committee included distinguished patrons and artists such as the tycoon Otto Khan and Chaliapin. "The house was packed and the social register ransacked."[178] "Almost everyone in the who's who who could beg, borrow or buy a seat was in the audience and there was abundant

---

176 J. M. Nakhov, "E kleronomia tou Aristophane," in Aristophanes. Meletes, p. 221, my translation.

177 The New York Times, September 4, 1925.

178 Alan Dale, American, December 15, 1925.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

enthusiasm for the play and its interpreters."[179] At the end of the performance. Chaliapin gave a speech in Russian and Nemirovich-Danchenko also addressed the audience "with brimming eyelids", overwhelmed by "the prolonged cheers".[180]

Prima facie, the American campaign aimed not only at impressing the public but also at edifying it. Oliver Sayler, a scholarly associate of M. Gest, had supervised the English translation of all plays and librettos of the Musical Studio's repertory on show at the American tour.[181] Also, he had edited a luxurious souvenir program which included Russian articles on the Studio and its productions.[182] Moreover, Sayler had been commissioned to write a book especially on the MAT's Musical Studio, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, published in 1925. The press mainly utilized material from these sources to cover the presentation of the Studio before and after its opening.

Sayler's work is important as the first and to date the only extensive western study on the Musical Studio, devoting an entire chapter on Lysistrata. However, the book aims primarily at satisfying publicity purposes. Inside the Moscow Art Theatre may have the guise of scholarly impartiality, yet it is essentially manipulative in the presentation of the material. Sayler emphasizes artistic concerns, divesting them entirely of their ideological context. This is a glaring fault, especially as his material is mostly derived from Russian sources. Understandably, Sayler was concerned that the Musical Studio steer clear of problems with the American authorities, ever hostile to communist cultural imports. However, his tactic results in distortion of facts.

---

179 Paul Morris, The Evening W., December 15, 1925.

180 Walter Winchell in Graphic, December, 15, 1925.

181 Oliver Sayler, ed. Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio.

182 Oliver Sayler, ed. The Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio, Souvenir Program.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

There is an insistent concern, showing only too clearly, to dissociate the MAT from the Soviet government. The company is almost presented as a dissident theatre, that played the old repertory "at the risk of prison."[183] In renovating the lyric stage, Sayler clarifies that "it was not so much the good will of governmental authorities, ... as it was the naive and pliable mood of a new theatregoing public that enabled him [Nemirovich-Danchenko] to attain his goal."[184] Indeed, Sayler overemphasizes the role of the MAT's supposedly loving, non critical audience: "public veneration has drawn protecting circles round the theatre and its presiding geniuses."[185]

Artistic innovation is freely and innocuously expounded on, yet discussion balances delicately between adverse concerns touching on publicity. Sayler uneasily insists both on the Musical Studio's originality, so as not give the impression it is a second rate copy of the dramatic company, as well as on its traditional outlook, stressing its close association to the MAT. Thus, he enthusiastically propounds Lysistrata's breakthrough departure from realism, crediting Nemirovich-Danchenko for this achievement, who "realized ... he would have to fly in the face of many of the theories which he had helped to work out in practice within those [MAT's] walls."[186] The director is exaggeratedly compated to Wagner, Nietsche and Craig, as an artistic reformer, seeking for a form fusing all theatrical elements. His Musical Studio is supposedly regarded in Moscow "as a Vesuvius within the citadel. No one can tell when it is going to burst forth and bury alive some outworn tradition."[187] However, Sayler is always careful not to overemphasize innovation, so as not to upset the close

---

183 Morris Gest, in Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 225.

184 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 230.

185 Ibid., p. 224.

186 Ibid., p. 54.

187 Ibid., p. 152.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

connection between the Musical Studio and the MAT — widely known and esteemed in the West at the time. Thus, he confidently reassures the American public, who had seen the MAT dramatic company perform in the U. S., "that we are due for a second course in these same lessons at the hands of the Art Theatre's Musical Studio, is the natural corollary to the fact that the Studio is inheritor of the same methods and traditions that rule its parent."[188]

Discussion of Lysistrata entirely avoids the thorny question of its relation to the Soviet revolution. Sayler refers to the Russian interpretation's contemporary relevance, quoting Smolin on the play's "great social and human significance."[189] However, the passage is too general in tone to be helpful. Similarly, Sayler's gloss does not aid clarification: "Amazing as it may be, the coin of [Lysistrata's] leading motives is still current after nearly two and a half millenniums — war, peace, nature, health, men, women, sexual desire."[190] The author mentions that in recent times the play has been related to pacifism and feminism, but fails to specify whether and how the Russian interpretation is responsive to these concerns. As regards the adaptation, he misleadingly gives the impression it has preserved the sexual frankness of the Greek text, taking to task B. B. Rogers for purifying it and M. Donnay for vulgarizing it.[191] The "Dionysian fervor" of the modern Russian stage allowed Nemirovich-Danchenko "to comprehend" that "Aristophanes ... has infused ... the same poetic beauty into his phallic episodes as into his scenes of moral indignation ..."[192]

---

[188] Ibid., p. 30.

[189] Ibid., p. 92.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Benjamin Bickley Rogers, translator, Lysistrata, in Aristophanes, Vol. I; Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata, (Paris: Ollendorff, 1894); Laurence Housman, Lysistrata (London: The Women's Press, 1911).

[192] Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, pp. 104-105.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The American press presented the Russian interpretation as feminist, perhaps taking the cue from the solidarity and comradeship in the women's camp, emphasized in the performance. Reviewers discovered the play was "the first and most famous contribution to the drama of feminism," supplying "conclusive evidence that the feminist movement is not modern."[193] Oversimplified contemporary analogies abounded. Lysistrata was "a forerunner of the modern Pankhursts," even "the handsome Christabel Pankhurst of her day."[194] Naturally, language limitations did not allow more deep reaching analyses of the production's supposedly feminist content. However, if Russian was a barrier to appreciating interpretative issues, it was perceived as an asset to appreciating the production's aesthetic merit: "the Russian language, for most of us a barrier to complete enjoyment, ironically serves to concentrate our attention on the means of production."[195] Lysistrata was hailed by the critic of the New York Times as a "technical achievement in theatrical arts" in appealing to all the senses.[196] The numerous, profuse descriptions of the staging testify to its immediate appeal. Reports are frequently impressive in giving an extremely vivid sense of the spectacle, finely detailed and exact, inspiring:

> These groupings, the flame and terracotta in which they are clothed, the white concentricity of the pillars and the stairways within which they flutter, the smiting blue of the sky which encircles everything — here are pictures so swift, so heroic, so magnificently burlesque, they seem to have been inspired by Homer on a saxophone.[197]

---

[193] Paul Morris, The Evening W, December 15, 1925.

[194] Don Carle Gillette, The Billboard, December 26, 1925; Unidentified review in "Clippings, Lysistrata, Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio Production," file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

[195] The New York Times, December 15, 1925.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Gilbert Gabriel, Sun, December 15, 1925.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Overcoming cultural differences, the Russian Lysistrata was almost perceived as a product of the jazz age. Another noteworthy feature of the American reception is the wholehearted appreciation of the production's guttural humor. Indeed, the spectacle was regarded as "one of the best light comedies on view in this town [New York]," "High entertainment, rollicking, honest to goodness fun."[198] Language presented no problem: " ... the intensely oracular good humor of whatever they were saying or singing surged up and swept language limitations away."[199] The Russian Lysistrata then had a highly successful intercultural career. The obfiscation of its politcal content rendered the spectacle highly suitable for capitalist and proletarian popular audiences alike.

In spite of its enthusiastic reception on both sides of the Atlantic, Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata has escaped critical notice in the West. The Studio's work, at least until the Western tour in 1925 consisted of operettas and adaptations of opera and poetry, in which music played a significant part. Lysistrata, as a prose drama was an exceptional offering, which has been misleadingly associated to the musical spectacles in the repertory. As early as 1927, Huntly Carter had the erroneous impression that the production was "a musical version of Aristophanes's Lysistrata with its early interpretation of a 'suffragette movement'."[200] The uncritical repetition of the American feminist reading is indicative of the author's reluctance to consider the project worthy of original research. The standard reference to the Musical Studio in modern criticism is that it produced operettas and light operas. If mentioned at all. Lysistrata is misleadingly presented as a musical work. For example, Marc Slonim.

---

198 Samuel Chotzinoff, World, December 15, 1925; Citizen, December 15, 1925.

199 Gilbert Gabriel, Sun, December 15, 1925.

200 Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917-1928 (New York: Brentano's Ltd., 1929), p. 253.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in his account of the Musical Studio, writes that its development "continued with other operettas, reaching the peak with Offenbach's La Périchole with Olga Baclanova, and a young lively company, and Lysistrata adapted from Aristophanes."[201]

Following earlier critics, Western historians are disinterested in the Musical Studio, assuming it was not integrally related to the MAT, especially since Stanislavsky had no connection to it. Norris Houghton refers to Lysistrata as an example of the Musical Studio's influence by the new non illusionist stagecraft. Yet, clearly, this has no bearing on the development of the MAT which "never abolished representationalism."[202] It is noteworthy that Huntly Carter mentions Lysistrata as an "exception" to the offerings of the MAT in the 1920s, referring to the acrobatic acting and the constructivist set. Yet, on afterthought, he quickly dismisses it as a product of studio work, having no relation to the main company other than the use of the same stage for performance. He explains: "Lysistrata was produced by the first M.A.T. company (sic) at the Moscow Art Theatre while Stanislavsky was in America."[203]

Indeed, since the early part of the century, Western criticism has inextricably associated Nemirovich-Danchenko with Stanislavsky, refusing to study the former as a theatre personality worthy of consideration in his own right. Studies on the MAT tend to focus entirely on Stanislavsky, regarding him essentially as the sole creator of the company's artistic profile. Nemirovich-Danchenko has been predominantly regarded as an administrator. A typical early example is given in Huntly Carter:

---

201 Marc Slonim, Russian Theatre from the Empire to the Soviets (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 313.

202 Norris Houghton, Moscow Rehearsals (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936), p. 162.

203 Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917-1928, p. 251.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"this business side was well looked after by Nemirovich-Danchenko; the spiritual side (which yielded the term Art Theatre) was the concern of Stanislavsky."[204] Researchers are disinterested in his directorial activity, tending to concentrate solely on the productions he co-directed with Stanislavsky. Thus, his artistic contribution to the MAT is at best regarded as marginal.

Lysistrata's was mounted while Stanislavsky was in America. Benedetti's recent biography of Stanislasky, a valuable Western source on the MAT contains minimal information on developments in Moscow, in that period.[205] At the meeting with Nemirovich-Danchenko in Germany in August 1923, Stanislavsky "learned that the studios, including the Opera were in a poor state."[206] No mention of Lysistrata, though it had recently successfully premiered. Stanislavsky's earlier major biographer, D. Magarshack, is unabasheddly prejudiced against Nemirovich-Danchenko. On his return from America, Stanislavsky only found a wasteland:

> during his absence, Nemirovich had dissolved his studios. This was a logical step from Nemirovich's point of view: he did not possess Stanislavsky's fanatical zeal, nor did he enjoy his authority. His knowledge of the system, too, was inadequate.[207]

The reader unavoidably forms a biased picture of the man. Not only was he incapable of artistic work, he was also hindering Stanislavsky's creativity. Indeed, Benedetti explains the MAT's successful development in the period 1925-1928, by recourse to Nemirovich-Danchenko's absence from Moscow: "The two year period of Stanislavsky's control had scothed the myth of his inefficiency. The fact is that with

---

204 Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917-1928, p. 108.

205 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography (London: Methuen, 1988).

206 Ibid., p. 261.

207 David Magarshack, Stanislavsky (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 369.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Nemirovich out of the way Stanislavsky thrived and so did the theatre with him."[208]

The prejudice against Nemirovich-Danchenko and his work at the Musical Studio probably largely accounts for why Lysistrata has fallen into oblivion in the West. The production's reinstatement can potentially alter fundamental precepts about the MAT and its leading figures. Indeed, Lysistrata has unjustly been ignored. The methodological approach of studying the MAT's development independently from the Musical Studio's appears to be misguided. The extensive references to the production's Russian reception mentioned earlier, clearly show that at the time. contemporaries identified the Musical Studio work as a MAT product.[209] Surely, it is difficult to disregard the authority of Lunacharsky, who, on the MAT's 25th anniversary — to make no mistake— presented Lysistrata as conclusive evidence of the company's revolutionary development. It is also noteworthy that Lysistrata is the sole production the Narkom chose to refer to, in exemplifying the MAT's work since 1917. Indeed, he concluded that the company was still a vital force with a promising future, entirely based on Nemirovich-Danchenko's studio activity.

Not only the successes, but also the failures of the Musical Studio were unequivocally reflected on the main company. In "The Solitude of Stanislavsky" (1921), Meyerhold refers to Nemirovich-Danchenko's directorial activity, to support his view that Stanislavsky is bitterly isolated in his own theatre. Examples are in fact drawn from the studio work. Meyerhold advises his old teacher to dissociate himself "from those who prepare, after Cain, an operetta alcoholfrei," continuing sarcastically, "What vulgarity! Gluck's Orpheus, Mozart, Wagner, Aristophanes!

---

208 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 301.

209 See quotations corresponding to footnotes 149, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Whatever one wishes next to Cain. We get the message."[210] A year earlier, on the occasion of the Musical Studio production The Daughter of Madame Angot by Lecocq, Meyerhold had similarly extracted a devastating conclusion about the main company: "Now we know what the Moscow Art Theatre audience consists of, leftovers of the bourgeoisie ... ."[211] Again, in the summer of 1923 he wrote to Stanislavsky, expressing the wish to meet him in Germany. In his brief letter, he found enough space to mention Lysistrata, specifying: "I will talk to you about Lysistrata in your theatre ... ."[212] Clearly, Meyerhold consistently follows the apparently common practice in that period, of referring to Nemirovich-Danchenko's projects as MAT work, frequently even omitting to specify they were produced by the Musical Studio.

If indeed Lysistrata can be considered within the context of MAT production, it would be necessary to revise important assumptions about this company's post-revolutionary development. The forging of the MAT's new artistic identity in the Soviet period is generally categorically presumed to have been initiated in 1926, with Stanislavsky's production of Ardent Heart, the Russian classic by Ostrovsky. This work is presented as a landmark in the history of MAT. According to Gorchakov, "[it] proclaimed the theatre's new personality which was not naturalism, nor truth to life but artistic truth."[213] Magarshack also finds that the production "marked a definite break with the "Chekhov traditions" of the MAT. The

---

210 V. E. Meyerhold, "La solitude de Stanislavsky," in Écrits sur le théâtre, p. 65, my translation. Byron's Cain, directed by Stanislavsky, was produced at the MAT in 1920.

211 Cited in Jean Benedetti, Stanislavski: A Biography (London: Methuen, 1988), p. 248.

212 V. E. Meyerhold, "Letter to Stanislavsky (August 23, 1923)" in Écrits sur le théâtre, p. 111, my translation.

213 Nicolai Gorchakov, Russian and Soviet Theatre, p. 238.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Chekhovian half tones" had now finally been abandoned."[214] The reception of Ardent Heart is also regarded as a turning point for the theatre. Benedetti notes that "the production was received with the enthusiasm of the earlier days."[215] Even the Russian historian K. Rudnitsky singles out the production for having "sharply altered the traditional opposition on the style of the MAT, regarded of a deliberately muted tone."[216]

Similarly to aesthetic evolution, the MAT's political integration to the revolution is assumed to have started in the mid-twenties. Historians commonly focus on the production of new Soviet plays for evidence of the theatre's ideological evolution, tending to ignore the staging of the classics. The most frequently discussed productions in connection to the theatre's Sovietization are M. Bulgakov's The Days of the Turbins (1926) and V. Ivanov's Armored Train (1927), both directed by Stanislavsky. By the end of 1926, about a year after Stanislavsky had actively resumed directing, "the Art Theatre appeared to have found its ideological place."[217]

Granted that Lysistrata was a MAT production, research on the company's evolution in the Soviet era must look for signs of integration earlier than 1926. In particular, the period 1923-1925 when Nemirovich-Danchenko was the sole director of the theatre in Moscow is worthy of serious consideration. Lysistrata would have to be acknowledged as a major first step in the process of integration. This study has shown that it was inspired and staged as an innovative project, radically going against the grain of the MAT's traditional naturalistic outlook and apoliticism. The production is also remarkable for masterfully embodying the new ideological and

---

214 David Magarshack, Stanislavsky, p. 369.

215 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 269.

216 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 118.

217 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 271.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

especially aesthetic concerns of the post-revolutionary era. Mounting a political play with a clear and unequivocal, even propagandistic message directly relevant to actuality was without precedent on the MAT stage. Moreover, ideology was innovatively interpreted theatrically in terms of a non illusionistic mise en scène, set in a constructivist space and emphasizing physicality in the acting. Indeed, Lysistrata would also have to be recognized as the first MAT production effectively employing avant garde devices in the staging. At the same time, however, experimental methods have been fused with more traditional aesthetic and interpretative concerns, producing an extended definition of realism.

The decision of whether to consider Lysistrata a MAT production then, is crucial, since it appears to have considerable impact on this company's history in the Soviet period. An equally significant result of this study, is that Nemirovich-Danchenko emerges as a more important figure than is commonly realized in the West. In view of Lysistrata, he appears to have been politically sophisticated and quick to capture the ideological spirit of the times. His correspondence and rehearsal notes have shown clearly that, as early as 1922, he had already fully grasped the significance of doing political theatre and was effectively able to put theory into practice. It is also remarkable that his production received official recognition by the Narkom as an exemplary model of revolutionary theatre. This coincidence of approach reveals at least Nemirovich-Danchenko's perceptive political instinct. However, the sound and thoughtful, well integrated interpretation of Lysistrata as a popular play presents strong contrary evidence against the prejudiced charges that he was "a toady towards the authorities,"[218] taking "the revolutionary path in order to conform to the demand of the moment."[219] He certainly was adaptable, but it is at least questionable to

---

218 David Magarshack, Stanislavsky, foreword, xi.

219 Huntly Carter, The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917-1928, p. 253.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

what extent he was an opportunist. Also noteworthy in connection to his adroit political instinct is that he was the first to introduce the production of a contemporary Russian play, Pugachev's Rebellion, into the MAT's repertory, in 1925.

By contrast, Stanislavsky's adaptability to the revolutionary spirit was much slower and more laborious. According to Benedetti, "Stanislavsky was not a political sophisticate. He had no conception of the ideological issues involved and no knowledge of Marxist theory."[220] His sole major attempt to produce politically relevant theatre prior to 1922, Byron's Cain (1920), was a downright failure. Cain was an ambitious project conceived as a response to revolution and the civil strife. Stanislavsky had conscientiously struggled to reveal the play's contemporary relevance, holding long rehearsals and discussions with the cast on the nature of revolution and the class war, supplying contemporary analogies and taking copious notes from philosophical works. Yet, in spite of the effort, the result according to Rudnitsky, was "overrationalized and heavy."[221] For Magarshack, Cain revealed "Stanislavsky's lack of political sense ... the play turned out to be more in the nature of a biblical legend than a tract against divine authority."[222] Similarly, Benedetti regards the decision to stage Cain "a huge error of judgement on everyone's part."[223]

Admittedly, Stanislavsky's political integration was delayed by the American tour. However, he was back in Moscow in the summer of 1924 but produced no new theatre work until the winter of 1926 when Ardent Heart premiered. This year also marks his first staging of a contemporary play, directly relevant to the revolution.[224]

---

220 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 255.

221 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 51.

222 Ibid., pp. 353-354.

223 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 244.

224 The Days of the Turbins, by M. Bulgakov.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

On his return from America, Stanislavsky first set out to revise his autobiography for the Russian edition. As Benedetti points out, it is highly noteworthy that he describes the post-revolutionary opposition to the MAT purely in artistic terms, ignoring or choosing to ignore the political issues. This is as late as 1925, by contrast to Nemirovich-Danchenko's political references in his writings, in 1922.

In view of Lysistrata, Nemirovich-Danchenko also appears to have successfully put into practice important aesthetic innovations transcending naturalism earlier than Stanislavsky. This is especially clear in the field of actor training. It is noteworthy that, in the early post-revolutionary period, both directors had set up musical studios, with the common, though independently pursued objective of achieving a synthesis of word, movement and gesture in acting.[225] However, prior to 1922, these efforts had not produced any results remarkable for their divergence from the MAT's traditional methods. As regards prose drama, the experience of Cain had made Stanislavsky fully aware of his actors' shortcomings. The architectural scenery had glaringly exposed their difficulties in mastering expressive movement:

> A production based on three dimensions, obliging me to concentrate my attention on the actors' movements, showed me quite clearly that we not only needed good speech in the right tempo and the right rhythm but that we also needed to be able to move in rhythm.[226]

Benedetti concludes: "if there was one serious flaw in Stanislavsky's training at this period, it was in the area of physical expression."[227]

In the revival of Inspector General (1921), Stanislavsky had presented a grotesque

---

225 In 1918, Stanislavsky launched an Opera studio, which initially functioned as a workshop, open to opera singers of the Bolshoi company, as well as to members of the First and Second MAT studios.

226 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: An Introduction, p. 47.

227 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography, p. 243.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interpretation of the play, which led him to emphasize physicality in the acting. Yet, critics credited the production's success to the protagonist's — Michael Chekhov's — individual performance, rather than to Stanislavsky's direction. For example, Meyerhold disliked the production but considered Michael Chekhov's performance a breakthrough, revealing new ways of achieving the grotesque in acting.[228]

On his return from America, Stanislavsky acknowledged in the revised version of his autobiography that, in his absence, there had been advances in the physical aspects of acting, where he was weakest.[229] It is again not until 1926 and especially 1927 with his widely acknowledged masterpiece The Marriage of Figaro, that Stanislasvsky achieved important breakthroughs in non-naturalist acting. According to Benedetti, this production is regarded as the onset of Stanislavsky's work in terms of broad physical objectives, contributing an important development to the system.[230] The characteristic, carefully choreographed movements and timed pauses were abandoned and actors were instructed in rehearsal to simply respond truthfully to the reality of the cramped space. However, the freer conception of group movement introduced in The Marriage of Figaro is already present in Lysistrata. Apparently, then, Nemirovich-Danchenko must be acknowledged as the first MAT director to successfully experiment with physical expression in a major production, adapting avant garde devices to the MAT's traditional realistic outlook.

Apart from the acting, his early employment of avant garde innovations is especially clear in his scenic conception. Taking Cain (1920) into consideration, Nemirovich-Danchenko was quicker than Stanislavsky to introduce an architectural set exhibiting strong influence from the avant garde in its design, as well as in its

---

228 Ibid., pp. 245-247.

229 Ibid., p. 268.

230 Ibid., p. 277.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sophisticated use in performance. As mentioned earlier, Cain's three dimensional set had backlashed on Stanislavsky, exposing the actors' inability to physically master the space.[231] In this respect, Nemirovich-Danchenko's achievement in Lysistrata is again only comparable in importance to his partner's The Marriage of Figaro (1927). Rudnitsky cites as noteworthy the employment of the left wing artist, Golovin, to design the set, explaining that Stanislavsky had intended the external appearance of the production to be uncharacteristic of the MAT.[232]

However, analogies to Lysistrata extend beyond the common decision to resort to avant garde talent. Perhaps the hallmark of Marriage, strongly evoking Lysistrata, is the fast tempo of scene changes, which conceptually matched the inner action of the play. All elements of the production were welded together, forming an impressive rhythmic unity. Moreover, as in Lysistrata, there was no front curtain, so that set changes were at all times fully visible, incorporated to the play's interpretation. Even more strikingly, Stanislavsky boldly experimented with the revolve, allowing rotation in full view of the audience. Rudnitsky explains, making no reference to the precedent: "In the finale, Stanislavsky, ... for the first time in the history of MAT, set a revolving stage disk into motion before the spectators' eyes. The revolving of Golovin's structure, which had suddenly been transformed into a carousel, seemed to condense and repeat metaphorically the mad day's dizzy run of events."[233] Apparently then, Lysistrata and Marriage introduced certain analogous innovations in the spatial conception, inspired by the avant garde. However, whereas Stanislavsky is fully credited for his experimentation, Nemirovich-Danchenko is ignored.

Lysistrata also demonstrates another notable feature of Nemirovich-Danchenko's

---

231 See citation corresponding to footnote 226.

232 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 191.

233 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

directorial work: the production effectively exemplified a monumental, epic style. Indeed, Pavel Markov has noted: "This spectacle is even more promising than the result. It confirms the possibility of heroic theatre."[234] The MAT, and Stanislavsky in particular, had never achieved outstanding results with the production of drama on a monumental scale. Prometheus Bound, Stanislavsky's sole attempt to produce ancient Greek drama, was abandoned after long rehearsals, in the late twenties. Cain had been unsuccessful, in spite of the production's majestically monumental external appearance. Acknowledging the effort to achieve monumentality but not the result, Meyerhold had characterized the production "a tragic failure."[235] As Rudnitsky explains, the play "demanded open pathos and a loftiness of tone and style, unfamiliar to the Moscow Art Theatre which had never really performed tragedy successfully."[236] Stanislavsky had been more fortunate with Shakespeare, yet even these spare attemps to produce grand poetic drama had been moderately effective. The only Shakespearean project of the MAT in the 1920s had been Othello, supervised by Sudakov, on Stanislavsky's detailed plan. In spite of long rehearsals, the production was a failure. Benedetti comments, openly exposing his prejudice against Nemirovich-Danchenko: "It was perhaps foolish to imagine that someone else could interprete and stage Stanislavsky's detailed plan. The early days when Nemirovich had exploited Stanislavsky's ideas could not be recreated."[237] It is a fortunate accident for Nemirovich-Danchenko that Lysistrata was launched entirely independently of Stanislavsky, during his absence in America.

---

234 Cited in Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dni i Gody, Entry for September 25, 1923, p. 369.

235 V. E. Meyerhold, "La solitude de Stanislavsky," in Écrits sur le théâtre, p. 64, my translation.

236 Konstantin Rudnitsky, Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, p. 51.

237 Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky: A Biography , p. 310.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata then is centrally important to the study of Nemirovich-Danchenko's artistic capabilities. This production presents strong evidence that the director's contribution to the right wing theatre in the Soviet period was particularly significant. Surprisingly, in view of Lysistrata, Nemirovich-Danchenko appears to even overshadow Stanislavsky as a pioneer, in successfully introducing to the traditional theatre major formal and ideological innovations of the post-revolutionary era. However, Lysistrata's significance is not limited to serving as an introductory experiment. As shown earlier, this project is in fact a major production of the Soviet theatre exhibiting a mature synthesis of traditional aesthetic principles with avant garde features.

Indeed, Lysistrata is a highly remarkable instance of the convergent movement between the right and the left wing theatre, which Rudnitsky discusses at length in the volume Russian and Soviet Theatre, 1905-1930.[238] Making no references to this production, the historian argues that the first clearly articulated instances of the right wing theatre's convergence towards the left occur in 1925, with the production of new Soviet drama on the civil war at the more conservative theatres, including the academic establishments. This type of play introduced scenic requirements unfamiliar to the right wing theatre, such as the staging of battles, revolutionary rallies and rural assemblies, which were the hallmark of avant garde practice. The traditional theatre gradually readjusted its aesthetic to serve the scenic interpretation of the new drama, borrowing elements from the avant garde. Rudnitsky regards the Maly's production of Liubov Yarovaya (1926) as the first outstanding example clearly demonstrating left wing influence in the staging, insisting especially on its avant garde set design. However, as shown earlier, central features of the designer's work for this production have in fact been directly derived from Rabinovich's set for

---

238 Konstantin Rudnitsky, "Extremes Converge." in Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932, pp. 185-264.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata.

Interesting implications follow, concerning the study of convergence in the Soviet period: Lysistrata must be recognized as one of the earliest major productions supplying clear evidence of the right wing theatre's convergence towards the left. which must therefore be dated earlier than the mid-twenties. Lunacharsky's presentation of this production as a model of the new revolutionary theatre, which he regarded as convergent, affords Lysistrata a singular place in the study of the right wing theatre's integration. Moreover, it is significant that Lysistrata is a classic. challenging the hypothesis that convergence was initiated with the production of contemporary civil war plays.

Venturing one step further, Lysistrata was possibly an influential precedent for the staging of the new Soviet drama, as suggested by its connections to the landmark contemporary play Liubov Yarovaya. The strongest indication presented was the resembling set design, but there are others. Indeed, Lysistrata shares important common features with the contemporary plays, such as the central theme — civil war — and the characters, who are predominantly ordinary people rising to heroic action. Central staging requirements, such as the representation of battles and rallies are also analogous, indicating that perhaps the scenic influence of Lysistrata was more generalized. Another relevant consideration is that it would be natural for the right wing and especially for academic theatres such as the Maly to heed to the Narkom's preferences, setting out to imitate successful features of Lysistrata in their struggle for integration. This research path then, looks promising. The example of Maly also opens up another interesting possibility concerning convergence: besides the left wing, the right wing theatre and particularly the MAT's Musical Studio might also have served as a source for the integration of avant garde elements into a more traditional framework.

Coming now to Lysistrata's significance as an Aristophanic production. it is the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

first major modern interpretation of this play and of Aristophanic drama in general as théâtre du peuple. Nemirovich-Danchenko adopted an entirely novel approach to Lysistrata that bears no sign of influece from the preceding major projects presented in this dissertation. The popular interpretation appropriately emerged in one of the world's foremost modern communist republics, in the heroic and promising early post-revolutionary period. In that context, the significance of Aristophanes as a progressive political writer in support of popular causes appeared self evident. As shown earlier, Nemirovich-Danchenko gave prominence to characteristic features of théâtre du peuple in his interpretation, sacrificing, in some cases, the spirit of the original. He primarily emphasized a didactic political interpretation, opting for a tighter structure and drastically limiting or eliminating the original's profound irony and the coarse sexual humor. The classic was presented as a contemporary play, directly relevant to the Russian revolution and the civil war. Naturally, the chorus was the focus of this interpretation, which was partial to the women, projecting their struggle as heroic. For the first time in the period under study, the parabasis was preserved and fully exploited for its potential of directly addressing and influencing the audience. Scenically, the production is also readily identifiable as théâtre du peuple, in its adoption of a non illusionist style, giving free rein to a variety of forms and devices inspired from popular entertainment.

Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata did not set an interpretative trend, as its impact on Aristophanic production in Russia was minimal. However, it did have considerable influence on the American staging of the ancient comic writer, even though not as théâtre du peuple. The radical misinterpretation of the Russian Lysistrata's political message paved the way for a pseudo feminist American production, tailored to the tastes of the large public. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-1 Costume sketches by Isaac Rabinovich, for Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1923): from left to right, a member of the elderly male chorus, a young warrior and the Proboulos.

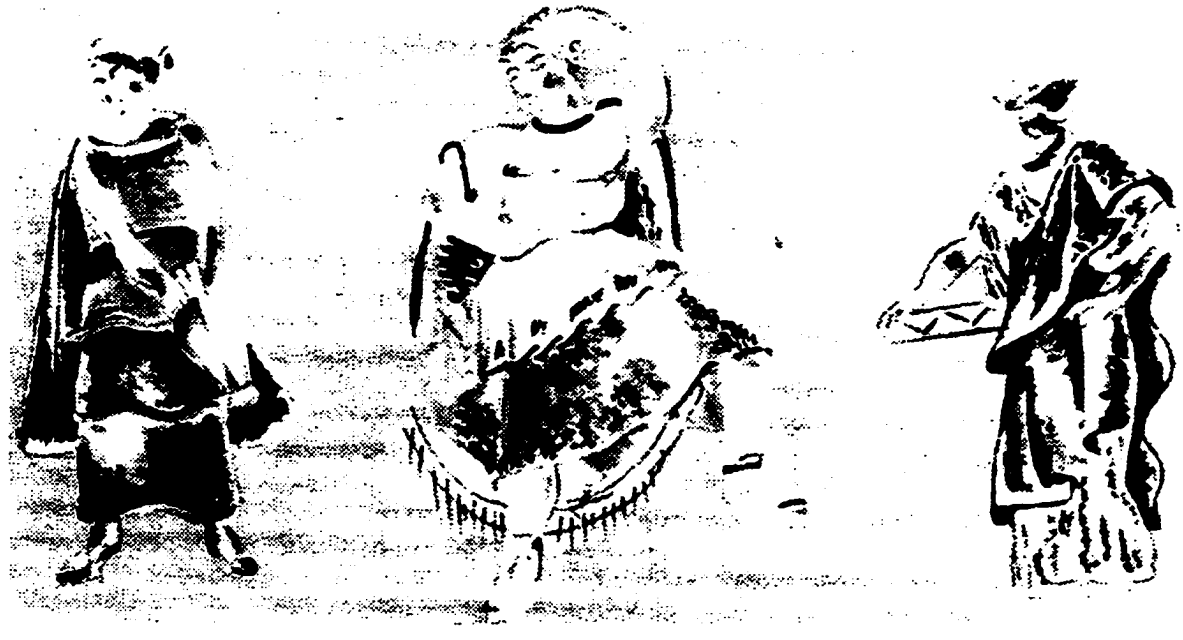

Fig. 3-2 Costume sketches of female chorus members by Isaac Rabinovich, for Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1923).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

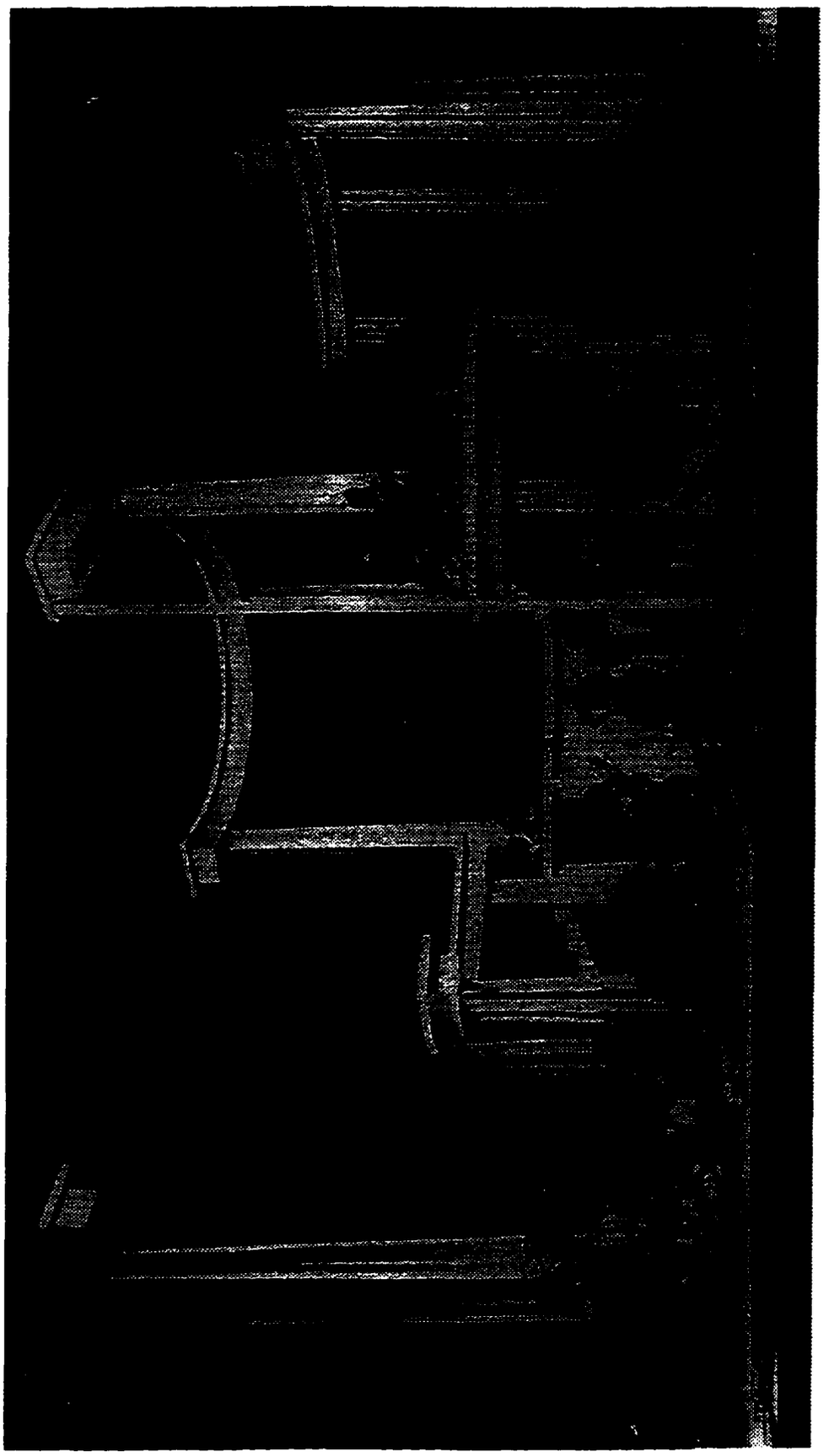

Fig. 3-3 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): choral battle, act I.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

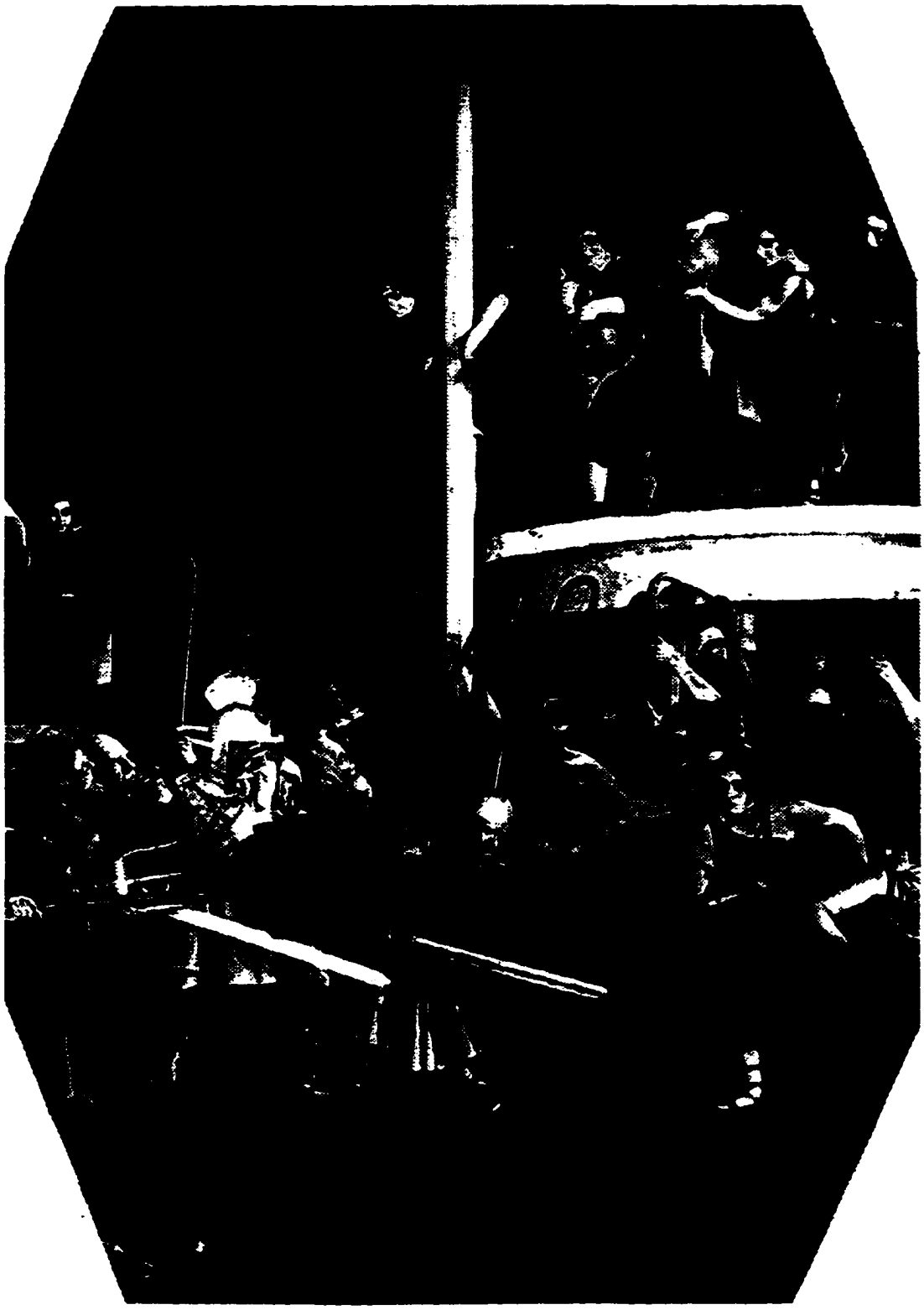

Fig. 3-4 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): choral battle, act I.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-5 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): choral battle, act I.

Fig. 3-6 Close-up of the Proboulos (Leonid Baratov) and two members of the male chorus. Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925), act I.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-7 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): Lysistrata (Olga Baclanova), debating with the Proboulos (Leonid Baratov).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-8 Olga Baclanova as Lysistrata, in Nemirovich-Danchenko's production of the play (1925).

Fig. 3-9 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): Lysistrata (Olga Baclanova) and Kinesias (Peter Saratovski).

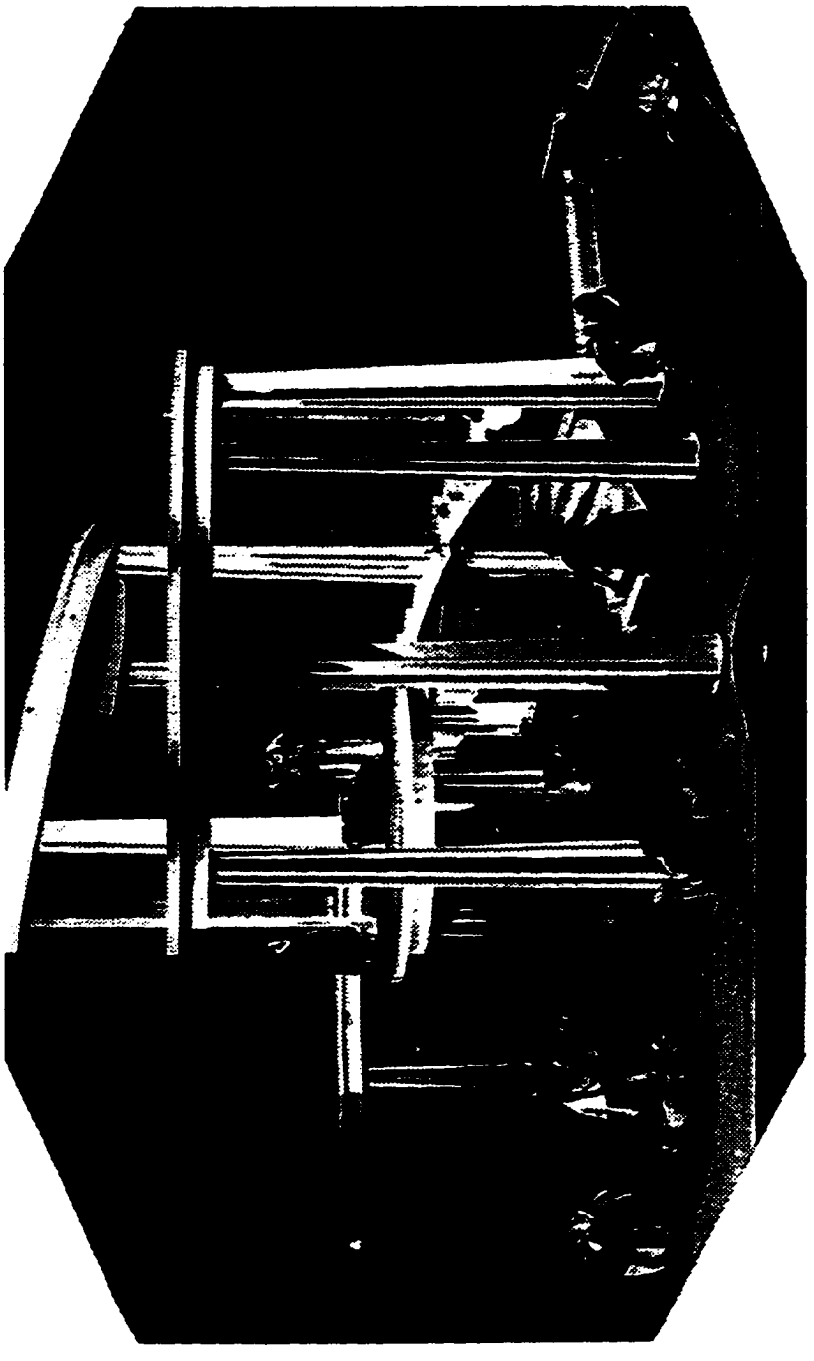

Fig. 3-10 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): choral battle, act II.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3-11 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): the choruses, addressing the audience.

Fig, 3-12 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925): the women bidding for the favor of the audience.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

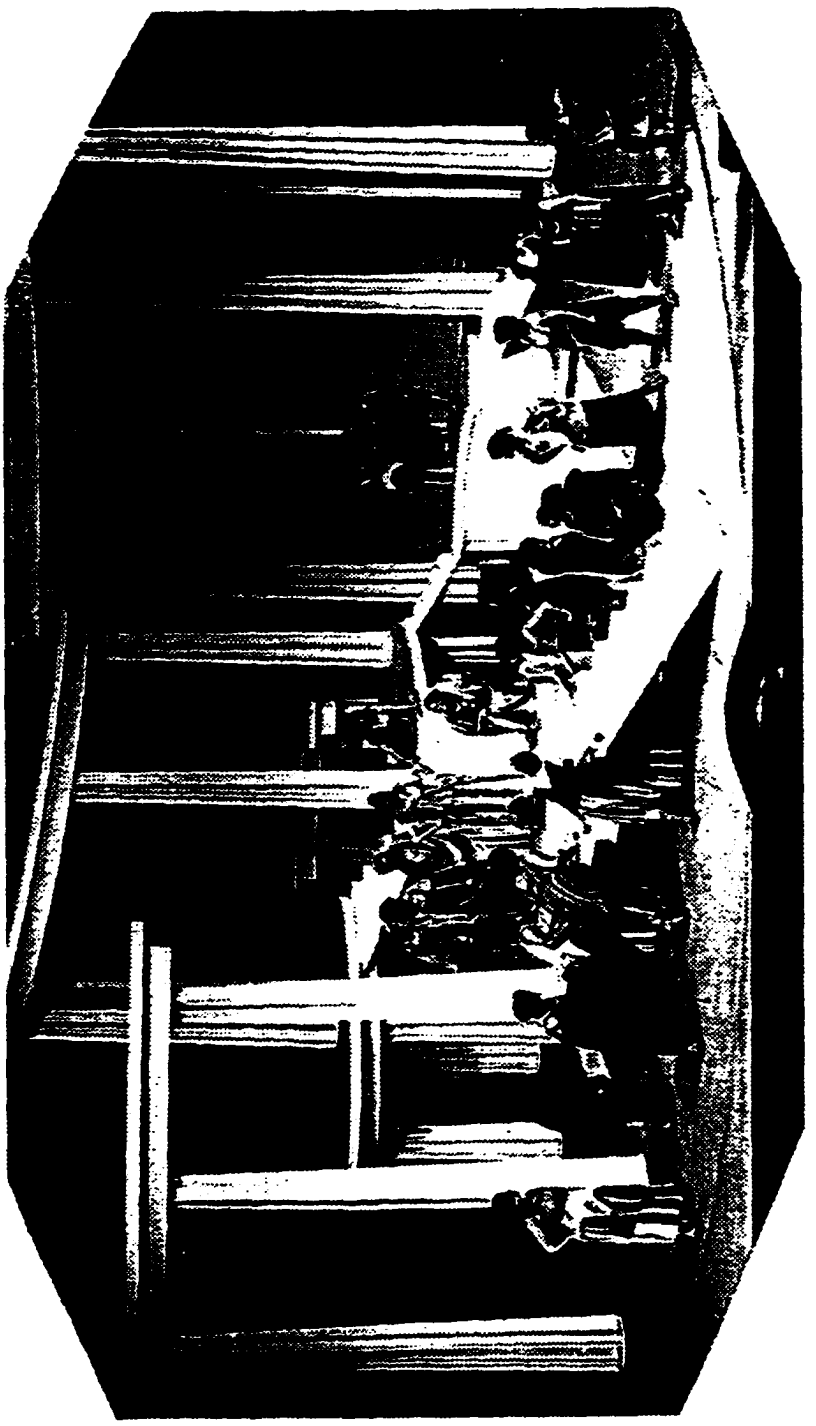

Fig 3-13 Scene from Nemirovich-Danchenko's Lysistrata (1925), act III.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

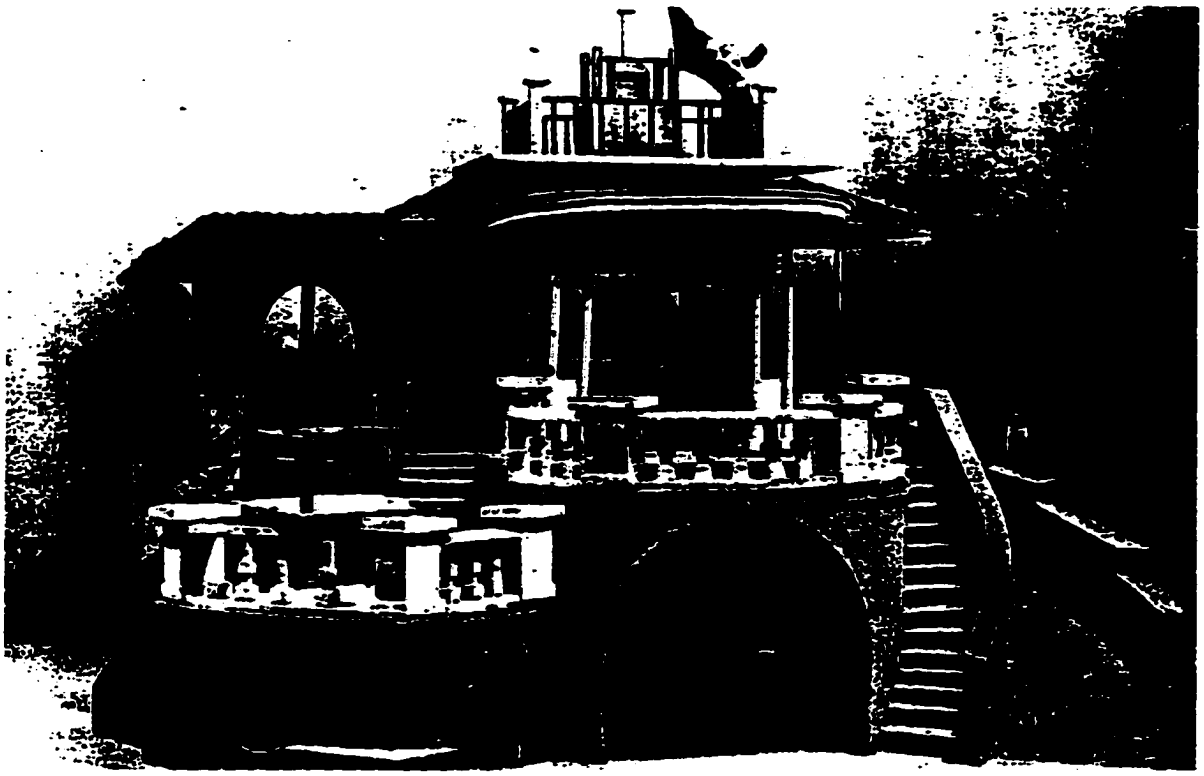

Fig. 3-14 A model of the set by Nicolai Menshutin, for Liubov Yarovaya (1926).

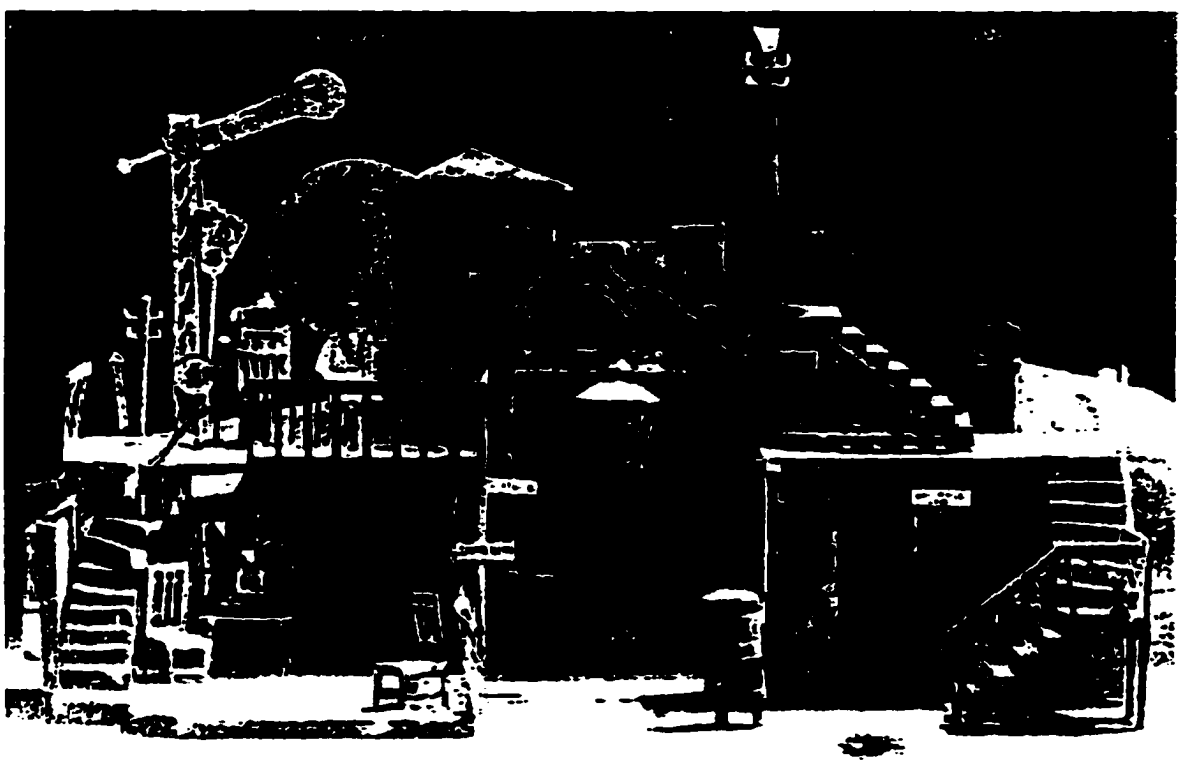

Fig. 3-15 A model of A. Arapov's set for The Bridge of Fire (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

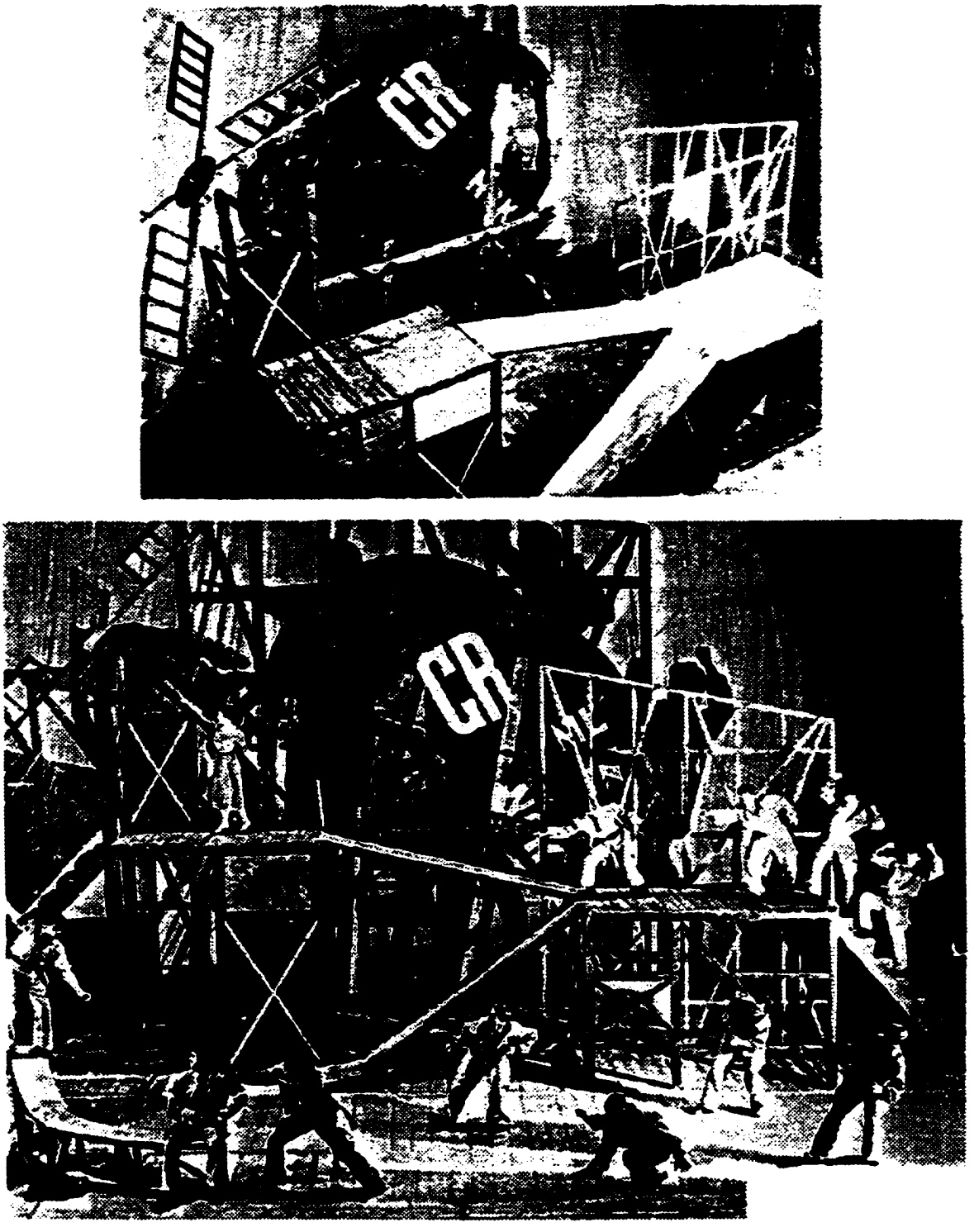

Fig. 3-16 Liubov Popova's set design for The Magnanimous Cuckold (1922).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter IV

Lysistrata and the American Popular Culture: "Aristophanes Puts'em in the Aisles."

When Lysistrata reached Broadway in June1930, it was advertised as the "comedy hit" with the longest run in history.[1] On the marquee of the Forty Fourth Street Theatre, an electric sign brightly announced "2444th year."[2] The production's program indicated the date of the premiere, revealing that this figure had been slightly miscalculated for dramatic effect. For the same reason, the Lenaeum festival was referred to as a 'theatre:' "First performance at the Lenaeum Theatre. Athens, in January, 411 B. C."[3] The American version was an adaptation of the original by Gilbert Seldes, the apologist for the Lively Arts in the 1920s. Seldes has explained that the project was "an attempt to create Lysistrata in the terms of the American theatre, as Aristophanes might have done if he were alive today."[4] Indeed. this intention came across very clearly, prompting a reviewer to comment: "the only reason Lysistrata did not receive the Pulitzer prize was because its author was dead and resident of another country."[5]

Besides literary merit, the production also had other strong artistic credentials. It was designed and directed by Norman Bel Geddes, already recognized in the 1920s

---

[1] Advertisement of the production in the file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

[2] Blanche Yurka, Bohemian Girl (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970), p. 154.

[3] Program of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata production at the Forty-Fourth Street Theatre, file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

[4] Gilbert Seldes, "Preface," in Aristophanes' Lysistrata. A New Version. (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930), p. x.

[5] H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"as a virtuoso scenic artist ... a genius in the maddest, most extravagant, most creative sense."[6] Moreover, it boasted of a stellar cast. How much more could one wish for? Popular magazines of 1930 and 1931 frequently included photographs and caricatures of the principals, recognizing Lysistrata as "one of the most successful shows on Broadway."[7] "Aristophanes," a caption read, "Puts 'em in the Aisles."[8] At the same time, the production enjoyed the esteem of high brow culture. Brooks Atkinson concluded in The New York Times: "Lysistrata is technically and textually one of the most interesting ventures the American stage has made for several years."[9]

I will approach the American Lysistrata as a popular spectacle, exhibiting an interesting synthesis of low and high cultural features. Related to the production's wide appeal is also the contemporaries' insistence on its uniquely American qualities. I propose to explore this relation and to show that Bel Geddes' version presented a new and original interpretation of the play. However, for all its originality, this interpretation will be revealed to employ elements from earlier adaptations and productions analyzed in this study, tacitly acknowledging a modern stage history of the play.

Bel Geddes' Lysistrata was in fact the first major interpretation of Attic comedy to reach the modern professional American stage. Until 1930, performance of Aristophanes in the United States was extremely rare and confined to amateur and

---

6 John Mason Brown, "Norman Bel Geddes as a Virtuoso Scenic Artist," unidentified review in file on Norman Bel Geddes, Museum of the City of New York. New York.

7 Caption to cartoon of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata production, "Aristophanes Puts 'em In The Aisles," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York. The collection includes a large number of cartoons and photographs of this production from unidentified magazines.

8 Ibid.

9 Brooks Atkinson, "Direct from Athens," The New York Times. June 1. 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

student ventures. The first recorded production of Aristophanic drama in America. The Acharnians, was staged in 1886 by the students of the University of Pennsylvania, in the original.[10] The production opened on November 19 at the Academy of Music in New York and the event was considered important enough to receive coverage in The New York Times and Harper's Monthly.[11] In the first two decades of this century, America was serenely indifferent to the arduous European interest in producing Lysistrata, with one exception. The Women's Political Union, a suffrage organization, sponsored two feminist amateur productions in Laurence Housman's adaptation, both before World War I. The first was given in an open-air theatre in Brookside (N.Y.) in 1912, and the second at Maxine Elliott's Theatre, in New York City, for two matinees on February 17 and 18, 1913.[12] After the War, Lysistrata's fortunes in America began to pick up.

In the early twenties, commercial producers in New York developed an interest in producing the play, especially in the French version. There are three Lysistrata scripts in the Shubert archives, all adaptations or translations of the Maurice Donnay prototype or its variants.[13] Lysistrata's lover and the courtesans are the surest recognition signs of Gallic influence and all the Shubert scripts make sure to include them. Interestingly, one of the scripts is the Paul Lincke romanticized operetta and

---

[10] Recorded in File on The Acharnians, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

[11] "A Notable Benefit," The New York Times, November 21, 1886; Harper's Monthly, November 20, 1886.

[12] Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1925), p. 93.

[13] Virginia Vernon, "Lysistrata. A Musical Comedy Version of Lysistrata by Aristophanes," (1920); Lilla Cayley Robinson, trans., "Lysistrata. Operetta in two acts by Bolten Baeckers. Music by Paul Lincke"; Maurice Donnay, "Lysistrata, adapted by Virginia Fox Brooks," (1921). All manuscripts bear the stamp "Property of the Shubert Theatrical Company" and are deposited in the file on Lysistrata, under "Unproduced versions" at the Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the other is a musical comedy version, indicating that the Shubert organization considered that Lysistrata in a musical form would be more attuned to popular taste. However, none of these scripts was produced.[14]

Apart from the theatre world, the French interpretation had also stirred up the interest of the public. The American press reported in the 1920s that "many a visitor from Paris [had] come back with tales of the gay Lysistrata."[15] Two of Donnay's versions had been translated into English and published after the War, the first in 1919 and the second in 1929.[16] Interestingly, the later edition was included in a "Theatre of Today" series and had a foreword by George Jean Nathan.[17] The critic primarily values the adaptation's "immensely amusing" humor which conveys the spirit of the original in a contemporary context.[18] He exaggeratedly characterizes it as one of the best modernized adaptations of the classics and regards it as the most representative sample of modern French theatre humor. Ironically, by that time, interest in the adaptation had waned in France.

G. J. Nathan's comments on Lysistrata indicate he is primarily interested in the play as entertainment. In the mid-twenties, the American public was also exposed to the MAT interpretation of Lysistrata, which employed the humor to project socio-political concerns. In his analysis of the production, Oliver Sayler compares Aristophanes to Bernard Shaw, as a dramatist aiming at social reform. He stresses

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] David Wallace, "Aristophanes to Modern Taste," unidentified clipping, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

[16] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata, translated into English by Helen Davenport Gibbons (Paris: Fasquelle, 1919); Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata, translated into English by William Drake, foreword by George Jean Nathan (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1929).

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that Lysistrata is a play of "deliberate propaganda," solicited in support of pacifist and feminist causes.[19] Sayler employs a distinction in his discussion between highbrow and popular, vulgarized versions. Donnay's Lysistrata is scornfully dismissed as a "decadent pandering to the boulevardier."[20] Besides drawing attention to Lysistrata as a socially relevant text, the MAT production had also masterfully demonstrated the play's theatrical potential.

By the late twenties then, the American public had been familiar with two major interpretations of Lysistrata. Apart from the Shuberts, intellectually minded producers also had plans for mounting the play. As a press article reports in 1929, Lysistrata had been in the Theatre Guild's production schedule "for years."[21] Moreover, various female stars had developed an enthusiasm for the lead role, such as Fay Bainter, Blanche Yurka and Dorothy Gish.[22] It was a matter of time before somebody produced it.

Oddly enough, even though the theatrical industry had been predominantly centralized in New York since the mid-twenties, the first major native production of Lysistrata in America originated in Philadelphia. This was the virginal project of the Philadelphia Theatre Association, founded with the ambitious aim to restore the city to "the priority in the drama and the theatre which once was hers."[23] Brooks Atkinson compared the company to the Theatre Guild, in that it primarily

---

19 Oliver Sayler, Inside the Moscow Art Theatre, p. 103.

20 Ibid., p. 93.

21 "The World and the Theatre," Theatre Arts Monthly, (June 1930): p. 454.

22 David Wallace, "Aristophanes to Modern Taste," unidentified clipping, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

23 Cited in John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emphasized quality rather than commercial success.[24] Lysistrata was to be the first production of a comedy series, presenting a historical survey of the genre through the ages. Initially, Granville Barker had been contracted to direct the play and Bel Geddes was to design it.[25] However, before the production went into rehearsal, Barker resigned due to the critical illness of his wife and Bel Geddes was assigned directorial responsibility.

By 1929, Bel Geddes was an internationally acclaimed avant garde designer. He had created the visionary work for Dante's Divine Comedy (1921) and had collaborated with Max Reinhardt on The Miracle project (1923). Interestingly, the artist had also worked for the popular theatre, designing revues and jazzy musical comedies for some of the most exuberant and creative spirits of the twenties: F. Ziegfeld, Cole Porter and the Gershwins. Indeed, the musicals Strike up the Band (1927) and Fifty Million Frenchmen (1929) are still cited as notable successes of the decade.[26] Bel Geddes had little directorial experience when he ventured on Lysistrata. The only other major production he had directed was M. D'Acosta's Jeanne d'Arc, in Paris, which had been poorly received.[27]

Bel Geddes had probably been acquainted with all the major interpretations of Lysistrata when he started working on his own version. As mentioned in the unpublished portion of his autobiography, he had heard of the German production

---

24 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

25 See Norman Bel Geddes, unpublished autobiographical material, cited in George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," pp. 170-171.

26 See Richard Traubner, "Broadway," in Operetta. A Theatrical History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 377-421.

27 See George Bogusch, "An American in Paris; Norman Bel Geddes Produces Jeanne d'Arc," Theater Design and Technology, (October 1969): pp. 4-10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

from Max Reinhardt himself.[28] Moreover, he had seen the Lysistrata production of the MAT in New York and had found it "delightfully staged."[29] Bel Geddes had also thoroughly researched the field of existing translations and adaptations of the play, which he generally regarded as 'dull.'[30] Originally, perhaps under Barker's influence, Laurence Housman's feminist adaptation was going to be employed for the American production, but plans were later changed.[31]

Following his customary working method, Bel Geddes first devised a scenario of the action, indicating all major movements and groupings, which was employed in the preparation of the set design. He worked with several existing versions of Lysistrata and also used material from other Aristophanic comedies. A major concern was to expand the short Greek text into a full length two act play by inventing new stage business or elaborating on the original episodes. In the preparation of the American version, the scenic outline of the scenario preceded and was used as a basis for the development of the script.

The task of writing the dialogue was assigned to Gilbert Seldes, who was intimately familiar with the play as he had translated D. Smolin's Russian adaptation of Lysistrata into English.[32] Seldes, a dramatic critic and book reviewer was principally known in the late twenties for his work The Seven Lively Arts (1924), a study defending the artistic merit of popular entertainment and acknowledging the

---

[28] See Norman Bel Geddes, unpublished autobiographical material, cited in George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," p. 171.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See Gilbert Seldes, "Adapting Lysistrata," Theatre Guild Magazine (October 1930): pp. 36, 60-63.

[32] D. Smolin, trans., Lysistrata, translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes, in Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio (New York: Brentano's, 1925), pp. 1-79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sensibility of popular taste.[33] Bel Geddes' decision to collaborate with him was principally based on this credit. The director wanted "a contemporary writer blessed with a light touch" to write the dialogue.[34] Referring to his choice of Gilbert Seldes, he mentions: "As literature's pioneer expounder of the seven lively arts ... he struck me as the likely person to make a distinctly modern version of the play."[35]

Seldes clearly explains the aims of the production team in adapting Lysistrata, in an article published in Theatre Guild Magazine.[36] The new version aimed at making the play accessible to "the average intelligent audience," presumably the educated middle class.[37] The principal concern was to create a modern play that would entirely avoid antiquarianism, without however sacrificing the essential qualities of the original. Seldes is generally careful to justify his interpretative choices by references to the comedy's ancient context, to avoid the charge of arbitrariness. He explains that he has attempted to "merely develop the natural Aristophanic ideas," which the dramatist occasionally gives in condensed form, relying on the ancient audience's shared background.[38] At the same time, however, the new version of Lysistrata would be distinctly American, expressing the contemporary values and culture of its time. Seldes set out to provide modern equivalents and analogies to the conception of the original so as to render it meaningful to the American audience.

Drawing on his intimacy with the thriving popular entertainment of the 1920s, he interpreted ancient comedy in terms of farce and burlesque, pointing out the

---

33 Gilbert Seldes, The Seven Lively Arts (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1924).

34 George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," p. 171.

35 Ibid.

36 Gilbert Seldes, "Adapting Lysistrata."

37 Ibid., p. 36.

38 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

existence of revue like features in the original such as choral voices, music and dance. He explains, "ancient comedy was closer to rough burlesque than polite tea table conversation" and illustrates his working method by examples.[39] Thus "the obvious choice" for the retinue of the Proboulos were "the equivalents of the Keystone cops."[40] A more challenging task was the adaptation of the lengthy choruses, which are unexciting for a modern audience. In this case, Seldes had recourse to the work of William Gilbert on popular musical comedy. Like Aristophanes, Gilbert was masterful in writing perfectly rhythmic couplets that also sound conversational. As Seldes was unable to combine both merits, he sacrificed the poetry, opting to convey "the unaffected speech of conversation," in prose.[41]

Popular entertainment then supplied a viable modern context for the ancient comedy. However, Seldes also emphasizes that underlying the farcical texture, Lysistrata is a comedy of ideas. "It is as farce then — but farce with a sound and credible intellectual basis that Lysistrata has to be taken," he explains.[42] Thus he attempted to give a sense of the reality of war, again resorting to modern analogies. He points out, for example, that the women's meeting was "a sort of Stockholm conference, as audacious for Aristophanes as it was during the great War."[43] With sound common sense he assumes that the ancient Athenian audience would be booing and hissing at the mere appearance of Lampito on stage, so that it was hardly necessary for Aristophanes to elaborate on the hostility between the women from rival city states. Seldes has attempted to flesh out the conflict by devising quarrels

---

[39] Ibid., p. 60

[40] Ibid. The Proboulos is referred to as 'The President of the Senate' in the American adaptation.

[41] Ibid., p. 61.

[42] Gilbert Seldes, "Preface," in Aristophanes' Lysistrata. A New Version, p. x.

[43] Gilbert Seldes, "Adapting Lysistrata," p. 36.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

between the women and making them more resistant to Lysistrata's plan. He finds this choice "psychologically correct."[44] As this example indicates, he resorted to realism to convey the play's ideas about war and the urgency of peace. Moreover, he occasionally strikes a serious note, to indicate he takes these ideas in earnest, referring to the "desperation which really underlies this terrible comedy of international warfare."[45]

According to Seldes then, the adaptation aimed at supplying both entertainment and food for thought. In the text, the serious tone is diametrically opposed the farcical, lighthearted spirit, imposing on the original a contrived, stilted schism between characters. The play's moralizing ideas about war are uniquely expressed by Lysistrata and the old women who display a highly developed social awareness, apparently irreconcilable with comedy. Indeed, these characters are completely straight, generally lacking a sense of humor. On the other hand, the rest of the characters are farcically riveted on money or sex, selfishly pursuing their own ends. Seldes' contrastive conception of characters is most obvious in the depiction of the women and has interesting ideological implications.

Drastically departing from all earlier major adaptations which generally ignore the old women, the American version is closer to the original, in assigning them a more important part in the development of the plot. In the Greek text they figure prominently in the battle with the old men. Indeed, in contradistinction to the male chorus, the female choral members are also elderly, as is indicated by direct references to their age in the text.[46] The ancient choral battles, in their vigor and the

---

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] For example, the old men threaten "your musty Age/to very shreds I'll batter," Loeb, l. 364, pp. 36- 37. Later in the women's camp, the leader calls on "fellow ... hags" to strip for action, Loeb l. 637, p. 66; translated into English by Douglass Parker, in Aristophanes. Four Comedies, edited by W. Arrowsmith (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 48. An old woman retorts against the men:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

confrontation of male and female sexuality are directly reminiscent of battles of satyrs versus the maenads. However, the transparent sexual symbolism of the men's phallic, lighted pyres versus the women's vaginal jugs of water in Lysistrata is overtly and solely comical. Manhood versus womanhood is represented by haggard old age, achieving an ironic, distancing effect. This is yet an additional device for placing the women's scheme in a fantastic context, cancelling all realistic expectation about its outcome.

In all modern versions of Lysistrata considered so far, the female chorus is predominantly, if not entirely, composed of young women. Only Laurence Housman and Dmitry Smolin have assigned miniscule parts to old women, realistically implying the breadth of women's solidarity. The American version is unique in introducing two distinct female choruses, of old and young women, respectively. However, the elderly female chorus in this version is conceptually very different from the Greek prototype. It is composed of withered widows of the war that has been going on for twenty years in the play's action. The widows appear at the beginning of each act, superimposing on the original solemn thoughts about the tragedy of war, totally uncharacteristic of Aristophanes. They are mournful, miserable and depressed, as they go over a tiresome lament about lack of hope: "Old age is a sorrow. Old age is a sickness for which there is no comfort, no cure or physician. .... A plague and a torment the days of our youth when we look back upon them. ... We have no more hope. We can live in despair.[47] ... No man is left — none but the old and the crippled and the lame. Still the war goes on."[48] However, hopelessness in

---

"I'm not too sorry/to have you see my daintiness./My habits are still depilatory;/Age hasn't made me a bristly mess, Loeb, l. 826-828, p. 82; Parker, p. 58.

[47] Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds., A Treasury of the Theatre (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), pp. 1475-1476.

[48] Ibid., p. 1495.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this version is a good incentive for action: "What joy is left to women old as we are except to serve their city and their children?"[49]

Indeed, the old women are devoted to the cause of ending the war and their contribution to action is noteworthy. They act like a disciplined army, blindly devoted to Lysistrata. Their most significant feat is the capture of the citadel. At the beginning of the first act, the widows are shown climbing up the slope to the Acropolis, on their way to obtain control of the treasury and later, just before the conclusion of the oath, they report to Lysistrata of their success. Thus in the American version, the original's one line report of this episode has been dramatically exploited to demonstrate the old women's determination. The elderly women's chorus is closer to the Aristophanic conception when it charges against the old men. However, this more relaxed, comical attitude is hardly developed, as choral battling has been shrunk to the original's initial episode.

In contrast to the elderly widows, young women consent to Lysistrata's scheme very unwillingly. Seldes has employed all the traditional male stereotypes about women to construct his young female characters. They are coquettish, kittenish and featherbrained, content to echoe their husbands' opinions on socio-political issues. Athenian statesman for them are "men of great minds. They think of everything."[50] Upon the appearance of Theban, Corinthian and Spartan women, Kalonika complains, "My husband's at the front and I don't think a faithful wife ought ever to have social relations with the enemy."[51] Of course she is hypocritically faithful, as she also has a lover. Indeed, all young women are stereotypically untrustworthy; they lack solidarity and are ever ready to quarrel and to betray each other.

---

[49] Ibid., p. 1477.

[50] Ibid., p. 1478.

[51] Ibid., p. 1479.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

No wonder they find it terribly hard to take the oath and keep it. Indeed, Seldes has greatly expanded the playing time of the original by elaborating on the young women's resistance to the scheme. They start quarreling to take out their frustration with the plan and later they bargain with Lysistrata on the duration of the sexual strike. In the pronouncement of the oath, two representatives break down in hysterics, unable to continue before a third finally succeeds. The scene where women invent excuses to leave the Acropolis has also been expanded by adding a mutiny. Kalonika, who in this version represents the eternal woman par excellence, actually dashes through the old women's sentinel and starts running away but is soon caught. As expected, the young women are poor fighters and hardly participate in the battle with the old men or in the debate with the Proboulos.

However, the focus of this adaptation is the temptation of Kinesias episode, at which young women are masterful. The scene has been expanded by adding three more couples to the original. This allows for the increase of the farcical by-play on the theme of sexual hunger. Myrrhina's tempting of Kinesias closely follows the Greek text, however, the comical spirit here generally owes more to French bedroom farce than to Aristophanes. Indeed, all grossness including the phallic symbolism has been removed, and implications of adultery have been added. Kalonika disappears with her lover off stage and comes back late in a disheveled state, having presumably succumbed to temptation, as is also indicated by her apologetic tone to Lysistrata.

Young women then add spice to the comedy by trying and frequently failing "to be good."[52] Even though also a young married woman, Lysistrata is exceptional. She is highly intelligent, socially sensitive, and displays remarkable leadership ability. She does not participate in the farcical antics on the Acropolis and

---

[52] Ibid., p. 1497.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

differentiates herself from her friends, "the little fools" who have to be "locked up" and constantly surveyed so as not to boycott the scheme.[53] "They want their men. They can't live without them," she complains to the old women, indicating she does not personally experience this difficulty.[54] Her composure and seriousness of tone aligns her with the old women. She, too, frequently expresses her concern in high flown rhetoric, alien to Aristophanes. "We can forget our ancient wrongs, the lies they teach the children to make them hate their brothers. Stand by me," she urges on the Acropolis.[55] Thus, she shares with the widows an awareness of war's destructive force and is devoted to the cause of peace. However, it is she alone of all women who appreciates strategy and is able to implement it, indeed, almost single-handedly.

The American version magnifies and greatly idealizes the role of Lysistrata as a leader. Throughout the play she gives orders for other women to obey. Characteristically, the widows set out to capture the Acropolis in total ignorance of Lysistrata's purpose, though this does not concern them. The heroine praises them. "You have been faithful. You have obeyed me. Blindly, not knowing what my purpose was, you served me."[56] Indeed, she is in complete control of the women's war, constantly monitoring the action. At the appearance of Kinesias and the men she orders the women "Let no one pass until I give word. ... If you'll obey me I promise you you'll have your men tonight. If you refuse or fail me, then beware."[57]

In the American version then, the women's action, instrumental to the

---

53 Ibid., p. 1484.

54 Ibid., p. 1495.

55 Ibid., p. 1483.

56 Ibid., p. 1477.

57 Ibid., p. 1500.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development of the plot, is not communal. A consequence of magnifying Lysistrata's role as a strategist is the drastic reduction of the choral battles. The heroine is all devouring, as she has even assimilated material from the choral passages to score points against the President. Lysistrata is essentially in charge of two female armies, a faithful and a mutinous one and interest naturally falls not on them but on her, the mastermind of the entire enterprise. All other women young and old, are ignorant. "Zeus send down your thunderbolts. Annihilate this wanton race," says Lysistrata, "magnificently," sounding like a frustrated Moses.[58] Indeed, choruses in this version are armies who fight upon instruction, even without questioning or caring why. They are not composed of citizens.

The old men are just as pathetic and ignorant as the old women. Their chorus leader mentions that they have been "sent by the rulers of Athens to fight" and asks for their surrender "By order of the council of Seven and the Senate."[59] There is no sense, as in the original, that the old men are defending their very own Acropolis, as a political democratic institution with which they are identified. Ironically, there is an inflation of choruses in the American adaptation, even though choral passages have been drastically reduced. Two choruses of young men and women, respectively, have been added to the original and there is also a chorus of Senators. This totals five choruses on stage, which are all under the command of distinct leaders. Indeed, the primary function of choruses in this adaptation is to demonstrate the power of leaders. As in the case of armies, the more numerous the chorus, the more powerful the leader.

Lysistrata proves to be an extraordinary leader, overshadowing the President, and even her husband, Lycon, who briefly appears at the end of the play as the leader of

---

[58] Ibid., p. 1483.

[59] Ibid., p. 1488.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the young men. Both male leaders and especially the President are depicted farcically. Lysistrata is clearly idealized, however the American version, far from supporting a feminist perspective, actually subverts feminism. The heroine is regarded by other characters as an oddity, a woman with distinctly male qualities.

Kalonika, frustrated with Lysistrata's perseverance, is genuinely puzzled by her. She certainly looks like a woman, but, she asks her "do you act like a woman? Do you feel like a woman and do you want what other women want?"[60] Thinking is not included in this list of questions. Indeed, the young women's chorus is uncomfortable with her intelligence: "Lysistrata's all right but she's full of ideas. She's always discussing the war and its problems."[61] Kinesias characterizes her "an intellectual" and finds this attribute straying from womanly nature. He explains "She's only a woman who's been disappointed in love and is trying to get even with the men."[62] The old women admire Lysistrata's self control, which is again perceived as an anomaly: "All women are frail. Their bodies are yielding; their spirits like water flow swiftly downhill. One spirit alone is firm as a man's. One woman alone will yield to no passion."[63] Lysistrata then is the exception who proves the rule. This character is idealized for embodying manhood, not for presenting an alternative model of a woman, departing from the norm. Ironically, the "women's war" in this version conforms entirely to male misogynist stereotypes.[64] The war's success is credited not to women, but to a single female, distinctly manlike, who is thus unrepresentative of the sex.

---

60 Ibid., p. 1496.

61 Ibid., p. 1478.

62 Ibid., p. 1503.

63 Ibid., p. 1495.

64 Ibid., p. 1493.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Characteristically, Lysistrata only finds support and understanding for her cause from the older women, who, being no longer attractive are worthless as sex objects and can thus selflessly turn to public service. Indeed, the widows draw a particularly grim picture of women in old age: "Their beauty departs and their strength is no more. The children they bear forsake and desert them. The men they have served forget and deny them."[65] The "powerfully built" Lampito, who is also devoted to Lysistrata, is obviously unattractive too.[66] Moreover, there are implications of lesbianism in her behavior, that account for her interest in the cause. For example, the following exchange is suggestive. Tipsy from drinking the sacramental wine, Lampito embraces Myrrhina asking tenderly, "feeling better, aren't you, darling?" The latter responds, "I am better but I wish you were Kinesias," to which Lampito replies: "Still thinking of your husband. You'll forget him."[67] Later, she and her friends are mistaken for men when they come back from Sparta dressed in male attire, for no apparent reason other than to look "warlike and brave."[68]

Similarly to Lysistrata then, her devotees are unrepresentative women. Female interest in socio-political issues is here presented as an unattractive anomaly. Moreover, it is significant that the devotees are inferior to Lysistrata in intellectual ability, following even without fully grasping the stratagems. So apart from Lysistrata, no other woman is able to take an initiative to aid the cause. Nor is the heroine interested in changing the women by helping them acquire greater awareness. Even though not farcical or grotesque, her behavior is in fact similar to that of the President towards the old men. She is simply using the women, patronizingly, in the

---

65 Ibid., p. 1475.

66 Ibid., p. 1479.

67 Ibid., p. 1487.

68 Ibid., p. 1497.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

most effective way to achieve her goal. By the end the the play, it is evident that the experience of ending the war has not contributed to the development of any female character apart from Lysistrata.

Lysistrata is an Athena-like character, sprung from a male head who cunningly supports the male centered status quo. Interestingly, the adaptation presents Athens as a capitalist society and appropriately, the heroine also proves to have a fine sense of business. The Acropolis in this version is not emblematic of a political democratic institution. Rather, it is solely identified as the treasury. The people do not have an integral relation to the citadel, not even the men, who, as mentioned earlier, solely follow orders in defending it. This seat of power is solely associated with a rich oligarchy. Athens is ruled by seven senators who are "bankers."[69] They are all corrupt war profiteers, who have made money by draining the treasury. "No one can complain if we spend all the money, since Athens has ships and the soldiers have food," they confidently assert, explaining they make commissions on all sales.[70] War then is profitable business. In the debate with the President, Lysistrata argues that the enormous preparations every winter to face the Spartans had been yielding poor results and that the cost in human lives had been inestimable. She decided to intervene when she "found the business going badly."[71]

Her recruiting strategy reveals a good manager. She recognized that the mutinous young women, the flower of the army, had to be constantly surveyed and employed the older women for this task at no cost, since they have no value on the sex market. Their leader asks Lysistrata if they can "take the place of the young women" and she

---

69 Ibid., p. 1507.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., p. 1493.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

replies they are too old.[72] Their inability to compete makes them entirely supportive of the scheme. Capturing the Acropolis at the beginning of the play is almost referred to as a job. Lysistrata urges: "I beg you, finish your work in the citadel."[73] Indeed, the heroine's relation to women conforms entirely to the pyramid structure, with the heroine issuing orders at the top for her inferiors to obey. The people constitute the work force.

The women's mobilization puts the senators in an extremely difficult situation. If the war ends, they fear they will be demoted from big to small business, going back again to square one as sellers of sausages. So they suggest buying the women off, which is untenable, since the women hold the treasury.[74] Indeed, the peace negotiations have distinctly businesslike overtones. Explicitly referring to the laws of the market, Lysistrata informs the men: "... The price you must pay is a great one. We women have learned to set a high value on what we have to give you." Lykon replies: "It's high but we will reach it."[75] In conclusion, women have become aware of their marketability. Indeed, a highlight of this version is that young matrons and especially Kalonika are eager to learn how to deal with men from the Corinthians, who are here all professional courtesans. As for Lysistrata, presumably she will have a bright future at the top, in business and politics.

Even though distinctly American in its capitalist ideological implications, this version actually combines elements from Maurice Donnay's and Laurence Housman's earlier major adaptations of the play. The titillating emphasis on the women's difficulties in keeping the strike obviously goes back to Donnay. The

---

[72] Ibid., p. 1476.

[73] Ibid., p. 1477.

[74] Ibid., p. 1508.

[75] Ibid., p. 1509.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

French adaptation has supplied the model for the sprightly, oversexed characters of the girls. The naughty Kalonika actually combines features of Lysistrata and her niece Callyce in the French version. Like Lysistrata, she has both a husband and a lover, for whom she betrays her oath. However, she lacks the French heroine's aptitude for deception and manipulation, which enables her to cover everything up. In her inability to hide her passions she clearly resembles the young Callyce. Callyce actually does not swear the oath and has to be shut up, so as not to betray the women. However, she too manages to have sex during the strike but has to rely on her knowledgeable aunt to cover up the affair. The addition of courtesans also goes directly back to Donnay. However, in the American version they are limited to guest star appearances and do not have a major part in the plot.

The American version has also incorporated changes in the French interpretation, motivated by the experience of World War I.[76] The addition of profiteers to the original clearly reveals French influence. After the war, both Donnay and his imitators attached increased importance to these characters, making the most of their obvious connection to actuality. Possibly, the inspiration for the addition of the grim old women has also been derived from Donnay's interpretation. In the 1919 revised version, Lysistrata reveals a newly acquired social conscience, which tarnishes the farcical spirit. Haunted by nightmarish visions of the war, she is unable to give in to her lover. She actually sees a wailing chorus of women stricken by the war's disasters, who even have sentinel duties. Seldes may have decided to exploit this narration dramatically. Lysistrata says: "My illusions, they are widows and mothers with faces veiled and black. They guard the threshold of the temple of Artemis. ... And now the chorus of the suppliants. They have unveiled their haggard faces upon which the tears have worn hollows. War is War! and our sons are massacred!"[77]

---

[76] See Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1919).

[77] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata, translated into English by Helen Davenport Gibbons

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The English adaptation has served as a prototype for the character of Lysistrata. Similarly to the American, the English heroine is a gifted leader, with greater awareness and foresight than her comrades. Moreover, she is a serious character who displays admirable self control. Indeed, she too, does not have any difficulty in abstaining from sex. However, the English Lysistrata is a feminist, committed to changing women's lives. Thus there is more camaraderie in her relationship to the chorus, which plays a major part in the plot, as in the original. In contrast to the American version, Lysistrata's consorts mature, develop and take initiatives in the action. Thus the success of the women's war is presented as the outcome of a communal female mobilization, even though the primary emphasis falls on Lysistrata.

Housman's adaptation is also the source of many effective theatrical devices, not in the original, employed in the American version. For example, the dramatic conception of the oath sermon in psychologically real terms originates in the English version.[78] Both adaptations insist on the women's difficulties in swearing the oath's terms, evident in the numerous stage directions, indicating hesitation, broken voices and sobbing. Both versions too, have an old woman handing Lysistrata the key to the captured Acropolis.[79] Moreover, in both, the women introduce the first appearance of the elderly male chorus by sarcastically commenting on their dilapidated approaching army.[80] The American version has also imitated some successful

---

(Paris: Fasquelle, 1919), pp. 64-65.

78 See Laurence Housman, Lysistrata (London: The Woman's Press, 1911), pp. 18-21.

79 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds., A Treasury of the Theatre, p. 1485 and Laurence Housman, Lysistrata, p. 21.

80 See G. Seldes, Lysistrata, p. 1487 and L. Housman, Lysistrata, p. 21.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

auditory effects. In the choral introduction to the women's attempted defection, old men's voices are periodically heard off-stage shouting "Down with Lysistrata!" exactly as in the English adaptation.[81] Similarly, behind the ramparts, young women make derisive bird sounds to the men, though these are employed in different episodes in the two versions.[82]

The American interpretation then has freely borrowed dramatic elements from the earlier French and English adaptations, combining them to create a new variant. Many of the devices adopted from Housman's version go back to the German Lysistrata. Interestingly, there are no remarkable traces of influence from the most recent in 1929 Russian adaptation, which Seldes himself had translated into English. However, the communist interpretation is immediately relevant in its diametric opposition to the capitalist perspective presented in the American version. In the former, Lysistrata's contribution to the women's war is deliberately undermined. She is merely representing the will of the people, acting more as the leader of the chorus than as a strong, independently minded character. This interpretation focuses on the choral battles, clearly highlighting the chorus' central importance to the action. By contrast, the American version overemphasizes the role of the heroine, subduing the choral contribution to the uprising. Thus it essentially transforms Lysistrata into a modern character play, inverting the Russian epic interpretation in which the protagonist is mass. As will be shown later, the inverted perspective of the American interpretation in relation to the Russian is also evident in the scenic conception.

Bel Geddes intimately collaborated with Seldes in shaping the text for performance. His contribution extended far beyond the initial supply of the scenario,

---

81 See G. Seldes, Lysistrata, p. 1495 and L. Housman, Lysistrata, p. 44.

82 See G. Seldes, Lysistrata, p. 1498 and L. Housman, Lysistrata, pp. 23 and 35.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as is evidenced by the production's three prompt scripts.[83] The first contains numerous notes of the director to Seldes asking for additional dialogue. He is concerned with attaining more precise characterization or differentiation between characters. For the chorus, he persistently requests individualizing and shortening the long speeches. His notes are very specific and suggestive. For example, referring to the old men's initial choral passage he writes: "These long speeches should be broken into many short ones by various old men. These fellows were young once. They still talk as though they were but their bodies wilt under the strain ... — with the spirit of 'we will show them a thing or two, we'll teach them.' Draces must have been a great general once."[84] Bel Geddes also took initiatives on issues of dramatic structure. For example, the scene of the old women setting out to capture the Acropolis was added at his suggestion. He also transposed the news of the citadel's capture so that it would be delivered before the swearing of the oath. This allowed him to include the old women in the sermon, thus achieving a more poignant dramatic effect.[85] He was also concerned with securing smooth transitions between scenes. For example, he found the women's consent to the scheme too abrupt. He writes to Seldes: "Again the transition is too sudden. The girls must be won over. There would be hesitation — it's an important decision. A little bargaining comes into it. Wouldn't one or two nights be enough? Couldn't the plan be put off a day?"[86]

The second version of the prompt script evidences that Bel Geddes actually added himself a lot of the dialogue he requested from Seldes.[87] In the unpublished

---

[83] See George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," pp. 176-182.

[84] Ibid., p. 179.

[85] See Gilbert Seldes, "Adapting Lysistrata," p. 36.

[86] Cited in George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," p. 176.

[87] Ibid., 179.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

version of his autobiography he claims to have been "co-author" of the adaptation, as he wrote "half of the half lines" and supplied the scenario of the action.[88] However, he magnanimously let Seldes be listed as the sole author, since he was not interested in earning credit for writing. This story is corroborated in Seldes's correspondence, which reveals that the director received a third of the royalties for the adaptation.[89]

Bel Geddes' contribution to shaping the text of Lysistrata is also evident in the published version. As mentioned earlier, the American interpretation is unique in that the staging conception preceded and influenced the preparation of the adaptation. There are numerous and detailed stage directions throughout the text, transparently revealing how scenes were actually staged. The capitalist interpretation of the play, so far supported only by textual analysis, is also reflected in the staging choices. Features such as the status of the leading characters and their power relations with the choruses, are translated visually in terms of stage positioning and movement, rendering the interpretation unequivocally clear. To fully appreciate this point, it is first necessary to discuss the production's spatial conception.

Bel Geddes created a monumental architectural construction of uneven steps and platforms occupying the entire stage and also extending six rows into the auditorium. There was no front curtain and scene divisions were indicated through lighting. The ascent to the Acropolis began under tawny hangings on one side of the auditorium and culminated at two enormous Cyclopean towers with a double gate in between, soaring up to two thirds the height of the stage.[90] The gate to the citadel was

---

[88] Relevant excerpt from Norman Bel Geddes' autobiographical manuscript cited in Bogusch "Unity in the New Stagecraft," p. 173.

[89] See letter of Gilbert Seldes to Norman Bel Geddes, January 14, 1947, cited in Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," p. 173.

[90] See Figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dwarfing and heavy, fashioned in metal studded with bosses.[91] The steps zigzagged upwards, forming sloping landings. Their sides were frequently sheer planes, giving the impression of loosely piled, rough blocks, falling away steeply, as is clearly exemplified by the uneven central platform before the entrance to the citadel[92]

Critics aptly characterized the construction as sculptural. Indeed, the effect is of an enormous sculptured space where verticality prevails.[93] The set also strongly evokes a vast open air plane as seen from an aerial photograph.[94] Even though stylized and abstract, it is reminiscent of the actual ascent to the Acropolis. At the same time, the minimalist design of the citadel has direct associations to modernist architecture. The high vertical towers in particular, look distinctly like New York sky scrapers.[95] The austerity of Bel Geddes' construction was perhaps alleviated through the use of colorful lighting. Varying hues of red prevailed, combined with browns, greys and yellows by a far spreading battery of electric lamps. For the most part, the stairs were of a deep red, while the cyclorama had a subdued golden glow, shaded by lighting to warmer tints.[96]

The sloping platforms almost determined the setting of scenes on a vertical, where the direction of movement appears to have been predominantly upwards or

---

91 See Figures 4-30, 4-31 and 4-34.

92 See Figures 4-1, 4-30 and 4-31.

93 See Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times April 29, 1930; John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it." New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930. See also Figures 4-1, 4-30 and 4-31.

94 See Figures 4-1 and 4-2.

95 See Figure 4-1.

96 See Stark Young, "The Philadelphia Lysistrata," The New Republic, May 14, 1930, pp. 352-353; H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

downwards. Throughout the performance the women occupied a fixed space in and immediately before the citadel and men's action was directed towards gaining possession of this highest point. Thus at the battle with the old men, the men move up the hill approaching the women who are visible at the platform before the gate. As is specified in the stage directions, throughout the battle women had the higher level of the hill.[97] From this advantageous position they spoke looking down and repelled the men by throwing hot water out of jars. The peace negotiations were similarly conducted on a vertical. Lysistrata and the women were again at the top of the hill while the men were at the platform immediately below. At each conciliatory word the women approached and embraced the men while at each resumption of the bargaining they slipped away and up the hill.[98] The verticality of the set also appears to have inspired the addition of minor scenes to the original, in the American adaptation. Thus, the construction presented the possibility of staging Kalonika's attempted desertion very effectively. From the highest platform, she dashes all the way down to the foot of the slope where she is captured by the Spartan women disguised as men.[99]

In Bel Geddes' vertical staging, the highest platform at the top becomes the focal point of all action. The steepness of this landing as well as the heavy locked gate and the menacing height of the towers emphasize inaccessibility. The great distance from the foot of the hill to the citadel also conveys a vivid sense of the difficulty of reaching the summit, especially as the ascent is hazardous. Indeed, the uneven size of the steps required good balance and tight bodily control. Blanche Yurka, who played Lysistrata for five months in New York, has noted that it was almost

---

97 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds, A Treasury of the Theatre, p. 1488.

98 Ibid., p. 1509.

99 Ibid., p. 1497.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

necessary to develop a sixth sense to be able to move freely on the steps.[100]

The idea that the ascent to the Acropolis is hazardous is organically tied to the American interpretation of the citadel as the seat of power. The pyramid shaped construction reinforces the hierarchical model emphasized in this adaptation with the leader constantly at the summit. As a leader, Lysistrata is intimately associated with the space at the top. In contrast to all other characters in the play, possibly excepting the senators, we never see her ascend the entire length of the vertical from the bottom of the stairs in the auditorium. She appears to be a natural born leader. At the opening of the play the heroine is "discovered" at the top of the hill, while the old women are laboriously working their way up.[101] Indeed, stage directions referring to Lysistrata painstakingly indicate her position at the summit at all the major confrontations.[102] In performance, this was the highest landing: "from the platform in front of the gates Lysistrata makes proclamations, hails the gathering women, receives the Spartan contingent, administers the oath above a huge amphora of wine, parleys with the envoys, watches with serio-comic satisfaction the efforts of husbands below, clamoring to their wives." The heroine is in constant display, reinforcing her image of a strong leader.

The placement of the other young women at the summit also offers the opportunity for spectacular display, though not of power, but of sex appeal, aptly serving their function as objects of desire. In contrast to Lysistrata, her comrades are not naturally suited to being at the top. Their dwarfed appearance at the ramparts, a

---

100 Blanche Yurka, Bohemian Girl, p. 153.

101 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds, A Treasury of the Theatre, p. 1475.

102 See for example Ibid., pp. 1475 and 1480 (women's meeting and oath scene), p. 1488 (onset of choral battle), 1491 (President's appearance), 1509 (peace negotiations).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space uniquely associated with the women's army, makes them look almost like prisoners.[103] This idea is further developed in the scene where women invent excuses to leave. Bel Geddes had women trying to escape with ladders and ropes from the top of the towers, dramatically emphasizing their alienation to the space.[104] Indeed the young women have a strong desire to fall, which reaches a climax with Kalonika's dashing down the hill in her attempted desertion. When she is captured at the foot of the slope by Lampito and her friends disguised as men she is obviously literally and symbolically a fallen woman, who is unwillingly led back on top.

Besides serving interpretation, the set offered exciting possibilities for exploiting to the maximum the theatrical potential of scenes. The use of the entire length of the vertical axis from the bottom of the stairs in the auditorium to the top allowed for extremely dramatic entrances. The uneven size of the platforms greatly enhanced the rhythmic quality of movement. It encouraged patterned motion, effectively exploited in the entrances of choruses. Thus "the mumbling" old women came into view enranked.[105] This spectacle contrasted aurally and visually to the clambering old men, who struggled to ascend tottering under the weight of battering rams, siege ladders, firebrands and other impedimenta.[106] The young men's chorus vigorously zigzagged upwards, boldly displaying "brave arrays of shields and spears."[107] The

---

103 See Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times April 29, 1930; H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York; Figure 4-31.

104 See Figure 4-36.

105 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times April 29, 1930.

106 Ibid.

107 H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

many levelled set also invited freedom of movement, effectively employed in the initial colloquy between Lysistrata and Kalonika: "They advance, then recede, upon the spectator's eye, ear and imagination."[108] The steep height of the platforms also permitted loss of balance to be exploited theatrically. After the capture of the Acropolis, the discarded soldiers, bound with thongs, rolled down the steps.[109] Similarly, the President, at the conclusion of the debate with Lysistrata, was bound, rolled down and placed on a piece of litter for the old men to pick him up.[110]

Another particularly interesting theatrical feature of the set is that it allowed Lysistrata and her army to function as an on stage audience.[111] The position at the top is extremely advantageous, allowing a virtually unlimited field of vision. Thus, women watch all choruses coming up from the foot of the hill. Indeed, the distance is effectively exploited for dramatic effect, drawing attention to the women's role as lively, participatory spectators. Thus, the young women, looking down, initially mistake the elderly male chorus, still off stage, for the young men's army. As they come into sight, their tone changes from alarm and wonder to sarcasm.[112] Later, the same device is used when Kinesias and his friends come to claim their women. Perched on the hill, the women keenly try to make out how many men are coming and who they are. Myrrhina breaks through their ranks and gazes down "with mounting excitement": "Here — let me see. Why yes, it looks like — that's just the

---

108 Ibid.

109 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times April 29, 1930.

110 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds, A Treasury of the Theatre, p. 1494.

111 See Figure 4-15.

112 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Gilbert Seldes, in Burns Mantle and John Gassner, eds, A Treasury of the Theatre, p. 1487.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

way — it must be. Yes, it is. It is my husband. Oh Kinesias!"[113] The ensuing tempting of Kinesias scene was effectively staged on a lower platform clearly evoking an arena, as the couple was surrounded by both the actual audience beneath and the vigilant onstage audience above.[114]

Indeed, the use of the highest platform as the seat for the onstage audience subtly altered the shape of the Italian stage, evoking the circularity of the Greco-Roman theatre. This encouraged a communality between the characters and the action onstage and the actual audience. The recognizable modernist architecture of the towers set against the golden glow of the cyclorama represented the Acropolis as the capital of finance, inducing the American audience's identification with a world familiar to them. The unification of the spaces of the auditorium and the stage was further encouraged by the bold extension of the set well beyond the proscenium, the abolition of the front curtain and the use of the auditorium for all stage entrances.

It is noteworthy that some of these devices were also employed in the Russian production, which demonstrated similar sensitivity to the presence of the audience. Indeed, Bel Geddes' spatial conception of Lysistrata has important analogies to Rabinovich's work. Both models are stylized, minimalist designs which, nevertheless, are representational. The steep stairs of the American ascent and the airy Russian columns both subtly evoke the ancient world of the original. At the same time, both sets are extremely ambitious, in striving to represent an entire cosmos. In the Russian model, this was achieved by means of rotation, which permitted the visualization of any and every place. In the American setting, the highest platform afforded a limitless, cosmic view of the vastness below.

The two conceptions of the world are diametrically opposed. Each masterfully

---

113 Ibid., pp. 1499-1500.

114 H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

represents the dominant ideology of its culture. The communist interpretation employed a transparent, flexible and particularly inviting structure to project the Acropolis as a civil institution, intimately associated with the people. Characteristically, the citadel had no door and although the construction did have various levels, these were employed non hierarchically. The rotating semi-circles emphasized the possibility of change, which was in control of the characters within the structure. The direction of movement was circular, tending towards a future in the process of definition. The world in the Russian version has no predetermined set form and can be shaped into new, exciting forms expressing popular need and aspiration.

Bel Geddes countered a rigid, inflexible structure, emphasizing permanence. The enormous Cyclopean towers of the Acropolis and the heavy gate annul the possibility of change. Moreover, the inaccessibility of the structure signifies that the Acropolis is only open to an elite caste who can climb the hazardous ascent to the top and keep good balance once on the highest platform. The Acropolis in the American version has no pretensions to being a civil institution. It is simply the treasury, the seat of wealth and power, accessible only to leaders. The hierarchical ordering of the world is vividly emphasized throughout the production by placing all action on a vertical axis.

Verticality is also prominently emphasized in the design. Whereas the circularity of the Russian setting is friendly to women, the phallic towers and the arrow shaped ascent directly evoke the male capitalist world alien and threatening to the stereotyped females of this version. Only exceptional women like Lysistrata can be admitted, who display a distinctly male charisma. This is an extremely conservative depiction of the world as given and final. The highest platform simply offers a view of what already exists and nothing new can be discovered. Moreover, there is no question of changing this structure, only of learning to function on its terms. Those

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

who balance well can make it to the top and the rest have to be content on the lower strata.

Compared to the masterful conception of the setting, costumes were lacking in creativity and ingenuity. Nevertheless, they were consistent to the play's interpretation. The exaggerated magnificence of the senators contrasted sharply to the drab and pathetic appearance of the powerless elderly choruses. Senators wore richly patterned and exuberant, colorful chitons.[115] Grotesque exuberance was particularly emphasized in the costumes of the President's retinue, who were dressed in ballerina-like tutus, displaying the nudity of their arms, busts and legs.[116] Corruption of power in the masculine model of this interpretation displays distinctly effeminate, exhibitionist characteristics. Powerlessness on the other hand, is unremarkable. Elderly choruses wore loose, layered fabrics of dull colors creating the effect of ragged chitons.[117] There was no trace of humor in these designs. However, perhaps the old women's "swathed and dowdy" appearance was consistent to their earnest tone in this adaptation.[118]

Bel Geddes devoted most attention to the costumes of the young men and especially the young women who are really the stars in this interpretation. Women were dressed in sexy transparent draperies that exposed the female figure.[119] Individuality was important. Designs exhibited coquettish sensitivity to detail.[120] Draperies mostly reflected contemporary styles of the period but were also

---

115 See Figures 4-19, 4-18 and 4-26.

116 See Figure 4-18.

117 See Figures 4-16 and 4-17.

118 H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

119 See Figures 4-7, 4-8, 4-11, 4-12 and 4-13.

120 See Figures 4-7, 4-11, 4-12 and 4-13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reminiscent of antiquity.[121] They were designed primarily for a sexy rather than a comic effect, even though some had comic details, such as the pointed hats of the provincial Spartans.[122] Lysistrata too, conformed to the sexy dress code as her costume was feminine and attractive. Her only distinctive mark from the rest of the women was a helmet clearly evoking her associations to Athena.[123] The feminine, frothy and flowing materials of the women's dresses contrasted sharply to the rigid, phallic verticality of the set, emphasizing their alienation the male space they occupied.

Men were dressed in martial costume that looked distinctly antique. The inflexibility of their metal armature, designed in clear, sharp lines, established their intimate connection to the space.[124] For example, in Kinesias' costume, the verticality of the set design is also directly reflected on his cape and loin cloth, rendering the association to the set unequivocally clear.[125] The armature left arms, legs and chests exposed, non humorously drawing attention to male strength. Directly analogous to the women's feminine dresses then, the young men's costumes pronounced masculinity.

There is an uneasy conflict of styles in the costumes, revealing a lack of a unifying principle. For example, humorous exaggeration reflected in the appearance of the President and his retinue clashes with the more or less realistic conception of dress design for the other characters. Moreover, some costumes, like the young men's, are clearly period specific, while others have very loose period associations.

---

[121] See Figures 4-7, 4-8, 4-11 and 4-12.

[122] See Figure 4-14.

[123] See Figures 4-4 and 4-19.

[124] See Figures 4-22 and 4-23.

[125] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

like those of the Senators. A third option was employed for the young women's costumes, some of which clearly mix period and identifiable contemporary features. Attention to detail is also uneven in the costume conception, ranging from the bare minimum in the sack-like chitons of the elderly to the carefully modelled, sculptural effect of the young women's dresses.

The production had a particularly large cast of about 90 actors, singers and dancers.[126] There were approximately 55 speaking parts, including the miniscule roles of the child and of an Athenian spy. Young and old choruses of the two sexes totalled an average of fifteen members each. About twenty members of the elderly choruses are listed in the production's program as singers, contributing solely to the auditory and visual effect of the masses. Casting also included 16 professional dancers of the Humphrey-Weidman school of dance, employed in the Bacchanalia of the finale.

As is indicated by the large number of the cast, Bel Geddes attached importance to spectacle in Lysistrata. He used masses to construct beautiful pictures, giving amplitude to scenes. Robert Benchley wrote admiringly in The New Yorker: "There are at least a dozen moments which take your breath away or bring tears to your eyes."[127] He singles out as particularly impressive the oath scene with the entire female cast awaiting expectantly on stage, while two Athenian women slowly came up over the brow of the hill bearing an enormous votive bowl for the sacrament. The Bacchanalia dance in the finale was also spectacular, worthy of Broadway's grandeur. Exuberant dancers filled the entire huge stage, fully exploiting the sloping, zigzagging planes of the set. Even though the experience for the dancers apparently

---

[126] Information about casting and role distribution is based on Lysistrata's program for the New York Forty-Fourth Street Theatre production, included in the file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

[127] Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was dangerous and harrowing,[128] critics greatly admired the result: "Fokine himself might hardly have designed it more vigorously, variously, sensuously in rhythms reiterated or broken in lines thickening and thinning, curving and straightening, against the background of the watching throng."[129] Lysistrata in fact introduced modern dance on Broadway, in an imaginative choreography by Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey.[130] Music was composed by Leo Ornstein, who had also contributed an incidental score for the speaking parts.

Even though appreciative of the finale, critics generally had reservations over Bel Geddes' enthusiasm for spectacle in Lysistrata. The sheer abundance of masses threatened clarity of form. Stark Young commented, "A longer moment is needed in which there is less commotion and multiplicity. Such an economy would rest and enliven the total effect of the evening; ... it would afford a relief or contrast against which the extraordinary vitality in action and design would appear more distinctly."[131] The first act which included most of the choral interaction, featuring the oath scene and the battles in defense of the citadel, was unanimously regarded as the least successful. Critics complained about the excessive padding of incidents, resulting in repetitive, boring prolixity, especially when the old men were on stage.[132] John Mason Brown made an unfavorable comparison to the Russian

---

[128] See Mary Henderson, Theatre in America (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986).

[129] H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

[130] See Mary Henderson, Theatre in America.

[131] Stark Young, "The Philadelphia Lysistrata," The New Republic May 14, 1930, pp. 352-353.

[132] See Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930: Richard Lockridge, "Greece, via Philadelphia," Sun, June 6, 1930: Wilella Waldorf, "Lysistrata Arrives," Post, June 6, 1930; H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production, noting that the horseplay of the old men lacked the comic invention that Nemirovich-Danchenko had brought to the direction of the same scenes.[133] Using entirely modern criteria, he even found that the battles of the elderly choruses revealed a structural weakness of the original, since the "real interest" of the play lied in how women would receive their husbands. Bel Geddes had made this defect more obvious by unnecessarily elaborating on what appeared to be just "comic business for its own sake."[134]

The director was probably misguided into exploring the theatrical potential of the choral battle by the example of the Russian interpretation. However, in the earlier model, the old men are integrally associated with the action, whereas in the American conception they essentially have a decorative function: the focus is on distinct individuals, not on mass. This orientation is clearer in the second act, which was received with overflowing enthusiasm. As was aptly explained, "The second act of more personal incident better entertains an American audience of May, 1930."[135] The concentration of the sexual war on couples was perceived as more modern and entertaining. Indeed, the tempting of Kinesias was characterized "the crowning episode" of the production.[136]

Similarly to the Russian cast, American actors interpreted the ancient comedy farcically, in terms of forms drawn from popular entertainment, especially slapstick and burlesque. The production, wrote Brooks Atkinson, "laid the humors thick," but

---

[133] John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

[134] Ibid.

[135] H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

[136] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nobody had serious objections;[137] comic excess was generally relished. The critic of Day vividly conveys the spirit of the performance: "It is the fun that comes out. the tremendous horseplay and energy and salt, the rollings down Mr. Bel Geddes' beautiful crescent stairs, the falling and the slapping and the mattresses and the heroic roughhouse — all done so freshly and gayly and cleanly."[138] Indeed. the masterful performances of the young principals imposed a fast, engaging rhythm. sweeping away choral boredom.

Ernest Truex, who played Kinesias, was greatly admired for his comic flair. Even the photographs and especially the cartoons of the production reveal his expressive physicality. There is a humorous intensity in his gesture, vividly conveying Kinesias' urgency.[139] Truex parodied wildly and incessantly. He roared, pleaded and like "a pony stallion, he whinnied and gyrated in spasms of passion."[140] The New York Times characterized him a capital actor, who revealed that Lysistrata is a crafted. highly actable play.[141] Indeed, his performance led to an appreciation of the play's ingenious comic business. It persuasively presented Attic comedy as slapstick. In Screenland, Truex was thought to incarnate "the soul of Aristophanic slapstick hot-dog comedy."[142] Interestingly, the reviewer also comments, drawing inspiration from Truex's performance, that Lysistrata should be played almost to a Mack Sennett

---

[137] Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times. April 29, 1930.

[138] Robert Littell, "Lysistrata," Day, June 6, 1930.

[139] See Figures 4-20, 4-24, 4-25, 4-32, 4-33 and 4-35.

[140] Percy Hammond, "Lysistrata Brings Athens to Times Square," Herald Tribune. June 6, 1930.

[141] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

[142] "Lysistrata," unidentified issue of Screenland, p. 90, file on Lysistrata. Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tempo.

Screenland's yardstick led to the criticism of the English actress Violet Kemble Cooper who initially played Lysistrata on Broadway, as "too classic" in the role. "She doesn't whip the comedy out of it," snapped the critic, using an eloquent metaphor.[143] Similarly, Richard Lockridge in The Sun, even though appreciative of Cooper's Grecian look, criticized her for bringing "more dignity" to the role than it needed, humorously pointing out that she "occasionally forgot she was not in a drawing room." Aristophanes, concluded Lockridge, "sought and attained the guffaw, not the smile."[144]

The popular press then found Cooper's reserved, stylish manner unsuitable for the boisterous Aristophanic comedy. However, perhaps the objection was not so much directed against Cooper, as against the way Lysistrata's character has been adapted in the American interpretation. Indeed, most critics did not find the role remarkable enough to comment on the performances of Cooper or even Fay Bainter, who played the role in Philadelphia. Brooks Atkinson, who commented on Cooper's interpretation, was clearly in a minority. Interestingly, in diametrical opposition to the popular press, he found that this was one of Cooper's best performances, elaborating: "Her voice has strength enough to dominate so vast a scene; her diction is excellent. She gives the part authority and stature."[145] Similarly, Percy Hammond in The Herald Tribune found that she dominated the scene and praises her statuesque manner and competent elocution.[146] The cartoons of the production also

---

[143] Ibid.

[144] Richard Lockridge, "Greece, via Philadelphia," Sun, June 6, 1930.

[145] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

[146] Percy Hammond, "Lysistrata Brings Athens to Times Square," Herald Tribune, June 6, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

support the view that she gave a valid interpretation of the role as adapted, clearly depicting her as a leader.[147]

Perhaps then it was the humorless, serious tone of the role that diverted the critics' attention from the performance of the actress playing Lysistrata, as was also the case with the old women, who were totally ignored. By contrast, the actresses playing the young women were abundantly praised for their comic flair and liveliness. Hope Emerson as Lampito was "a thunderous virago,"[148] whose style came into sharp antithesis to the "girlish mischief"[149] of her attractive friends.[150] Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika especially delighted critics with her kitten-like piping playfulness.[151] She was probably the most frequently photographed performer in Lysistrata, and her pictures convey a vibrant sensuality.[152] Critics fell for her magnetic sex appeal, characterizing her as "the lovely lady who, strike or no strike, knows what she wants when she wants it — and she wants it most of the time —."[153]

The critical reception of the acting in the American Lysistrata is especially interesting because it stimulated thoughts on the nature of Aristophanic comedy and

---

147 See Figures 4-30, 4-33 and 4-37.

148 H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

149 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

150 See Figure 4-29, numbers 5, 9, 10, 14, 18, 36, 37, 38, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53 and 55.

151 See Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930; H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in 'American'," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York: Richard Lockridge, "Greece, via Philadelphia," Sun, June 6, 1930.

152 See Figures 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8.

153 Robert Garland, "Seldes' Version of Ancient Greek Farce a Live Offering," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

comments on how it should be interpreted. Clearly, critics were uninterested in the choral interaction and in Lysistrata's stilted, humorless references to war. As analyzed earlier, these were obviously misguided choices in the adaptation. diverging drastically from the original's comic spirit and, not surprisingly, they did not work in production. E. Truex. M. Hopkins and the girls were regarded as representing the essence of Aristophanic drama. These performances awoke critics to the comic virtues of the ancient dramatist. Aristophanes was appreciated as a robust comic author who could supply lusty parts to modern comedians.

Similarly to the performance, the adaptation was praised mainly for preserving the original's comic flair, interpreting it into a colloquial idiom that could be savored by contemporary American audiences. The more serious implications about war were generally ignored. Stark Young commented that Seldes' text was "full of turns and quips that are for the most part akin to the original gayeties." At the same time he found it "fluent and alive."[154] Brooks Atkinson more specifically relished "the sheer artlessness of the slapstick episodes [which] makes them palatable and enjoyable." He also found the bawdiness of the production as a whole akin to 2nd avenue burlesque.[155] Similarly, another commentator judged Seldes' colloquies to be "unctuous, in the vein of our better comedians of burlesque."[156]

The chief merit of Bel Geddes' production then. greatly appreciated in the adaptation as well as in the performance, was its entertainment value. Lysistrata. wrote John Mason Brown, "wrings a full blown kind of laughter from its audiences.

---

[154] Stark Young, "The Philadelphia Lysistrata," The New Republic May 14. 1930. pp. 352-353.

[155] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times. June 6, 1930.

[156] H. T. P.. "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in "American," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata. Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

not ordinarily heard in our playhouses."[157] The production was perceived as "heartily amusing,"[158] precisely because it included all the ingredients of a successful modern revue: burlesque and slapstick satire, bawdiness and beautiful, sprightly girls. At the same time, these features were regarded as representative of the farcical spirit of the original. Lysistrata, concluded John Mason Brown, "grants Aristophanic farce the robustious rowdiness proper to it."[159]

Humor was also a central consideration in the discussion of the production's weaknesses. A frequently repeated complaint was Lysistrata's lack of economy. Bel Geddes' gay inventiveness was occasionally hampered by his tendency to indiscriminately overload the scene with effects. Brooks Atkinson found that "the comic spirit could dance more freely if Mr. Geddes had spared the picture somewhat and tightened the performance."[160] The overcrowding of scenes also occasionally ruined the production's fast tempo, resulting in an uneven rhythm. Interestingly, Brooks Atkinson commented that the production's erratic pace and the undisciplined fooling perhaps approximated the spirit of the original's performance context. He found the tempo "not unsuited to the festival quality of the humors," which however is alien to the modern audience, accustomed to the tightly structured modern theatre. For this reason, he concluded, "Geddes has not found the style best suited to Aristophanes."[161]

---

157 John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

158 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

159 John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

160 Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

161 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The lavishness of the lighting and set design were also criticized as inappropriate for the comedy. The critic of Theatre Arts took issue with Bel Geddes for his indulgent employment of lighting. He observed, Lysistrata "demands a brilliant healthy lighting and plenty of it ... Its very excesses of gaiety require a firmer hand ..."[162] Even though abundantly praised for its theatricality, for serving as "a splendid platform for the horseplay of the comedy,"[163] the set was also mildly criticized as too imposing for the play's farcical mood. Thus John Mason Brown found the comedy "far lighter than Mr. Geddes' heavy background."[164] In The Herald Tribune the set was characterized "gloomy,"[165] and similarly, in The New York Times, it was judged to be "more on the side of the tragedians than the mountebanks."[166]

Lysistrata then was simply and straightforwardly received as a fun play and criticism of the production mostly focused on its comic merits and weaknesses. Brooks Atkinson explained that Aristophanes' "free cartooning" in Lysistrata is amenable to several interpretations, including anti-war and feminist propaganda, which are all legitimate. He characterized the play as adapted, a burlesque of the love between the sexes.[167] For John Mason Brown, Lysistrata primarily reflects " ...

---

[162] Herbert Gellendré, "What about Lysistrata," Theatre Arts Monthly (October 1930): pp. 891-892.

[163] Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

[164] John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

[165] Percy Hammond, "Lysistrata Brings Athens to Times Square," Herald Tribune, June 6, 1930.

[166] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

[167] Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the animal exuberance of a vigorous race."[168] The critic of The New Yorker found it "frankly and openly a comedy of sex."[169]

Bawdiness and the sexual theme raised concern about the production's morality. Fearful of censorship, the producers included a brief note in the program explaining that Lysistrata's roaring mirth has great health, in spite of its broadness. It is "inoffensive" and completely free from licentiousness. Sheltered behind the classic stature of Aristophanes they point out in conclusion: "If the greatest comic spirit of the greatest age civilization has ever known is offensive, one may suspect the fault is not so much his as ours."[170] This bold attack on prospective moral protest did not settle the issue. Indeed, apprehension of the censor perhaps explains the delay in producing the play in America in the 1920s, even though it had attracted the attention of the theatre world. Theatre Arts Monthly commented on Lysistrata shortly after its Philadelphia opening, "Nobody quite knows now whether the joke is on New York that did not dare to produce the play (it is said to have been in the Theatre Guild schedule for years) or on Philadelphia that went ahead and did it."[171] In any case, William Carlos Williams hurried to see the production to be on the safe side. He recounts in the foreword to his autobiography, "Once, in great excitement, we took the train for Philadelphia late in the day to be present at a performance of Lysistrata before it could be censored."[172]

---

168 John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it." New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

169 Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930.

170 Program of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata production at the Forty-Fourth Street Theatre. file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

171 "Lysistrata," Theatre Arts Monthly (June, 1930): pp. 453-454.

172 William Carlos Williams, Selected Essays. (New York: New Directions, 1954). p. 313.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed Lysistrata did attract the professional interest of Dr. Frederick Poole, a member of Philadelphia's censorship board, who was, however, easily won over. After attending a performance, he was happy enough to joke with reporters, mentioning that the play was beyond his jurisdiction, as it was written bc: "and bc in its case means, before censors."[173] Still, the censorship board did cut a few lines and threatened to ask for more changes, depending on the reaction of theatregoers.[174] Apparently however, no further action was taken. Later, the imminence of the Broadway premiere again stirred up fears of censorship.

The New York press gallantly undertook the production's defense, discouraging prospective interference. Reporters were generally careful to explain that even though shocking, the play is actually clean and inoffensive. The delicateness of the subject is easily discernible in the elusive or apologetic references to Lysistrata in the press. Burns Mantle in Daily News writes: "It will shock many, but actually offend few. ... though the purpose is earnest and the plan rational, the writing of the play descends frequently to the level of the cheaper burlesques, with such scenes as defy printed description or free discussion in any home of what used to be known as decent moral standards." However, he reassures readers that Seldes has employed "a fair restraint" in the adaptation.[175] Similarly, Edward Hope apologizes that he cannot give a complete synopsis of the play, as he is writing for a "family newspaper." Still, he ardently defends the production: "This country is ready for — and needs — such a hearty laugh as the present Lysistrata provides. ... The play seems to us to strike equally effectively at prudery and prurience. ... we promise

---

[173] Cited in I. F., "Lysistrata Given Great Production," Camden Evening Courier, April 29, 1930.

[174] "Censors Trim Lysistrata," The New York Times, April 30, 1930.

[175] Burns Mantle, "Here Is Good Athenian Dirt," Daily News, June 7, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

anyone who attempts censorship our wholehearted and vocal ill will."[176] The Broadway premiere was attended by captain J. Coy, who had led the raid on May West's Pleasure Man and had been an important witness in her then recent trial. He was lenient on Lysistrata, commenting he had found nothing objectionable in the production.[177]

Lysistrata then scraped through censorship virtually unscarred. Still, it was perceived as a shocking spectacle. Interestingly, Lysistrata's licentiousness turned the critics' attention not only towards the production but also towards the audience. The public's reaction to libertinage was deemed noteworthy. Thus, the critic of The New Yorker reports approvingly that the Philadelphian audience was civilized. There was no titter or nudging during the performance, only "loud, clear and entirely healthy laughter."[178] Percy Hammond, who reviewed the Broadway production for The Herald Tribune, similarly found a lively and expressive audience. However, he regards the fervent response unusual for a classic and has puritanical suspicion: "Not often does an audience react so vehemently to the masterpieces as did this one last night. Cries of "Bravo!" were to be heard frequently in applause of some of the comedy's more unrestrained freedoms. ... [The] public ... one fears, was attuned to naughtiness rather than art."[179] By contrast, Richard Lockridge in The Sun welcomes extroversion in Lysistrata and wishes it were more liberated. He detected "an atmosphere of hushed reverence" in the first act, stemming from a misguided

---

176 Edward Hope, "The Lantern," New York Tribune, May 15, 1930.

177 "Police Captain Visits Lysistrata Opening," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

178 Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930.

179 Percy Hammond, "Lysistrata Brings Athens to Times Square," Herald Tribune, June 6, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

respectfulness towards Lysistrata, as a classic.[180] In the second act, the audience overcame self consciousness, achieving a participation appropriate to the play's liveliness. He perceptively points out that "What Lysistrata needs, even more than most plays, is an audience which will enter without reservation into the intended spirit and help the actors enjoy themselves."[181]

The production's popularity with the large public clearly evidences that Lysistrata was primarily enjoyed rather than revered as a classic. It premiered on April 28 in Philadelphia and was originally scheduled for a three week run which was extended to six. Even sophisticated New Yorkers travelled to Philadelphia especially to see the production. Robert Benchley wrote in The New Yorker: "The most important New York theatrical event of the spring took place in Philadelphia."[182] This was an exceptional occurrence, as all major theatrical events were then exclusively produced in New York. However, the Shuberts were pragmatic. Sensing good business, they transferred the production to Broadway in the summer.

Lysistrata opened on June 5th at the Forty-Fourth Street Theatre and held the stage for 256 performances. By the end of its 8th month, it passed the season's greatest hits, Green Pastures and Garrick Gaieties, to take the lead of most in demand in the ticket brokers' lists.[183] Due to some financial problem, the Broadway production closed before ticket demand slackened. A second company opened at the Majestic Theatre in Chicago and toured the Eastern states and a third premiered at the Morosco Theatre in Los Angeles and toured the Western part of the country.

Financially then, Lysistrata was a highly successful venture. However, the

---

180 Richard Lockridge, "Greece, via Philadelphia," Sun, June 6, 1930.

181 Ibid.

182 Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930.

183 See George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," pp. 202-203.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production was also a personal artistic triumph for Bel Geddes. In spite of the minor complaints about lack of economy, the general impression was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The production was characterized "a masterpiece of the visual theater. Primarily and persistently, [Bel Geddes] addresses the sensuous, imagining, illuded eye."[184] Similarly, Brooks Atkinson praised the artist for designing "a magnificent production, imaginative, free, sculptural and colorful."[185] The set was unanimously admired for its form and function. Stark Young praised it as "a superb design, active and alive in every part, and highly dramatic."[186] John Mason Brown observed that the designer created a formally engaging set that also served the play effectively instead of smothering it, as in Arabesque. Thus he had managed to avoid the dangerous pitfall, detrimental to some of his previous work.[187] With Lysistrata, Bel Geddes had also effectively demonstrated his directorial talent. Brooks Atkinson recognized that the designer was "equally successful as a director, massing his figures for spectacle at times, but leaving his actors free to play lusty parts."[188] Rob Benchley in The New Yorker regarded Lysistrata as Bel Geddes' best work, commenting, "[he] has never done a more beautiful or exciting piece of staging."[189]

Aristophanes' introduction to the American theatre was triumphantly successful.

---

[184] H. T. P., "Aristophanes, Newly-Staged in "American," unidentified review in the file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

[185] Brooks Atkinson, "Lysistrata Here With Broad Humor," The New York Times, June 6, 1930.

[186] Stark Young, "The Philadelphia Lysistrata," The New Republic May 14, 1930. pp. 352-353.

[187] John Mason Brown, "Lysistrata as Philadelphia is Now Seeing it," New York Evening Post, May 10, 1930.

[188] Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

[189] Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata strongly impressed the critics and the public as a highly entertaining comedy which happily combined avant garde with popular features. However, the production is also noteworthy for its lasting impact on Aristophanic production in the United States. It initiated a long series of professional and amateur Lysistrata productions, the overwhelming majority of which employed the Gilbert Seldes adaptation. There was at least one production of this play per year throughout the United States in the 1930s and through most of the forties and fifties, to the early sixties.[190] The Seldes adaptation then had an impressive longevity of over thirty years. As late as 1959, Brooks Atkinson, on the occasion of a Lysistrata staging, still considered Seldes' work relevant and fresh, commenting that it "makes the most of [the play's] ribaldry".[191] In the same year, a professional company used an alternative version of the play, — the Dudley Fitts translation — for its production at the Phoenix Theatre in New York.[192] The translation was praised as "crisp" in The New York Times, but the production was considered a dismal failure. The critic goes back nostalgically to the unsurpassed landmarks, the 1925 MAT venture and Bel Geddes' interpretation with its "magnificent setting and glamorous cast."[193]

Post 1930 productions of Lysistrata in the Seldes adaptation probably imitated Bel Geddes' successful staging features, especially as the text is replete with stage directions. Blanche Yurka, who played the lead role on Broadway, directed the play in 1938 in Dallas, Texas in her own version, based on Seldes' adaptation.[194] In

---

190 See Chronological List of Aristophanic Productions, included in this study.

191 Brooks Atkinson, "Theatre: Old and New," The New York Times, June 3, 1959.

192 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted by Dudley Fitts (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954).

193 Brooks Atkinson, "Phoenix Lysistrata," The New York Times, December 6, 1959.

194 The production opened at The Little Theatre in Dallas, on January 20, 1938.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

preparing the text, Yurka mentions she was careful "not to lose too many of the sure-fire laughs" she was familiar with.[195] Photographs of the production indicate the staging was a cheapened imitation of Bel Geddes' prototype.[196] The young women's transparent tunics are a kitch, nylon version of the original aetherial garments.[197] Lysistrata wears a metal dove helmet identical to that of the original production, which had probably become a typical feature of her attire.[198] Characterization also seems to be directly derived from the original, as is indicated by the picture of an authoritarian Lysistrata scolding the child-like, naughty Kalonika.[199] Bel Geddes' set was obviously more difficult to imitate. However, it seems to have been influential in determining Yurka's spatial conception. The Dallas production also had an architectural set of steps and platforms and the Acropolis was fortified by a heavy double gate and high walls. Obviously, however, this set did not offer the variable imaginative possibilities for group movement of the original.[200] Yurka's production is perhaps a typical example of how the original Lysistrata supplied a staging prototype for later productions. In a New York 1959 production of the play in the Seldes version, the actress playing Lysistrata was criticized for speaking "in the flat accents of cocktail party clatter." Possibly she was imitating the snobbish elocution of Violet Kemble Cooper, which had engendered similar commentary in 1930.[201]

Two noteworthy attempts to produce imaginative and original Lysistratas

---

195 Blanche Yurka, Bohemian Girl, p. 212.

196 See Figures 4-38, 4-39 and 4-40.

197 See Figures 4-38 and 4-40.

198 See Figures 4-40 and 4-41.

199 See Figure 4-40.

200 See Figure 4-39.

201 Brooks Atkinson, "Theatre: Old and New." The New York Times, June 3, 1959.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

diverging from the prototype were unsuccessful. Interestingly, both are associated with political theatre. In 1936, the Federal theatre sponsored a Lysistrata production by a Black theatrical company in Seattle, Washington.[202] The adaptation had been prepared by the black playwright Th. Brown and was subtitled, "an African version."[203] Action had been transferred to Ebonia in Africa, populated by warring Negro tribes. The production's program lists exciting new, exotic characters such as a witch queen and a lion tamer. Unfortunately, the black Lysistrata was closed down by the WPA on the second day of performance.[204] The other interesting venture is associated with the Theatre Guild. In 1948, the Guild announced the opening of Lysistrata '48 in Westport Connecticut, in the Seldes version.[205] Modern dress would be employed in this production, which would emphasize the parallels between the Peloponesian war and the civil war in modern Greece which was then seething. According to the press release, production had been scheduled to open on June 28 but there is no further information on it, indicating that, if produced at all, the venture was unsuccessful.

The interest in producing Lysistrata in the Donnay version in the 1920s died down with the emergence of the Seldes adaptation. Nevertheless, there is a record of a 1936 Lysistrata production in the Donnay version, revised into a musical: Ode to a Grecian Urge.[206] It is also noteworthy that until the early sixties, the existence of

---

202 The production opened at the Moore Theatre, in Seattle, on September 17, 1936.

203 Indicated in program of the Federal Theatre's Lysistrata production, file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

204 See Hallie Flannagan, Arena (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 305.

205 Indicated in press release of the Theatre Guild bearing the company's letter head, file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

206 The production opened at the Heckscher Theatre on March 27, 1935. See file on Lysistrata, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Seldes' adaptation had led to the virtual monopoly of Lysistrata on the American stage. Indeed, there was no significant interest in producing any other plays of the ancient dramatist. The first notable production of an alternative Aristophanic play, The Birds, occurs in 1964, a year after the last record of a Lysistrata production in the Seldes version. The Birds was produced by Herbert Blau at the Actor's workshop, in San Francisco, in William Arrowsmith's translation.

Bel Geddes' Lysistrata then has the privilege of being not only the first major Aristophanic production in America but also the most influential. Its impact was exerted over a period of thirty years. Moreover, since the sixties, there has not been any other Aristophanic production of comparable importance in the United States. The substantial effect of Bel Geddes' production is intimately related to the original's transformation into a contemporary popular spectacle. Lysistrata was transformed into a familiar character play. All alienating features of the ancient text such as the parabasis and the long choral passages were either removed or reinterpreted in terms of contemporary analogies, frequently distortive of the original context. The American interpretation primarily emphasized entertainment and the comic value of the play. Even though there was some attempt to introduce a social problematic about war, this was not conveyed successfully in performance or appreciated by the public. In production, Aristophanes' comic spirit was interpreted into a viable modern form, employing performance techniques and methods of the flourishing popular American theatre. The identification to popular contemporary spectacles was so successful that critics of the popular press were even inspired to add thoughts on how Aristophanes should be interpreted, drawing on familiar popular models, such as Mack Sennett.

Indeed, Lysistrata exhibits all the main features of the American popular arts in the twenties, as discussed paradigmatically in Seldes' The Seven Lively Arts. The term 'lively' captures the most essential feature of lowbrow popular entertainment, its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

vibrant, high spirited vitality. As Seldes explains, "the essence of the minor arts is high levity. ... It is a question of exaltation, of carrying a given theme to a 'high' point."[207] His discussion of musical comedy could just as well apply to Aristophanic drama. Again he insists that the secret of the successful musical comedy is high spirits, elaborating: "there must be some courage, some defiance of nature and sound sense, a feeling for fantasy ... It is for this freedom of the spirit ... that these shows are cherished."[208] Wide appeal is another principal feature of the lively arts, which interestingly imposes restrictions on freedom of the spirit. The emphasis on popular taste virtually invites censorship, which, also threatened Lysistrata. Indeed, "the lively arts are inhibited by the necessity to provide 'nice clean fun for the whole family,' — a regrettable, but inevitable penalty of their universal appeal."[209] Seldes' personal taste is in fact closer to the robust Aristophanic spirit than the adaptation reveals. He confesses he would prefer popular spectacles to be more gross and licentious, inviting cheerful roaring at dirty jokes.[210] However, in adapting Lysistrata he prudently decided to remove a certain cause of offence. The lively arts are also characterized by immediacy. Popular entertainment is easy to enjoy and thoroughly digestible, leaving the audience happy and untroubled. Its appreciation does not depend on a background of education or culture. Connected to immediacy is also an emphasis on distinctly American features. Seldes vividly singles out the "sparkle and snap," of the popular arts, "their inner life which corresponds to the brighter and better side of American life, their impertinence and good cheer, and above all the strong creative current which in them has found a native, not borrowed form for

---

207 Gilbert Seldes, The Seven Lively Arts (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1924), p. 294.

208 Ibid., p. 162.

209 Ibid., p. 300.

210 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

itself."[211]

Clearly, Lysistrata was also shaped into a distinctly American product. As shown earlier, it accurately reflected the ideology of success. The concentration on leaders, the interpretation of choruses as masses in need of direction, the vertical axis of the setting, imposing a hierarchical structure and drawing emphasis on getting to the top, the presentation of the Acropolis as the seat of wealth and power, the male centered ethic and aesthetic of the production all evoked a capitalist world. American audiences were shown their very own socio-political model. It is not surprising that critics completely ignored the production's ideological interpretation of the original. It was so evidently American that it was taken for granted.

In retrospect, it is profoundly ironic that the American production celebrated capitalism at the aftermath of the stock market crash, in October 1929, which brought the collapse of capitalist economy. Historically, the persistent references to business, the impression of permanence and the solidity of the structure can thus only be viewed comically. The hazardous balance on the magnificent, steep ascent leads to pessimist thoughts about falling, rather than getting to the top. It is only with a good dose of wishful thinking and self deception that contemporary audiences could identify with the ideological conception presented on stage. Henry Hazlitt in The Nation, a political publication associated with the left, unwittingly made some comments on the set which appear to hit the mark. He found it tragic rather than comic in atmosphere and complained that it was unsafe. He writes, "When, in the last scene, everyone on the stage was supposed to abandon himself to an orgy of joyous dancing, I found myself watching the performers carefully picking their way from step to step. ... Even if they never turn an ankle or bump a shin, the spectator is distracted from the main business in hand by the constant fear that they are going

---

[211] Ibid., p. 10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to."[212] However, no irony was intended on the part of the director. Lysistrata is a typical American popular spectacle of the mid-war period, nourishing the public with lovely dreams, eagerly sought on stage at a time when reality could no longer sustain them. Indeed, Broadway activities were not drastically curtailed by the depression. The thirties was the Golden Age of American musicals, flourishing side by side with plays on socially relevant themes. Lysistrata, as a hearty comedy that presented a reassuring picture of capitalist prosperity, catered to the public's need to laugh away depression.

Lysistrata also aptly reflects the theatrical creation of its time in combining popular with high brow artistic features. The twenties is characterized by the emergence of a fertile communication between the popular arts and the avant garde, which were both flourishing.[213] This interaction contributed to the popular theatre's greater sophistication. The new stagecraft movement came into maturity in the 20s with the experimental, seminal work of its leading scenic designers Robert Edmond Jones, Kenneth Macgowan and Bel Geddes. It is important that these artists were working simultaneously on avant garde and commercial projects. For example, as mentioned earlier, in the 1920s Bel Geddes had also designed spectacular sets and costumes for popular musical comedies and revues. In addition to the standard popular fare, Broadway commissions also came to include highly ambitious artistic productions such as Max Reinhardt's Miracle, again designed by Bel Geddes, a project of interest both to the avant garde and to the commercial theatre.

Besides opening up to greater innovation in scenic design, Broadway also unprecedentedly came to welcome the production of more interesting plays, both modern and classic. The 1920s was an especially fertile period in dramatic talent.

---

212 Henry Hazlitt, Lysistrata, The Nation, June 25, 1930.

213 See Ethan Mordden, The American Theatre (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The most important was undoubtedly Eugene O' Neil, who, by the late twenties was already established as the pre-eminent American dramatist, significantly enjoying both the esteem of the avant garde and wide popular appeal. Qualitative offerings of modern plays on Broadway even extended to foreign avant garde authors such as Karel Capek and Luigi Pirandello. The classics also received unprecedented attention on Broadway in this period. Perhaps the most notable venture was the collaboration of R. E. Jones, A. Hopkins and the Barrymores, which resulted in the production of several landmark Shakespearean productions in the 1920s.[214] The filtering of avant garde elements into the commercial theatre was also undoubtedly aided by the Broadway visits of distinguished European theatre artists such as Max Reinhardt, the Moscow Art Theatre's dramatic and musical companies and Karel Capek.

Producing Lysistrata was thus a timely choice for the American theatre in the 1920s. As a classic, it enjoyed the esteem of high culture. At the same time, farce offered the alluring possibility of reaching the wide popular audience. Lysistrata's hybridic combination of popular and avant garde features targeted both a popular and a sophisticated audience. As mentioned earlier, the combination in some cases appears contrived. The attempt to introduce socially relevant concerns about war in a serious tone collides uneasily with the emphasis on burlesque and slapstick. Yet, Bel Geddes' choice of supplying a modernist platform for the performance enhanced wonderfully the theatricality and exuberance of the popular acting styles employed. The synthesis of avant garde and pop was so effective that critics were not estranged by the production's hybridic features. However, there was perhaps a difference of emphasis, depending on whether the publication was highbrow or popular.

Popular publications dwell more on the virtues of the farcical acting styles and do

---

[214] Notably, they collaborated in producing Richard III (1920), Macbeth (1921) and Hamlet (1922).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

not generally contribute enlightening commentary on the set.[215] The balance is reversed in the highbrow press.[216] Occasionally estrangement does amusingly show through. As mentioned earlier, popular critics either ignored or found Violet Kemble Cooper's classicism dissonant to the robust spirit of the performance. Cooper is praised solely by the highbrows, some of whom are ill at ease with the bawdiness of slapstick. For example, even though generally appreciative of E. Truex, Brooks Atkinson characterizes his acting style as "diminutive farce."[217] Percy Hammond in The Herald Tribune is clearly embarrassed with the performer's uninhibited rowdiness, blurring "I thought he was comic but not amusing."[218]

Prima facie, Lysistrata is not a production of particular historical interest to the development of American theatre. It simply appears to reflect the general tendency towards a synthesis of avant garde and popular art that emerged in the twenties. However, perhaps the production merits special attention on account of Bel Geddes' involvement. It would be fruitful to establish how his experience of designing for the popular theatre was expressed in Lysistrata, especially as Bel Geddes had worked on some of the most successful musicals of the twenties. To the best of my knowledge, there is at present no relevant critical material to rely on. Unfortunately, the meagre theatre research on Bel Geddes is entirely focused on his avant garde work, ignoring

---

215 For example, see Richard Lockridge, "Greece, via Philadelphia," Sun, June 6, 1930; Burns Mantle, "Here Is Good Athenian Dirt," Daily News, June 7, 1930; "Lysistrata," unidentified issue of Screenland, p. 90, file on Lysistrata, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

216 For example, interesting discussion of the set is included in Brooks Atkinson's reviews in The New York Times of April 29, and June 6, 1930; Robert Benchley, "With Love from the Greeks," The New Yorker, May 10, 1930; Stark Young, "The Philadelphia Lysistrata," The New Republic May 14, 1930.

217 Brooks Atkinson, "Aristophanes Play Is Sprightly Acted," The New York Times, April 29, 1930.

218 Percy Hammond, "Lysistrata Brings Athens to Times Square," Herald Tribune, June 6, 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his other projects.[219] Lysistrata's bold projection of popular features intimates that this may be a misguided tactic.

However, since this study is not focused on Bel Geddes, I can at best only indicate here Lysistrata's importance to his avant garde artistic development. Conceptually, the set belongs to a series of formal architectural settings of cubical forms set behind ascending steps and platforms. Other notable examples of this type of design, also created in the twenties, are Jeanne d'Arc and Hamlet. Interestingly, he also attempted to direct both of these productions but was unsuccessful. Jeanne d'Arc, his first major attempt at directing, is immediately comparable to Lysistrata. Indeed, as in Lysistrata, the vertical towers of the set are reminiscent of New York sky scrapers, establishing a connection to the industrial present. Another common feature of both structures is that they were especially designed to enhance the play of the performers. As Bel Geddes explained to the cast of Jeanne d'Arc, "The success of any play depends eventually upon the actor and toward this end I have designed a purely plastic stage structure for the action."[220]

However, in spite of his professed belief in the performer, acting was perceived as the production's greatest weakness. Eva Le Galliene, who played the title role, was very critical of Bel Geddes as a director: "He wasn't a director at all in my opinion. I think of him only as a stage designer. Certainly in Jeanne d'Arc he didn't direct the actors at all. He did move the crowds of supers around in masses to enhance the

---

219 The following papers attempt to give a sense of the breadth of Bel Geddes' creativity. However, they both are expository rather than critical: Frederick Hunter. "Norman Bel Geddes: The Renaissance Man of the American Theatre," (Paper delivered at the International Federation for Theatre Research, at the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, New York, October 6, 1969; Jane Preddy, "Costumes and Clowns: Bizarre Projects of Norman Bel Geddes Journal of Popular Culture (Fall 1986): pp. 29-39.

220 Cited in George Bogusch, "An American in Paris; Norman Bel Geddes Produces Jeanne d'Arc," Theater Design and Technology (October 1969): pp. 4-10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

visual effect — but that's about all."[221] Even though aesthetically appreciated. the set was also strongly criticized for smothering the play. With Lysistrata. Bel Geddes managed to overcome the weaknesses singled out in Jeanne d'Arc and to earn credit as a director. The acting was extremely well received and the set was admired for its theatricality. Moreover, Bel Geddes was able to keep his baroque tendency of overloading productions at bay.

Lysistrata was the first and probably the most successful directorial project of Bel Geddes. In his theatrical career he only directed about seven productions and is now principally known as a designer rather than as a director. However, he strongly advocated a unified conception of production in the tradition of Appia and Craig, in which the distinction between designer and director is not clear-cut. He wrote: "An artist in setting out to stage a play looks at it in a new way. He sees it as a whole, a unit, a design and he tries to hold this unity."[222] Far from simply supplying a background to action the stage designer is an interpreter, responsible for providing a visual exposition of the play. His work should "create a scheme for unfolding a specific drama to the eye, as the actor's voice and movement does to the ear."[223] The design, for Bel Geddes, is conceptually inseparable from the play. it is the space that gives viability to action. Lysistrata exemplifies perfectly his unified conception of staging, as he was responsible for every aspect of this production from designing the sets and costumes to the casting and directing, and even to the creation of the adaptation. As shown earlier, the space conception for Lysistrata preceded and influenced the shaping of the text. Moreover, the set has an extremely rich visual symbolic function rendering the ideological underpinnings of the modern play

---

[221] Ibid. p. 8.

[222] Cited in George Bogusch, "Unity in the New Stagecraft," pp. iii-iv.

[223] Norman Bel Geddes, Miracle in the Evening (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), p. 261.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

compellingly obvious.

Bel Geddes' Lysistrata also has a singular place in the history of Aristophanic production in the United States as the most important theatrical interpretation of Attic comedy. Moreover, it introduced the playwright to the American public and had considerable impact in stirring up an interest in producing Lysistrata. Bel Geddes' project was so influential that subsequent stagings tended to be mimetic rather than original. The American interpretation freely borrowed elements from earlier major interpretations, shaping them however into a new original version. Lysistrata was adapted into a modern comedy, directly reflecting the capitalist ideology. The primary emphasis of the production was on entertainment, as opposed to socio-political aspects bearing on war or feminism explored in earlier major interpretations. Drawing on the extremely effective performance styles of the modern popular theatre, Aristophanic farce was interpreted in terms of slapstick and burlesque. In the American interpretation, Lysistrata was essentially transformed into a commercial popular spectacle, reflecting central stereotypes of the American mass culture and catering to the large public's need to be entertained. However, this was a popular spectacle of high aspirations, since the production also exhibited sophisticated avant garde features. Audiences and critics were delighted and flocked to see the play. A major new dramatic talent had been unearthed: Aristophanes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

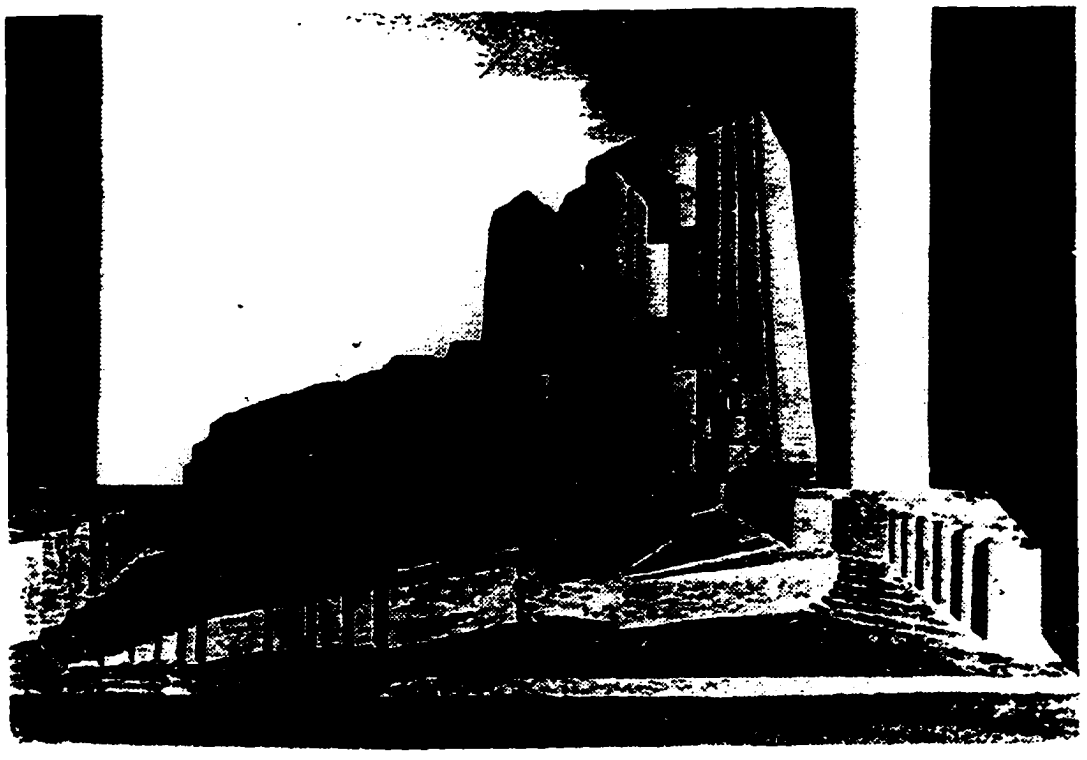

Fig. 4-1 Photograph of Bel Geddes' model for the set of Lysistrata (1929).

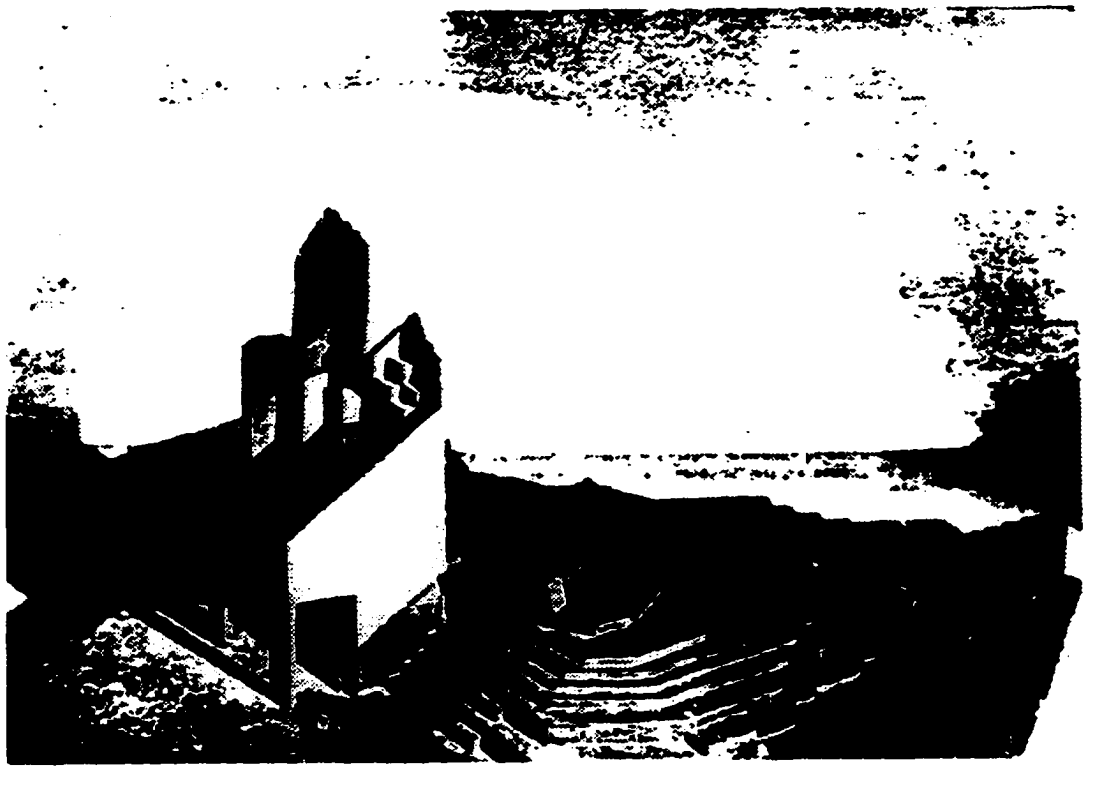

Fig. 4-2 Photograph of Bel Geddes' model for the set of Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

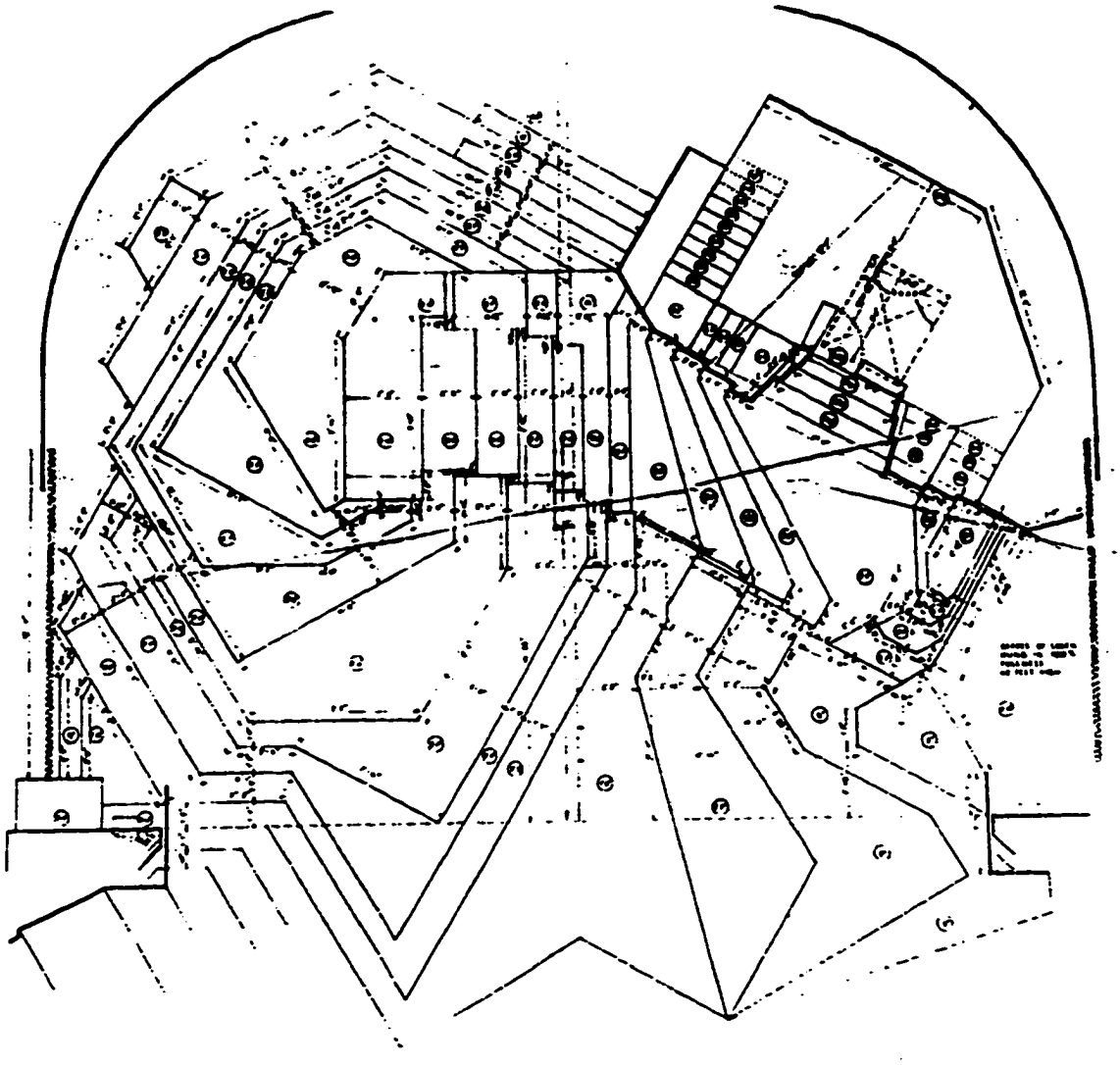

Fig. 4-3 Floor plan of Bel Geddes' set for Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

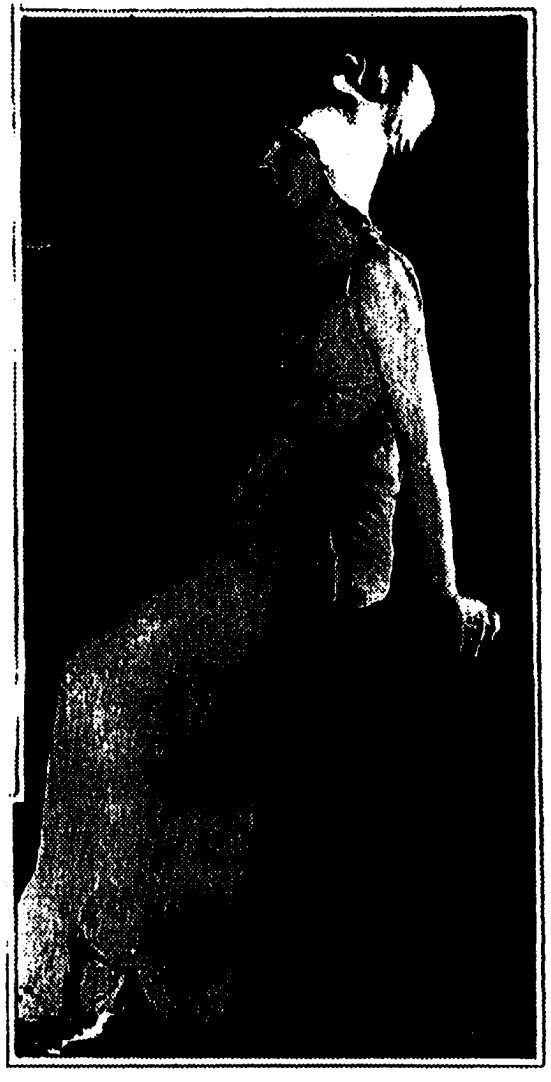

Fig. 4-4 Violet Kemble Cooper as Lysistrata, in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-5 Blanche Yurka as Lysistrata, in Bel Geddes' production of the play (1929).

Fig. 4-6 Still from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Violet Kemble Cooper (left) as Lysistrata and Miriam Hopkins (right) as Kalonika.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-7 Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-8 Cover of Theatre Magazine, featuring drawing of Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

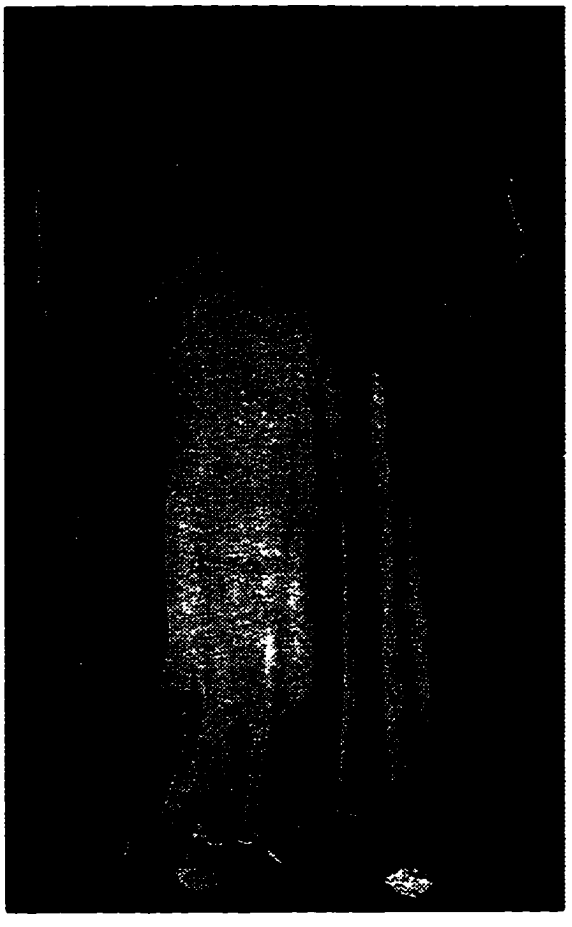

Fig. 4-9 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Violet Kemble Cooper (left) as Lysistrata and Hortense Alden as Myrrhina.

Fig. 4-10 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Hope Emerson (left) as Lampito and Violet Kemble Cooper as Lysistrata.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-11 Neville Westman, in the role of an Athenian young woman, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-12 Gloria Bragiotti, in the role of a Spartan woman, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

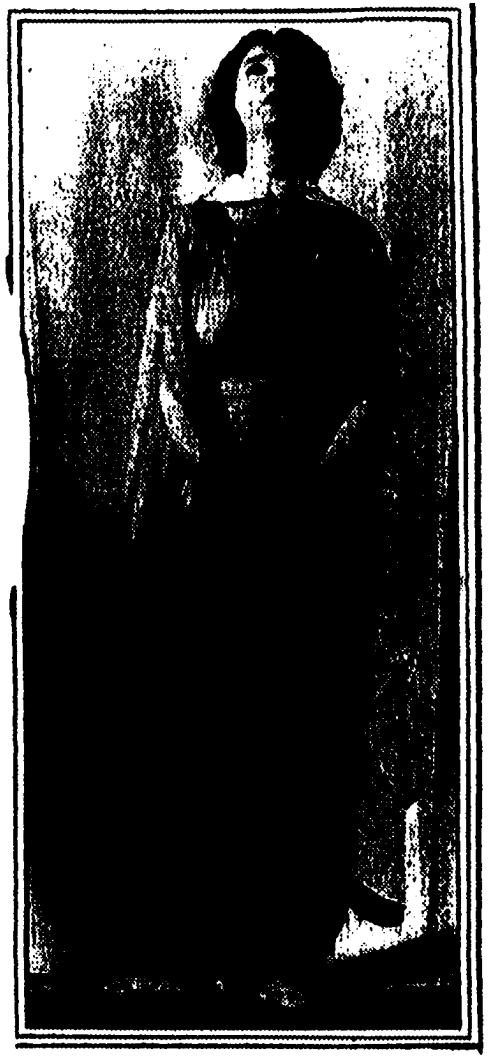

Fig. 4-13 Hortense Alden as Myrrhina, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata(1929).

Fig. 4-14 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Spartan women taking the oath. Hope Emerson (far left) as Lampito.

Fig. 4-15 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): the young women, sitting on the highest platform watch the action, below.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-16 Mary Blair as an old Athenian woman, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-17 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): the old men's chorus, ascending the slope to recapture the Acropolis.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

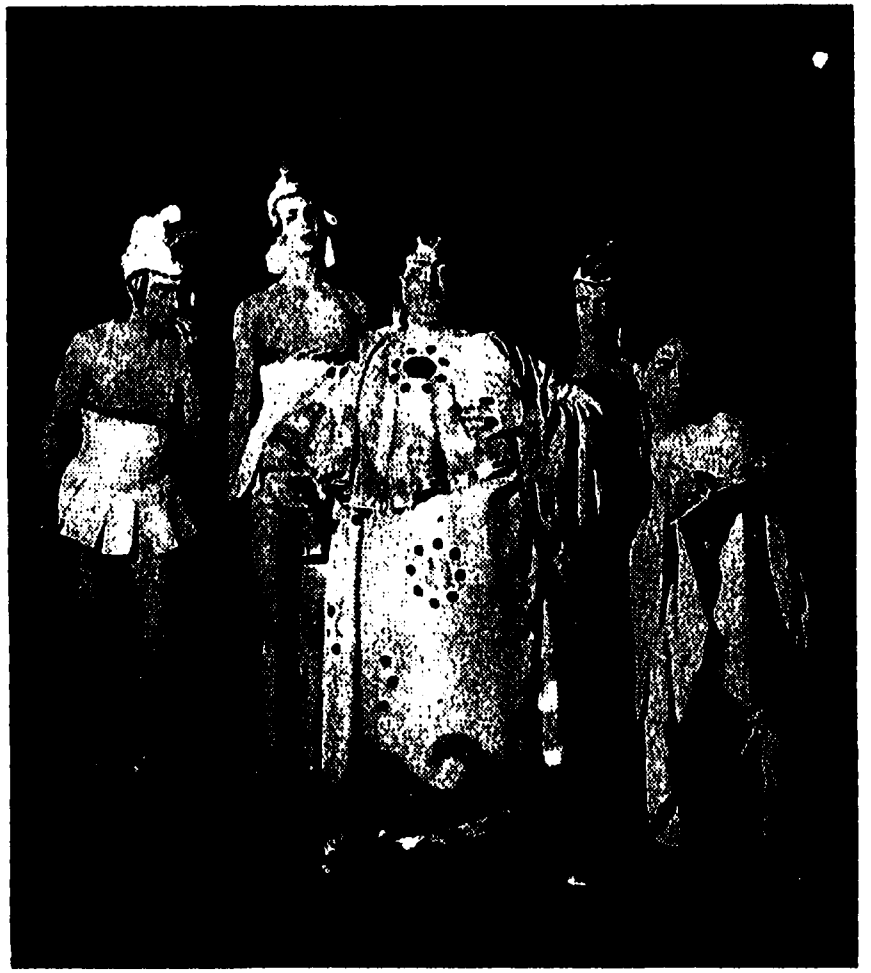

Fig. 4-18 Sydney Greenstreet as the President of the Senate, surrounded by his secretary and officers, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-19 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): the debate between the President of the Senate (Sydney Greenstreet) and Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-20 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Kinesias (Ernest Truex), demanding his wife, Myrrhina, from Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper).

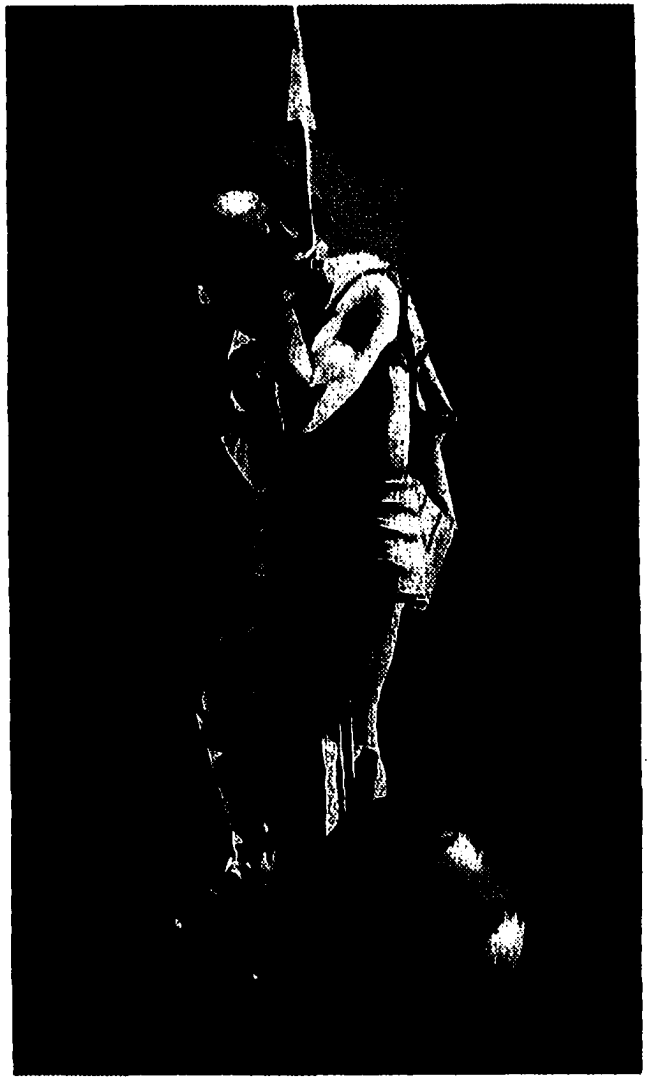

Fig. 4-21 Ernest Truex as Kinesias, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-22 Still from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Ernest Truex as Kinesias.

Fig. 4-23 Still from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Ernest Truex as Kinesias.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

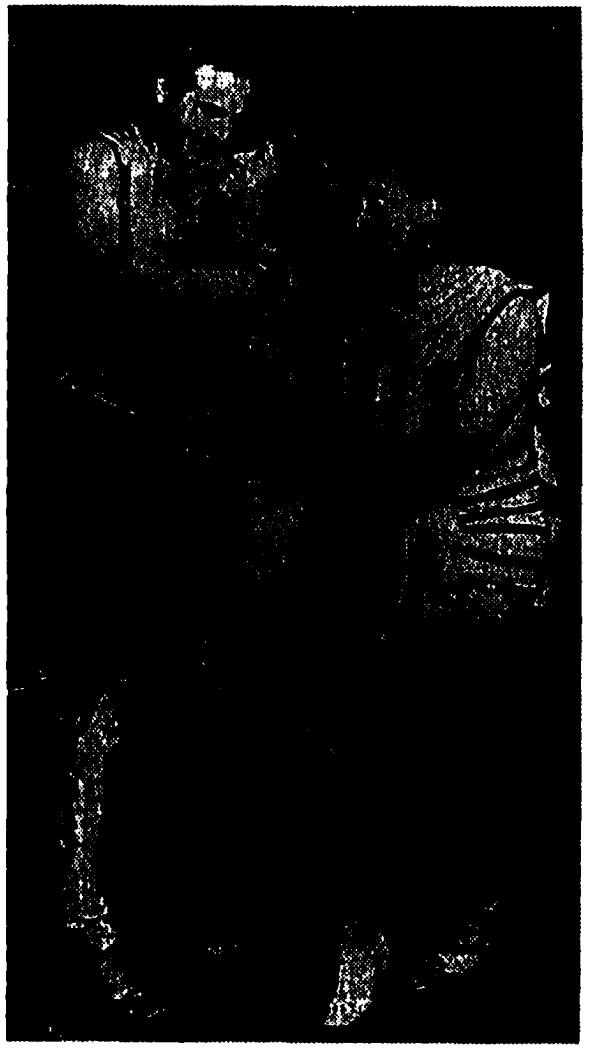

Fig. 4-24 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Polydorus (John Clearman), Kalonika (Miriam Hopkins) and Kinesias (Ernest Truex).

Fig. 4-25 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Myrrhina (Hortense Alden), sexually arousing her husband, Kinesias (Ernest Truex).

Fig. 4-26 Scene from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929): Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper), addressing the warriors (left) and the Senators (right) during the peace negotiations.

Fig. 4-27 The finale of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata: Members of the Humphrey-Weidman School of Dance, performing the Bacchanalia.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-28 The finale of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata. Partial view of the set, showing the raised platform and the gate of the Acropolis (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

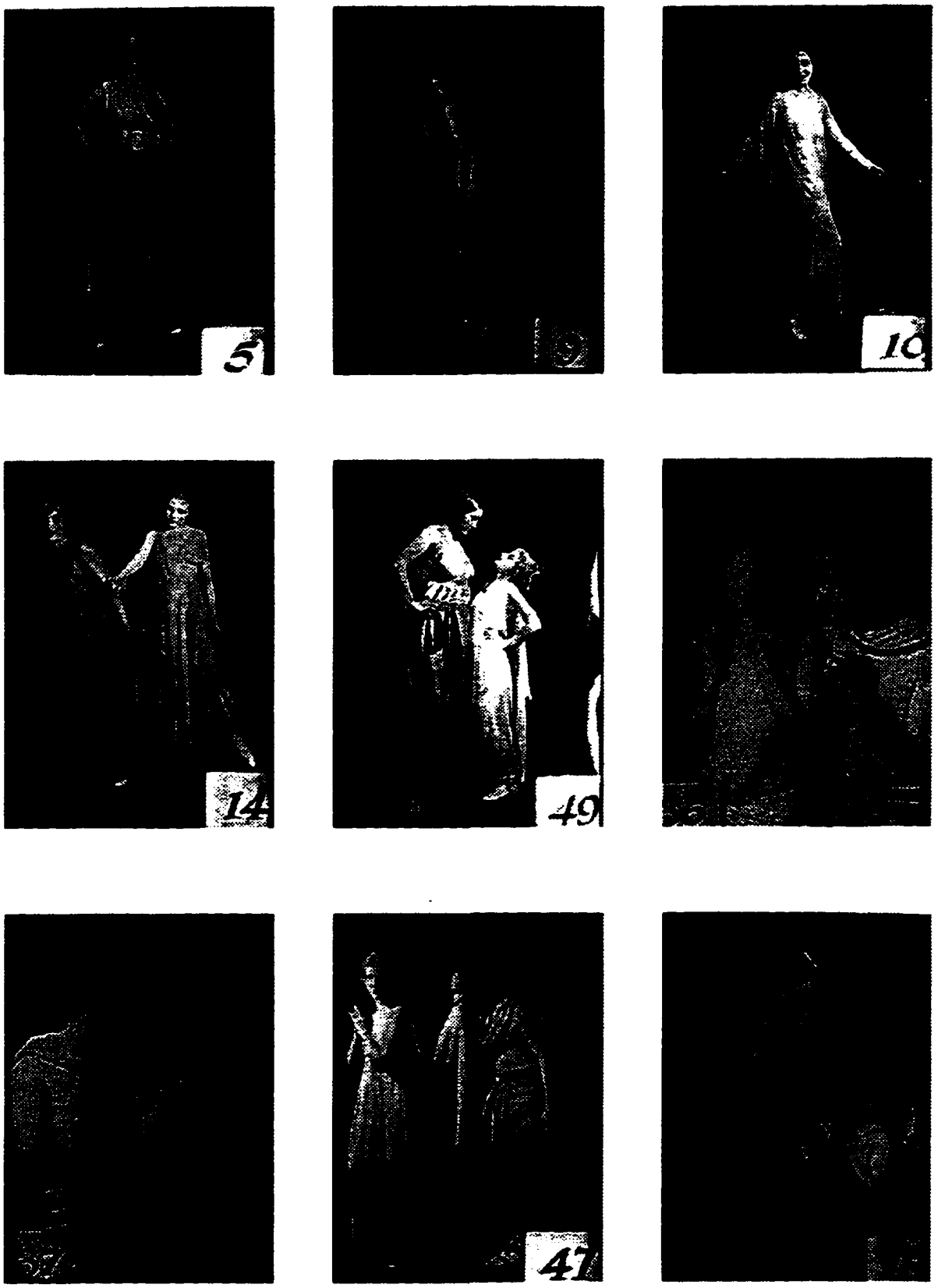

Fig. 4-29 Stills from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-29 (continued): Stills from Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

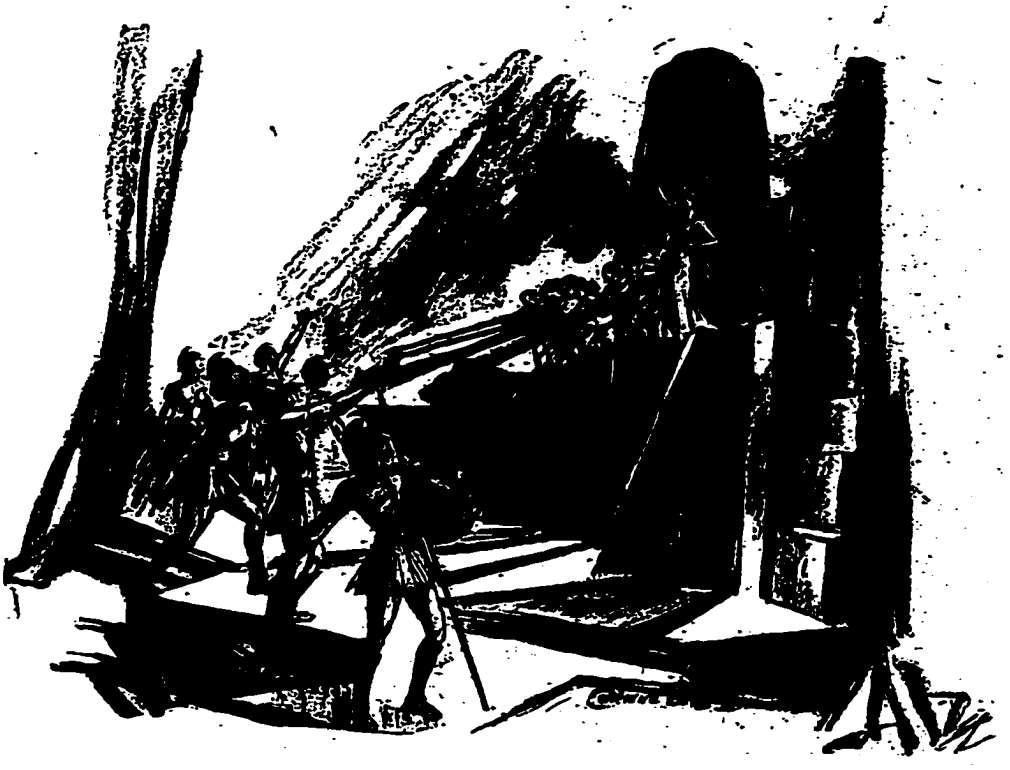

Fig. 4-30 Drawing, conveying an impression of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

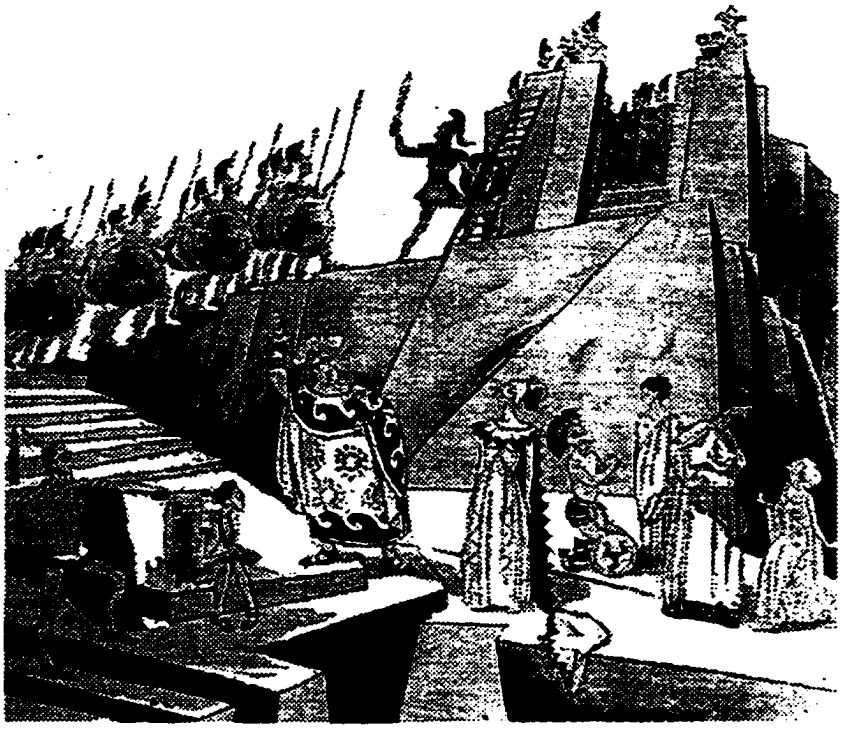

Fig. 4-31 Cartoon of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata, depicting principal characters. In the foreground, from left to right, President of the Senate (Sydney Greenstreet), Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper), Kinesias (Ernest Truex), Myrrhina (Hortense Alden) and Lampito (Hope Emerson).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-32 Cartoon of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata, depicting Kinesias (Ernest Truex), Myrrhina (Hortense Alden) and Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper).

Fig. 4-33 Drawing of Violet Kemble Cooper in the title role of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata (1929).

Fig. 4-34 Cartoon, caricaturing principal actors of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata. Violet Kemble Cooper as Lysistrata (center), Miriam Hopkins as Kalonika (right) and, on the bed, Ernest Truex as Kinesias.

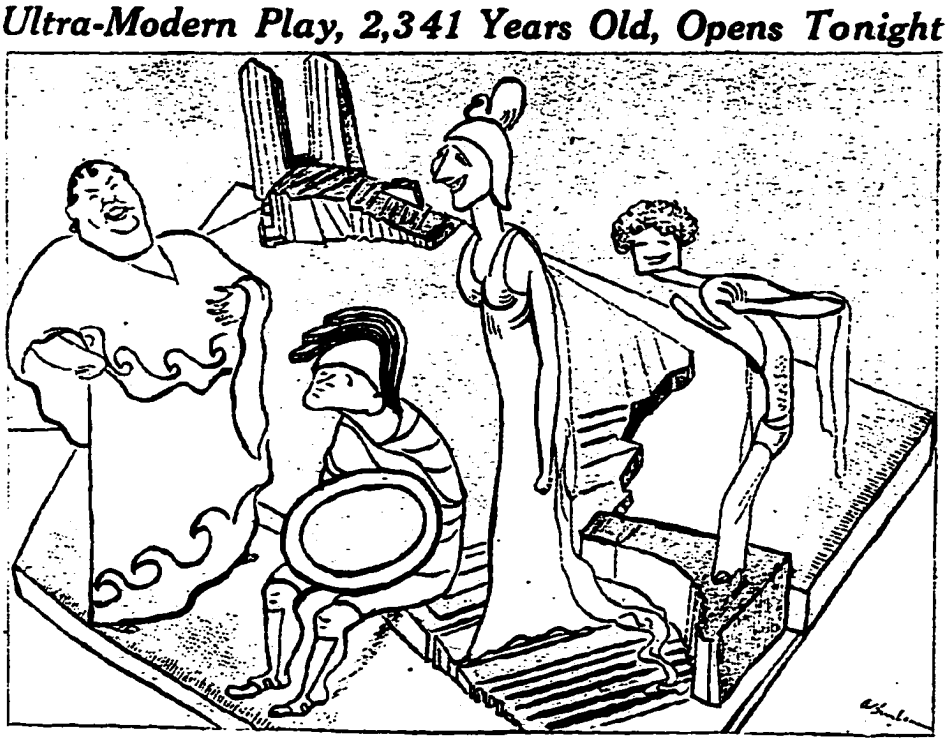

Fig. 4-35 Cartoon, depicting principal characters of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata. From left to right, President of the Senate (Sydney Greenstreet), Kinesias (Ernest Truex) Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper) and Kalonika (Miriam Hopkins).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-36 Cartoon, conveying impressions of individual characters, in Bel Geddes' Lysistrata.

Fig. 4-37 Cartoon, depicting principal characters of Bel Geddes' Lysistrata. From left to right, Lysistrata (Violet Kemble Cooper) Kinesias (Ernest Truex) and Myrrhina (Hortense Alden).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-38 Scene from Lysistrata, directed by Blanche Yurka at the Little Theatre, in Dallas (1938): In the foreground, Blanche Yurka as Lysistrata (right) and Muriel Hutchison as Kalonika.

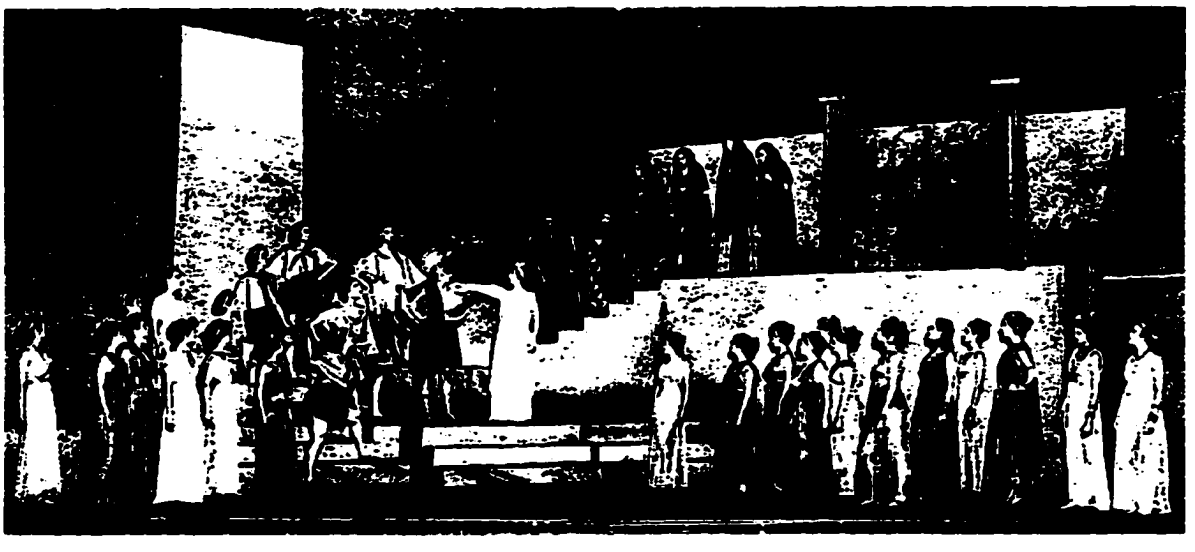

Fig. 4-39 The finale of Lysistrata, directed by Blanche Yurka at the Little Theatre, in Dallas (1938).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4-40 Scene from Lysistrata, directed by Blanche Yurka at the Little Theatre, in Dallas (1938): Blanche Yurka as Lysistrata (left) and Muriel Hutchison as Kalonika.

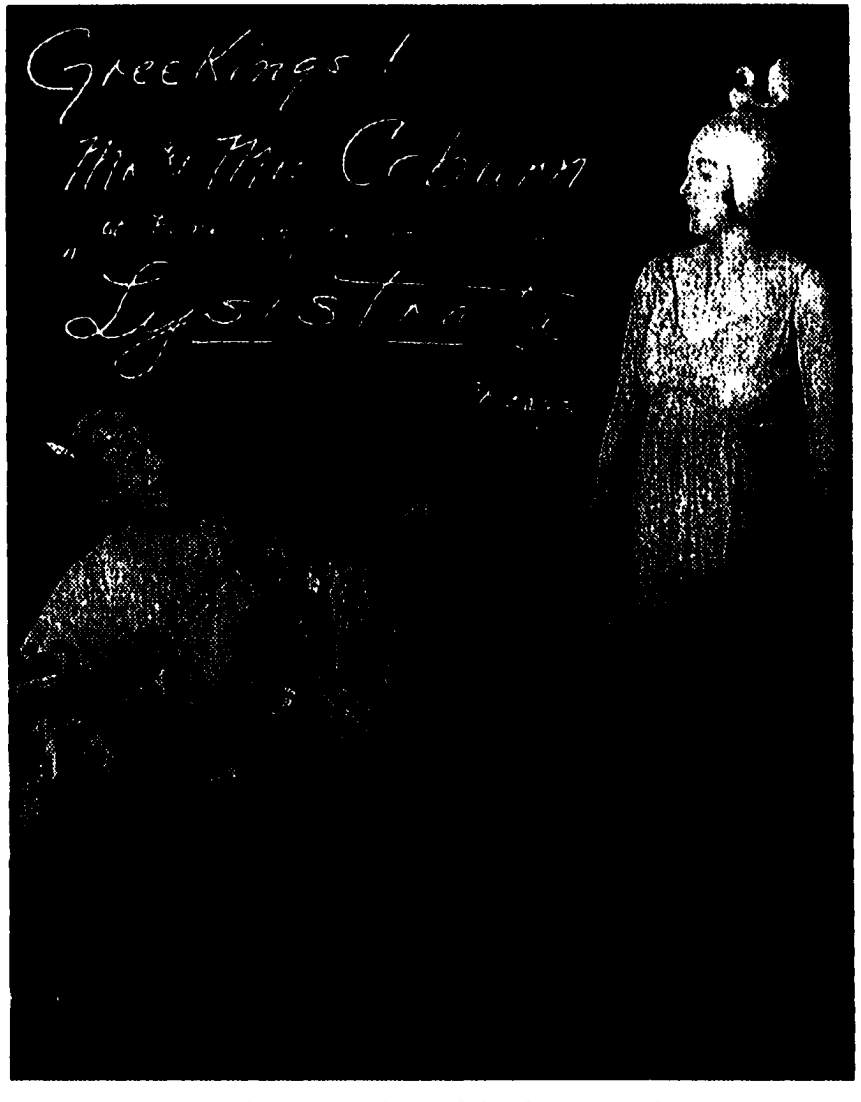

Fig. 4-41 Still of the President of the Senate and Lysistrata, from a later production of Lysistrata, influenced by Bel Geddes.

Chapter V

'No Sex Please, we are Suffragettes:' Aristophanes Votes for Women

In 1895, three years after the premiere of Maurice Donnay's Lysistrata, there appeared in Paris yet another adaptation of the play, La grève des femmes, bearing the hallmark of the French major interpretation: courtesans.[1] The author had included in the edition of the text an introduction, as well as a peculiar brief note, both signed M. D. The introduction clarified that the modern play was based on Lysistrata and aimed at "pleading, in a pleasurable form for a serious cause, women's emancipation."[2] In the note preceding the introduction, M. D. identifies herself as "a female author," Marie Després, and openly accuses Maurice Donnay of plagiarism.[3] Indeed, she claims to have been the progenitor of courtesans. According to her story, La grève des femmes was ready in manuscript form in 1889, and she had then shown it to several people, including Hubertine Auclert, a leader of the feminist movement in France. The author had even ventured to send it to Antoine, but had received no response.

Marie Després acknowledges that Maurice Donnay has made different use of the courtesans in his play, and interestingly attributes the distinction in approach to the politics of gender: "Whereas the female author mocks men and despises the courtesans, the male author draws the latter flatteringly and gives the good part to men."[4] Still, her eagerness to supply names of witnesses indicates she was not

---

[1] Marie Després [Raynal de Tissonière], La grève des femmes (Paris: Albert Savine, 1895).

[2] Ibid., p. 7. Unless otherwise specified, translation of French passages in this chapter is my own.

[3] Ibid., p. 6.

[4] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

prepared to lose credit for the idea. After all, it is the addition of courtesans that gives the French interpretation its distinctive flavor. It is highly unlikely though that we will ever know whether it was M. D. the female or M. D. the male author who had the initial inspiration. Marie Després has lost this place in history.

Curiously enough, there is yet another author of a feminist Lysistrata adaptation unhappy about having missed historical prominence. Laurence Housman adapted the play in 1910 for production at Gertrude Kingston's Little Theatre, in London.[5] A sturdy supporter of women's suffrage, he straightforwardly saw the original in engaged terms. "The Woman Suffrage agitation was then in full blast," he explains. "and here was a play of feminist propaganda which offered lurid possibilities."[6] In his autobiography, Housman regrets that the Lysistrata production was not provocative enough: ".had we chosen, we could ... have made it such a hair-raising performance that the cry of 'Where is the Censor?' would have resounded throughout the press. I own that I wish we had — or that we had gone nearer to it."[7]

In retrospect, it is hardly surprising that the feminist Lysistratas of Housman and Després did not make history. All major interpretations considered in this study enjoyed prominence at the time, primarily because they were conformist, orthodoxically expressing dominant ideologies. By contrast, feminist Lysistratas originated in the fringe and have a critical, even insurgent character. In this chapter, I will discuss Lysistrata's employment in relation to feminism as an alternative, non-mainstream interpretation. The use of the term 'feminism' is here primarily associated with the women's political equal rights movements which developed in

---

5 The adaptation was subsequently published: Laurence Housman, Lysistrata A Modern Paraphrase from the Greek of Aristophanes (London: The Woman's Press, 1911).

6 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), pp. 207-208.

7 Ibid., p. 208.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Europe and America in the period 1875-1925 and focused on gaining female suffrage. Though vigorous, these were comparatively small, numbering from a few hundred to one or two thousand adherents. The suffrage mobilization was a product of bourgeois liberalism and only had significant impact in Protestant countries, especially in Great Britain and the USA.

La grève des femmes is the only feminist adaptation of Lysistrata to have come out of France in the early modern period. Its exceptional occurrence is hardly accidental. As already discussed in Chapter I, France had a strongly misogynist 19th century tradition in the interpretation of the Aristophanic female comedies, which was upheld and invigorated by Donnay. In the early modern period, Donnay's Lysistrata reigned supreme, leaving no room for alternative readings of the Greek original. The play of Després was probably never produced and it certainly did not function as a model for the creation of feminist or other adaptations based on the Attic comedy. The author herself modestly considered her work as "a draft that a talented collaborator could have enlarged and perfected."[8] Thus, she does not seek acclaim for artistic merit. Nor does she present herself as a faithful or privileged interpreter of Aristophanes, in Donnay's fashion. The female author declares sincerely that her play, is "after Aristophanes' Lysistrata, though appropriated to our manners and morals."[9] Després aims primarily at propagating the feminist cause. This purpose overrides and subjugates all other concerns, relegating the author to marginality.

Aristophanes' Lysistrata has supplied little inspiration to La grève des femmes. All central episodes of the original, such as the oath, the confrontation with the old men, the debate with Proboulos and the scene between Kinesias and Myrrhina have

---

[8] Marie Després [Raynal de Tissonière], La grève des femmes, p. 5.

[9] Ibid., p. 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

either been removed or drastically reinterpreted. There is no trace of a chorus in this interpretation, even in the modified form it occurs in Donnay.[10] Characters have Parisian names and their listing includes a specification of age and occupation.[11] The play's action has been transferred from the Acropolis to a bourgeois salon, and for the third act, to an open air promenade. Even the purpose of the strike has been altered to serve feminist militancy directly. In the modern play, abstention does not aim at peace but at the recognition of female rights.

Després has organized her material in three acts. The first two acts are wholly taken up by women's conferences on the difficulties of implementing the strike. Mademoiselle Claireau, the modern Lysistrata, first organizes a meeting of bourgeoises and then summons the courtesans in the second act to ensure unanimous support for her scheme. In the third act, women are shown in action, resisting their husbands and lovers. In this adaptation, the strike ceases individually for each man who signs a petition in favor of women's rights. All twelve male characters are depicted entering a kiosk in the promenade and signing, so that women are eventually victorious. At the end of the play, a happy utopia of unprecedented harmony between the sexes prevails.

In diametrical opposition to Donnay's adaptation, the feminist Lysistrata systematically undermines the significance of sex to plot and character construction. In the first act, Claireau has no need to be circuitous and persuasive in disclosing the strike plan to her consorts. The modern play in fact opens with the heroine's address to the women. In her "somberly furnished" salon, under the bust of the Republic, she goes straight to business right from the first line: "Ladies, I see but a sole means of vindicating men. This is to let them be consumed by love, yielding nothing, until

---

10 Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896).

11 Marie Després [Raynal de Tissonière], La grève des femmes, pp. 11-12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they have consented to recognize our rights."[12] Her terse, twelve line address has the immediate effect of securing the women's enthusiastic support. "Murmurs of approbation" can be heard from all sides, culminating in a virtually unanimous "Bravo! Bravo! What an idea."[13]

The women's readiness to embrace the scheme has rendered the oath unnecessary. The idea of making a more formal, ceremonious commitment to sexual abstention is not touched upon at all, as the women have virtually no carnal inclinations. Lysistrata herself is a model of chastity. In this version, she is a thirty year old unmarried "woman of letters."[14] Even though some of her consorts are advocates of 'free love,' she does not even appear to have a lover. Her name, 'Claireau,' transparently evokes clarity, light, that is intellectual qualities. She has "devoted her life to defending the rights of her sex." to the exclusion of sexual interests.[15] Claireau only comes into contact with men to confront and vindicate them in debates on feminism.

Her consorts similarly have interests and concerns stretching beyond the sexual sphere. The feminist leader regularly holds women's meetings at her place, "engaging the ladies to preserve their independence of character and to safeguard their dignity."[16] This program would be totally out of place in Donnay's Lysistrata, where women are solely differentiated as individuals in terms of their sexual preferences. Després clearly allows for more versatility. Some women are self-supporting through their work, like Eugénie the seamstress and Louise the teacher.

---

[12] Ibid., p. 13.

[13] Ibid., p. 14.

[14] Ibid., p. 11.

[15] Ibid., p. 7.

[16] Ibid., p. 22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While most of them are married, some, especially the working women, prefer to simply have lovers. Eugénie even goes as far as to dispute the validity of conjugal duties: "it is [the men] who have made the laws, they treat us like slaves, the sermons of slaves have no value."[17] As the example indicates, Claireau is not a luminous exception. Other women, too, demonstrate intellectual self-confidence and commitment to a progressive, feminist morality. Even unhappily married, battered women, like Mrs. Lacour, have enough independence of mind to attend Claireau's meetings, to the strong disapproval of their husbands.

In La grève des femmes, the sexual strike supplies an opportunity to explore 'real,' not phantasy-laden marital problems, as in the mainstream version. Mrs. Linotte declares that it will not be problematic for her to abstain, as her marriage has already been devoid of sexual excitement for a long time. Indeed, this is a novel option that did not occur to Aristophanes or Donnay! Mrs. Brisse avows it will be "a little difficult" for her to strike, as she loves her husband.[18] However, in the feminist version, this woman is fortunate enough to be in love with the right man. She will not have to wait for long, as her husband "has already been partially won to our [the women's] cause.[19] Though apprehensive that her brutish husband will beat her, Mrs. Lacour is courageous enough to put up with it for the cause.

For Claireau, however, forced consent is not good enough. In the feminist version, there is an insistence that women happily espouse the cause of their own free will. Problems are posed and solved. The heroine proceeds to have a discussion with Mrs. Lacour, even challenging her to leave her husband. At that moment, Mr. Lacour appears and Claireau jumps at the opportunity to teach him a lesson, telling

---

[17] Ibid., p. 15.

[18] Ibid., p. 18.

[19] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

him she encourages battered women about killing their husbands. Her threat, miraculously, takes immediate effect. Intimidated, Lacour agrees that wife-beating is despicable and leaves, bowing to the ground. He is even accommodating enough to his wife, who is ready to follow him, to let her stay as long as she likes.

Claireau's adherents are not the only women ready to accord wholehearted support to her scheme. The courtesans, who are certainly not regulars at her salon, are equally enthusiastic on hearing about the strike. Claireau makes no references to women's rights in her address to the courtesans. It is simply enough to ask for their support in "aligning against men" so as to "vindicate" them.[20] In the feminist adaptation, the courtesans' relation to sex has been inverted to act as a turn off, rather than as an aphrodisiac. In Donnay's play, courtesans are clearly idealized for being capable of fulfilling the wildest male fantasies. Després gives the unpleasant inside story.

The portrayal of courtesans appears to have been influenced by Zola's sour naturalist novel, Nana.[21] Indeed, their leader is the namesake of Zola's heroine. As a result of being exploited by men, courtesans are already engaged in a secret war against them. They have a gutt hatred of their clients and seek to ruin them. Indeed, Manon throws out the idea that perhaps Claireau and her adherents could convert to the courtesans' tactics. They would thus jointly undo men not by privation, but by giving them a sexual overdose!

Courtesans are hesitant in consenting to the strike because sex is their sole means of support. In direct symmetry to the first act, Claireau holds a consultation with prostitutes on their problems. She thus introduces us to the hard core, "real life" difficulties of these working girls. Some are rich and notorious, like Nana and

---

20 Ibid., pp. 32, 33.

21 Emile Zola, Nana (Paris: Dunod, 1994).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Manon, while others are at the bottom of the scale, struggling to make ends meet. Claireau again finds an ingenious solution. She puts poor courtesans on a pay roll for the duration of the strike. The amount she proposes, however, is unrealistically low. Stepping for a minute out of Zola's novel, Nana comes to her rescue, generously offering 20,000 francs simply for the pleasure of seeing men being driven around like dummies, "in a word, for art."[22] Her example is immediately imitated by other courtesans, each offering according to her financial capacity. Indeed, Claireau teaches courtesans a lesson in solidarity.

Even though the overwhelming majority of women readily consent to Claireau's plan, there are some objections, giving voice to the traditionally male perspective on the strike, represented by the old men and especially Proboulos, in the original. Drawing inspiration from The Thesmophorians, Després has added three men disguised as women to the courtesans' meeting. The men raise misogynist arguments against the strike, expressing them in modern anti-feminist phraseology. Thus, Henri tells women that "our vocation is to look after our household, to love our husbands and to take care of our children. Beyond this we become ridiculous and repulsive."[23] Claireau replies tit for tat, that not all women are married or have children and among married women, "not all are obliged to watch the stew and mend the trousers of their husbands."[24] Then Jules points out that woman loses all her charm in stepping out of her traditional role; "woman must be sweet, submissive."[25] Claireau is openly contemptuous: "That is to say, woman must be a stupid sheep. You are

---

22 Marie Després [Raynal de Tissonière], La grève des femmes, p. 39.

23 Ibid., p. 43.

24 Ibid., p. 44.

25 Ibid., p. 45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

free, madame, to accept this role. For us, it is unbecoming."[26]

The debate supplies the opportunity to refute central anti-feminist arguments, projecting the feminist perspective. Interestingly, anti-feminism is not only refuted by argumentation. It is also cleverly subverted. The inspiration of representing the opposition by men disguised as women is not only effective dramatically, but also ideologically. Transvestism allows for ironic exposure of the anti-feminist arguments as arbitrary, invented and inflicted upon women by men. Notoriously, these arguments are supposed to state laws of nature: the feminist is presented as an anomalous specimen of her sex, attempting to eradicate qualities essential to her womanliness. Després returns the compliment. The arguments prove the existence of anomalous men rather than anomalous women and point to the need of radical changes in the conception of sex roles.

Jules' defense of feminine charm as an essential sex quality is immediately refuted by the masculine appearance of the woman he has been disguised into. Indeed, courtesans ridicule his point by poking fun at the adroitness and ugliness of their interlocutor. They then see through the ploy and fall on the men like amazons or maenads, striking one more blow to the argument about feminine charm. Nana leads the way, telling Claireau, "Mademoiselle, we must whip them, undress them, send them away stark naked."[27] Ironically, in the feminist play, the raw brutality of courtesans against the men is presented as a genuine expression of female nature in its unaffected, pre-civilized state.

In insisting on the animality of courtesans, Després subverts a powerful male stereotype about women. If courtesans, as in Donnay, represent the quintessentially sexual woman, this a female animal, whose reactions are in fact similar to that of the

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 47.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

male animal: she can be as aggressive and vindictive when provoked. In tearing up the men's female disguise and beating them, courtesans also exact retribution for male oppression and fraudulence against the female sex. They prevail and the men are trying desperately to escape. Jules manages to reach the window and cries. "Help, I'm being assassinated!"[28] Is it Jules' masculinity that is being attacked or his supposed femininity?

At that point, the confrontation leaves the private contour of the drawing room. Two policemen appear who take the men to be perverts and find the women's action entirely justified. Their comments are highly ironic: "Oh I see! These ladies did not want you to usurp the attributes of their sex. Is this yours?"[29] they say, pointing to a pair of false breasts, a wig and a corset. The remark is equivocal. The policemen ostensibly censure the men for usurping women's traditional emblems of femininity. However, from a feminist perspective, no offense has been committed, since the feminine paraphernalia actually belong to men, not women. Men, however, are culpable of inflicting on women this suffocating attire, covering and distorting free expression of their nature. Far from being really feminine, women constrained by such fetters are grotesque male effigies. Indeed, at the end of the second act, women return to men their belongings. They put the tattered, quintessentially female articles of clothing back on Jules and his friends, so that they can be taken into custody to the police station. Laughter and jeering are heard, as the men venture out into the street. Their experience is meant to serve as a lesson to society as a whole.

In representing the anti-feminist opposition by men disguised as women, Després also conveniently draws the implication that Claireau's mobilization is so appealing to the female sex that no real woman can actually be opposed to it. Indeed, there is

---

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., p. 49.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a solitary exception to prove the rule: Mrs. Choumalouc. This comically named character is a fifty year old woman, the wife of a rich bourgeois, who personally refuses to go on strike, appealing to reasons of principle: she does not wish to violate conjugal duties towards her husband. However, Mrs. Choumalouc is in fact a sexually starved female, pursuing a husband who has no desire for her, in direct parallel to the nymphomaniac Lampito in Donnay's play. Lampito, though, is in good company, among women with equally strong libidos. In La grève des femmes, Mrs. Choumalouc is a loner.

Her libido is presented as an unattractive anomaly, odious even to men. Her husband hastens to sign the petition, hoping that when women have their rights, marriage may be abolished, so that he can get rid of his wife. He tells a friend, "When [women] will have understood the ideas of justice and of liberty, they will no longer be tyrannical towards their husbands. The more ideas are limited, the more we are disagreeable to our surroundings."[30]. Mr. Choumalouc generalizes from his own marital experience. His wife is variously described as tyrannical, limited, bothersome. Yet her only demand from him in the play is to have sex.[31]

Després exchanges a woman for a man. Mrs. Choumalouc is given the boot from the feminist ideal world, while her broad-minded but sexless husband emerges as a supporter of the cause. Mr. Choumalouc is an exceptional man. Reversing the tables on Donnay, Després presents men, not women, as having an uncontrollable sexual drive. The strike is effective, precisely because women are constant and unanimous in thwarting male advances, while men cannot do without sex. Indeed, in this play, the sexual drive is proportionate in vigor to anti-feminism. Jules, the staunch anti-feminist, is also oversexed. He is desperate enough to run after a lame woman, so as

---

[30] Ibid., p. 67.

[31] See Act III, Scene II, Ibid., pp. 54-56.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to avoid signing the petition. Indeed, men's dependence on sex is regarded as a humiliating infirmity of their nature. In extreme cases, men's sexual passion can be fatal, rendering them susceptible to the courtesans' destructive lure. Nana claims to be successful in reducing men "to their most simple expression: no more money. no more brains, no more health, no more soul, nothing, nothing, finis."[32]

As this passage indicates, a central reason the sexual drive is so maligned in this play is for fear of its leading to a loss of identity. Women, in the transitional phase of fixing their new identity, could afford no sexual escapades. Corsets, and wigs are promptly returned to Jules and his male friends. Enraged, Jules points out that these articles prove the inferiority of the female sex. Claireau, however, responds that the male sex is even more inferior in falling for sexy apparel. Interestingly, among the rejected items is also a pair of breasts. albeit false. The women appear to give away too much, disclaiming the existence of female sexuality altogether, as opposed to female stereotypes of sexuality inflicted upon them by men. The pay off is that sexually driven men are depicted as contemptible, while the cool and collected women are upgraded to superior status.

Indeed, there is a marked tendency in this interpretation to idealize the women. Their exceptional maturity, though, does not allow for much development of the female characters. At the onset of the play, the feminist adherents are already close to perfection, displaying broad-mindedness, solidarity and intellectual prowess. There is definitely room for the improvement of courtesans, who however, already have a pre-feminist conscience and are quick to learn and benefit from the lessons of their more developed consorts, turning to effective allies. The experience of the strike is intended primarily towards changing men, not women. Indeed, the mobilization has immediate, if a little sudden, results. Eugénie, the seamstress,

---

[32] Ibid., p. 33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

plainly explains to her lover, Louis, that she cannot continue to love a man who considers her "inferior to him."[33] Louis promptly responds: "... You are right, my dear, I have been wrong to deprive you of this mark of respect. There, I am going to sign immediately."[34]

There is an even more dramatic change in Mr. Choumalouc. He realizes that he made the wrong choice of mate, because at the time he "shared the common misconception on the advantage of marrying a limited wife."[35] The experience of the strike acted as a catalyst driving him to become a spokesman for feminism. Després has even added a scene unrelated to the strike, with the sole purpose of showing the beneficial effect of the mobilization on society at large. Aubigny, a deputy, is moved at the sight of an old woman pulling a heavy cart. He hastens to give her 20 francs and plans to bring up in Parliament the issue of women employed in heavy labor. "Ah my good lord," responds the old woman, "this is the first time that a man has taken pity of me."[36] Indeed, in contrast to Donnay, where the mobilization is used to re-affirm the status quo, in the feminist play it is presented as the outset of far reaching societal reforms.

The unbounded optimism and idealization of women in La grève des femmes appears to be combined uneasily with a wealth of naturalist features. As is immediately apparent in the list of characters, there is an attempt to present as inclusive a picture of society as possible. There are 26 characters, ranging in age from 18 to 55.[37] Upper, middle and lower middle class professions are well

---

33 Ibid., p. 57.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., p. 67.

36 Ibid., p. 62.

37 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

represented. Després makes conscientious, even though not penetrative or consistent enough efforts to have characters react according to their socio-economic identities. In the portrayal of courtesans, her naturalist zeal even goes as far as to distinguish between the behavior of rich and poorer courtesans. She imagines plausibly that Claireau's adherents would not raise financial difficulties, since the majority is composed of well off bourgeoises.

However, Claireau's most impassioned devotee is Eugénie the seamstress, who, unlike richer courtesans, is entirely detached from survival problems. For no apparent reason, she is also the most broad-minded and articulate, overshadowing Louise, the teacher. Even though also specified in the list of characters, men's ages and professions seem to play no part in influencing their reactions to the strike or their views on feminism. Reactionaries and progressives alike belong randomly to any and every profession. This does not appear to reveal an interpretative choice, but rather a weakness in character construction.

As in Donnay's play, the naturalist inclination is also apparent in the focus of the plot on individual, characteristic cases, ruling out the possibility of choral contribution. In this adaptation, the exclusion of the chorus is perhaps also additionally motivated by feminist concerns. Després is intent on showing that the women do not act like a flock of sheep. Their decision is the outcome of conscious, individual deliberation. Choral collectivity, however, implies not only a weakening of individuality but also strength in alliance. The signing of the petition is left strategically to men's individual initiative, rather than to a male chorus, underlining the male sex's lack of solidarity. In this version it is the men, not the women, who betray allegiance to their sex.

Far from idly following the dramatic fashion of the day, in employing naturalist features Després makes a theoretically interesting, though rudimentary, effort to ground her idealization of woman on facts of nature. Thus, as shown earlier, she

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

distinguishes two central stages in the evolution of woman. The raw female animal is represented by the courtesans, who have all the instincts of the male hunter. The female animal is readily capable of developing into the civilized woman, who can have a highly skilled intellectual faculty. According to this feminist perspective on human nature, the sexes are differentiated in terms of the presence or absence of the libido. Men are libidinous animals, whereas women, even in the uncivilized state, are firmly in control of sexual desire. The more civilized the individual, the less he or she is dependent on the libido. The modern Lysistrata, in this interpretation, is presented as the most perfect specimen of human evolution, displaying absolutely no signs of libido.

This theory of gender differences and evolution corresponds directly to Donnay's conception of inherent gender qualities, outlined in Lysistrata. Similarly to Després, Donnay also attempted to present his views as facts about human nature, appealing, though more lightheartedly than the female author, to naturalism's scientific guise. The woman, for Donnay, is primarily characterized by a strong libido, overriding all other urges and concerns. Exceptionally, she may have a highly developed intellectuality. However, as Lysistrata's example demonstrates, in cases of conflict, intellectuality as a non inherent quality, succumbs to the libido.

Whereas in the feminist version the courtesans' sexuality is negatively presented as a primitive female expression, in Donnay it is regarded as the quintessence of womanliness. In contrast to honest women, courtesans cultivate their libidos through suitable erotic exercises, attaining supreme mastery over sexual desire. In this way they perfect their nature. Honest women who are not as conscientious, are out of touch with their nature, at the mercy of their own erotic urges. The woman's strong libido implies she is not self sufficient. Indeed, the men in Donnay are irresistible! Obviously, a woman's relations to her own sex are antagonistic, since they are all competing for male favor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Donnay has explored with relish all consequences arising from the tenet that woman is oversexed, while Després has desperately tried to avoid them, by associating the libido with male sexuality exclusively. In Donnay, men have the best of both worlds, since in the male, the presence of a strong libido is ideally paired with highly developed mental prowess. Indeed, Agathos the general, is not only the sexiest but also the cleverest man in town. Lysistrata subjects herself to him, following the calling of her nature. In the feminist world of Després, this man does not exist. Claireau best celebrates her womanhood uncoupled.

Placed directly against Després, Donnay's conception of human nature appears to be equally outlandish. The female author has turned familiar misogynist tenets inside out, exposing their flimsiness and arbitrariness. However, in her zeal to make a breakthrough for the women's cause, she has overstated her theory. A disturbing feature of her play is that all action is motivated and explained by recourse to an extremely rigid determinism about male and female attributes, which makes developments thoroughly predictable and unconvincing. The women's daring actions are met with such immediate success that the resulting happiness can only be perceived ironically. Indeed, the prevailing societal harmony at the end of the play closely resembles Aristophanes' happy utopias, letting artifice show through the rosiness, as in The Birds or Women in the Assembly. The play's most effective scene is the women's confrontation with the disguised men, laden with thought provoking significations. Generally, however, the uncritical idealization of women in La grève des femmes limits its ideological effectiveness.

Interestingly, there is yet another French author who had recourse to Aristophanes at the turn of the century to express his views on feminism. Pierre Mabille appears to respond directly to the overenthusiasm of Després, advising for a moderate development of feminist conquests. Referring primarily to Women in the Assembly, in the monograph Le communisme et le féminisme à Athènes, Mabille characterizes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aristophanes "a feminist."[38] Indeed, Praxagora "carries herself like one of our contemporary revolutionary feminists."[39] The lesson to be drawn from the play supports precisely the argument about feminism that Mabille wishes to develop. Women's emancipation must advance prudently and progressively.

Given free rein, the ancient militant feminists turned the state into shambles. They imposed a communism threatening to the male establishment, as it "abated the personal dignity of the citizen, of the father and of the husband."[40] Mabille is skeptical about women's abilities outside the domestic sphere, but is at least open to experimentation and willing to secure favorable conditions, such as equal pay. His patronizing tone is a little disturbing, though the point is well taken: the burden is on women to prove themselves: "But if woman dares expose herself to fatigue, if in fact she can prove to have endurance and moral prowess, we can leave her all liberty."[41]

Even though isolated and obscured at the time, the works of Després and Mabille are noteworthy as original efforts to move against the misogynist tide in Aristophanic interpretation in France. Donnay's play had a powerful hold on audiences in the early modern period, partly because it expressed appealing, mainstream views about gender differences. The familiar stereotypes were easily copied and eagerly reproduced by his imitators. By the mid-twenties, when Lysistrata had finally lost popularity, the adaptation was relentlessly criticized on various counts, though not on misogynism. Lysistrata's last major revival, in 1924, inspired G. Lecomte to draw a valuable lesson for women. Indeed, he urges the female population to go on a sexual strike, as in Lysistrata, ... so as to force men to vote in the general elections,

---

[38] Pierre Mabille, Le communisme et le féminisme à Athènes (Paris: Fourneau Libraire, 1900), p. 44.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p. 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

presenting serious arguments about why this action would be in their best interest.[42]

Amusingly, there are two brief satirical sketches based on the French Lysistrata which make fun of Donnay's views on woman. While lacking the feminist political orientation of La grève des femmes, these sketches satirize some of the same stereotypes about female passivity. In Le deuxième complot de Lysistrata (1909), Maurice Levaillant imagines life in Athens after the conclusion of peace.[43] The sexual strike proved to men that women did not have any interest in life other than loving them. Confident of their irresistibility, they stopped working and had their wives replace them in all tasks. Exasperated, the women convened under Lysistrata a second time and took action to send men back to war, to get rid of them.

Agathos ou la grève des hommes (1919), by Rolland Dorgelès and Jean Pellerin almost functions as a sequel to Levaillant's sketch.[44] Back from the battlefield, men are stupefied and angry to find that during their absence, their wives had successfully been engaging in independent business activities, amassing enormous profits from war. It is now the men who go on a sexual strike so as to redress the status quo. Eventually, the sexes are reconciled but, warns Agathos, casting the die for equality, "if one day we go back to war against Sparta, we will take [our wives] with us."[45]

French dramatists of the 19th and the early 20th centuries feel remarkable freedom to depart from Aristophanes' originals, forcing their own contemporaneity

---

42 Georges Lecomte, "Lysistrata à la ville," Intran May 10, 1924, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

43 Maurice Levaillant, "Le deuxième complot de Lysistrata," unidentified publication, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 I, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

44 Rolland Dorgelès and Jean Pellerin, "Agathos ou la grève des hommes," Humour March 12, 1919, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 II, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

45 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

blatantly upon the ancient texts. The English proceeded more respectfully, preferring translation to adaptation. Moreover, in England, Aristophanes' female comedies and especially Lysistrata have more frequently been employed in defense of women rather than against them, as in France. In 1878, Benjamin Bickley Rogers was probably the first to individually publish a translation of the play under the title, The Revolt of the Women.[46] This is essentially a faithful translation of the original, except for licentious expressions, which have been glossed over.

Possibly, this work was inspired by a women's movement, particularly active in the 1870s in England, The Ladies' Association for the Repeal of Contagious Diseases Acts. The association's political mobilization, pressuring Parliament to secure more favorable conditions for prostitutes, was referred to at the time as "the revolt of the women."[47] Rogers' title of Lysistrata then may not be coincidental. If indeed there is a link between the translation and the activity of the Ladies' Association, this must be the first use of Lysistrata in connection to a feminist cause and it appears to be favorable towards the women's militancy. The translator added in the list of characters the specification that Lysistrata is "a young and beautiful woman," indicating a friendly disposition towards the female leader.[48] He also characterizes positively her scheme as "original."[49]

---

46 Benjamin Bickley Rogers, The Revolt of the Women, freely translated from the Greek of Aristophanes (London: George Bell and Sons, 1878).

47 Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser, A History of Their Own. Women in Europe Vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 183.

48 Benjamin Bickley Rogers, The Revolt of the Women, p. 1: "Lysistrata, a young and beautiful woman is standing alone, with marks of evident anxiety in her countenance and demeanour ... she suddenly begins to speak with abrupt and indignant emphasis."

49 Benjamin Bickley Rogers, "Introduction," in Aristophanes, The Lysistrata, Vol. III, translated by Benjamin Bickley Rogers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

About twenty years later, in 1896 there appeared in London a privately printed limited edition of Lysistrata, remarkable on several counts. This was the first unexpurgated translation of the play in England and probably also in the West. The author, who preferred to remain anonymous, has produced an accurate, quality translation of the original into flowing, vivid prose, aiming to make the play accessible to the non-classicist.[50] Significantly, the edition was accompanied by 8 pen and ink drawings by Aubrey Beardsley, illustrating central scenes from the play. These are extremely interesting for their lack of inhibition, their playfulness and humor, casting Victorian reticence to the winds. Indeed, the women are presented as sexually liberated Victorians.

Beardsley was one of the most brilliant illustrators of the 1890s. He was associated with an infamous circle of artists, decadents and liberated New Women clustering around the Yellow Book, an avant garde London periodical of art and literature. The artist has drawn 31 illustrations for the Yellow Book, 27 of which depict women, mostly actresses, lesbians, prostitutes and feminists. "The Beardsley women" drawings were frequently vehemently criticized in mainstream reviews for bearing signs of corruption, sexual deviance and emancipation.[51] Among his best work are his illustrations for books, notably, for Oscar Wilde's Salome and A. Pope's The Rape of the Lock. His designs for Lysistrata are regarded by some critics as his summit achievement.[52]

---

[50] Aristophanes, Lysistrata wholly translated into English and illustrated with eight full-page drawings by Aubrey Beardsley (Paris: Privately printed, 1934).

[51] See Bridget Elliott, "New and not so 'New Women' on the London Stage: Aubrey Beardsley's Yellow Book Images of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Réjane," Victorian Studies 31 (Autumn 1987): pp. 33-57.

[52] See George Frederic Lees, "The Art of Beardsley and its Reflection in Aristophanic Comedy," in Aristophanes, Lysistrata wholly translated into English and illustrated with eight full-page drawings by Aubrey Beardsley (Paris: Privately printed, 1934) pp. v-xv.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Beardsley's approach to Lysistrata shares a common emphasis on sexuality with Donnay. Indeed, the original publication of the private edition coincided in date with the first major revival of the French play. However, in the French interpretation, the libidinous women are hypocritical, constantly scheming to hide their desire behind an appearance of modesty. The central premise in Donnay's adaptation is that women are having sex even though they have sworn to abstention. Thus they play dirty, seeking sexual pleasure on the sly. Donnay supposedly offers the audience the opportunity to watch women in their private sexual moments, when they have no desire to be seen. This prohibition functions pornographically, as a sexual stimulant. Indeed, the only reason women are given the libido in Donnay is not so that they can enjoy themselves but, rather, so that they can arouse men's desire through voyeurism. The female libido then functions as yet another repressive stricture on the female personality. This is yet another strong argument as to why Després is so anxious to get rid of it in her adaptation.

In Beardsley, the female libido is projected as a liberating, rather than as a repressive force. Completely free of pseudo-modesty, women are everywhere shown exposing their breasts and vaginas.[53] They are very comfortable in their naked bodies, whether in private, as in the plate depicting the toilet of Lampito, or in public. In public, they are equally at ease among themselves, at the women's meeting, as well as in the old men's presence.[54] Remarkably, in most of the plates women are shown with the hands on their genitals, as if innocently beginning to know their own bodies and to explore their sexuality.[55]

The plate on the title page has Lysistrata with one hand on an erect phallus and

---

[53] See Figures 5-1 to 5-6.

[54] See Figures 5-3 and 5-4.

[55] See Figures 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and 5-5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the other on her vagina. Even though the caption reads, "Lysistrata shielding her coynte," the heroine also appears intent on impressing another message: it is as if she is indicating the primal sources of woman's sexual pleasure.[56] It is noteworthy that in this picture the male is only present as a phallus, supporting the ambiguity of interpretation. Lysistrata erotically indulges herself not only so as to sexually arouse the male but also so that the erected phallus will contribute to her own pleasure.

Indeed, in most of the plates where the women are portrayed touching their vaginas, men are not present at all.[57] Most remarkably, in the plate depicting the toilet of Lampito, Bearsley appears to celebrate the female autoerotic experience. Lampito is intricately and intimately concerned with giving pleasure to her own body.[58] In the private setting of her toilet, she is stimulated by her own hand, as well as by the winged angel, Eros, powdering her buttocks. Lampito's autoerotic expression gives the angel an erect penis, symbolically portraying a thriving Eros.

In Beardsley, then, the female libido appears to be a source of pleasure not only to men but also to women themselves. Besides the emphasis on autoeroticism in male independent contexts, the women's erotic autonomy is also effectively implied by recourse to humor. The female buttocks are not solely employed for the purpose of providing sensual stimulation; they are also fearful, aggressive weapons. In the plate depicting the defense of the Acropolis, Beardsley has drawn a woman prominently farting on an old man, in the foreground.[59] Her naked buttocks are prominently depicted, exposing to full view this provocative act of female assertion. Through farting on obnoxious men, women clear the space for themselves. Indeed,

---

[56] See Figure 5-1.

[57] See Figures 5-2, 5-3 and 5-5.

[58] See Figure 5-2.

[59] See Figure 5-4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

there is a good deal of humor in Beardsley's drawings, functioning as an antidote to sensuality. In enjoying themselves women are also enjoyable. However, humor is an effective controlling device, safeguarding female autonomy. In Beardsley's world, women have the right to put off the voyeur — in this case the reader — by asking impertinently, 'What are you staring at?'

Similarly to Donnay, Beardsley has chosen to interpret Lysistrata as a play about sex, ignoring the political target of the female mobilization. As in the French interpretation, the Acropolis is entirely absent. Indeed, only three women are present at the meeting, two of whom appear to be more preoccupied with each other's bodies than with listening to the heroine.[60] All are stark naked, tuning the reader into a sexual, rather than a political climate. In the defense of the Acropolis, women are also shown naked, as if the citadel to be protected is in fact the female body.[61]

Beardsley has included the scene of women's defection in his drawings, which essentially demonstrates their boundless sensuality, as opposed to their political determination.[62] As shown, the artist has also chosen to portray Lampito, one of the most militant activists in the original, as encouraging women towards sexual liberation rather than abstention and peace.[63] Indeed, the only reference to peace on Lysistrata's title page is the olive branch which the heroine holds, while resting her hand on the raised phallus. The drawing perfectly encapsulates the play's theme on this interpretation: peace solely concerns the sexual battle between men and women. The Peloponesian war has fallen out of the picture altogether.

It is remarkable that both Bearsdley and Donnay, concurrently and independently

---

60 See Figure 5-3.

61 See Figure 5-4.

62 See Figure 5-5.

63 See Figure 5-2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of each other chose to focus on the exploration of female sexuality in their modern versions of Lysistrata. Ironically, Beardsley's 'decadence' was regarded by repulsed English puritans as quintessentially French. Thus, in 1896, a hostile critic proposed a simple solution for cleansing England of the illustrator's miasma: "Why not hoist the Decadents altogether off our shoulders and saddle them onto France? She has a nice broad back for such things and Mr. Beardsley won't be the last straw by many."[64] However, had the English shipped Beardsley and his Lysistrata to Donnay, he would probably have sent them back.

Donnay's approach is misogynist, firmly within the mainstream, whereas Beardsley appears to be subversive and original, almost celebrating female sexual emancipation in his drawings. Abstention from men gives women a chance to concentrate on themselves and to affirm their erotic autonomy. By contrast, in Donnay the strike is employed to show that women are slaves by nature, driven by an irresistible desire for sexual subjugation to men. Interestingly, both Beardsley and Donnay regard the women's sexual preoccupation as incompatible with political concerns.

Unlike the French author, who eagerly sought lasting and wide acclaim for his play throughout the early modern period, Beardsley soon came to bitterly regret his illustration of Lysistrata. In 1897 he became a devout catholic and, conscience stricken, he sought to obtain and destroy all copies of the work. Moreover, he wrote to his publisher, Leonard Smithers, imploring him to destroy the plates.[65] Beardsley,

---

64 Margaret Armour, quoted in Bridget Elliott, "New and not so 'New Women' on the London Stage: Aubrey Beardsley's Yellow Book Images of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Réjane." Victorian Studies 31 (Autumn 1987): p. 56.

65 See George Frederic Lees, "The Art of Beardsley and its Reflection in Aristophanic Comedy," in Aristophanes, Lysistrata wholly translated into English and illustrated with eight full-page drawings by Aubrey Beardsley (Paris: Privately printed, 1934).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

however, did not manage to erase his work on Aristophanes from historical memory. In fact, he succeeded in raising the market value of his Lysistrata spectacularly, as copies of the original limited edition soon became exceedingly scarce.[66] His Lysistrata illustrations also acquired international notoriety in the early modern period. Besides England, the book was independently published in France and in Germany.[67]

Beardsley's sexual interpretation of Lysistrata appeared almost concurrently with a feminist reading of the play. While the illustrator was busy trying to obliterate all traces of his work, Marie Stopes, a notable feminist, wrote an article in the Humanitarian, in November 1897, entirely shifting the weight of the female comedies from sex to politics.[68] Thus, Women in the Assembly and Lysistrata "assert the same truths, that women have a stake in the greater questions of peace and war ..."[69] Indeed, Stopes insists on the demonstrative character of the plays. Lysistrata shows that women can effectively contribute to the resolution of the great social and political problems directly concerning them. The militants are highly efficient in establishing a solid international female alliance, to achieve mutual understanding between the warring states: "The lesson is true for all times, that if women will only combine, they can do anything."[70]

---

66 Ibid.

67 For example, see Aristophanes Lysistrata, translated into English and illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley (London: The Beardsley Press, 1927); Aristophanes Lysistrata, translated into German by J. J. C. Donner and illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley (Privately printed, 1913).

68 Marie Stopes, "The Greek Satirist on Women," The Humanitarian 5 (November 1897): pp. 237-241. Stopes would later publish Married Love and Wise Parenthood, advocating birth control. Moreover, she would successfully open the first English birth control clinic in 1921.

69 Ibid., p. 341.

70 Ibid., p. 339.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Stopes disputes that Aristophanes was a misogynist and finds his satire in the female comedies "gentler and less scathing than usual."[71] However, she is not seriously concerned with claiming the Attic dramatist as a precursor of feminism. Whatever his intentions, the female comedies have contemporary relevance: they teach "some lessons not unpractical" and offer food for thought to the modern debate on feminism.[72] Moreover, the author points out briefly that modern social comedies can be ideologically enriched by looking back to the Attic female plays.

Clearly, Stopes presents an interpretation of Lysistrata from a feminist perspective. Beardsley's approach, if not feminist, appears to be pro-feminine and this probably also applies to Rogers' earlier translation of the play. Housman then was in good company when he undertook the translation of Lysistrata in 1910 as an aid to the women' s cause. The project had been hastily proposed to him by the actress Gertrude Kingston, after his own play, Pains and Penalties, which had been scheduled to open at her Little Theatre, was banned by the censor. Housman "jumped at the opportunity," reckoning that if Lysistrata were also censored, it would still be good to publish it, in support of female suffrage.[73]

Indeed, as a critic has aptly assessed, Housman's "greatest claims to fame" were his prolonged conflict with the censor and his struggles to win suffrage for women.[74] With 32 of his plays banned, Housman proudly referred to himself as "the most

---

[71] Ibid., p. 340.

[72] Ibid., p. 341.

[73] Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), p. 207.

[74] Karl Schriftgiesser, "A Victorian Liberal," unidentified publication, file on Laurence Housman, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

censored playwright in England but the most respectable."[75] As a dramatist, he had mastery over the very short piece, not even the one act but the ten minute episode. In his own lifetime his most well known play came to be Victoria Regina, a compilation of Victorian vignettes. An ardent supporter of women's suffrage, he had also written numerous feminist plays, as well as articles propagating the cause.

In the period 1906-1914, equal rights movements in Britain concentrated on winning the vote, holding large rallies and demonstrations. Housman had associations with the Women's Social and Political Union (W. S. P. U.), one of the two largest feminist movements at the period. As opposed to the National Union of Women's Suffrage which was more moderate, the W. S. P. U., headed by Emmeline Pankhurst, favored more provocative, militant tactics, such as attacks on property and hunger strikes in prison. The women's activism was frequently singularly inventive and humorous. Notoriously, feminists would stir up trouble with the authorities through window breaking. As Housman approvingly explains in his autobiography, the existence of glass panes presupposes the consent of the governed towards the state. Window breaking was tantamount to the withdrawal of consent so that shutters at that period became a necessary substitute.[76] As will be shown, the militant feminists' emphasis on provocation has affected Housman's interpretation of the Aristophanic original.

The feminist Lysistrata was ready in just three weeks. Even though not a translation, this version is close to the original, aptly characterized in the published edition of the play "a modern paraphrase."[77] A delicate point in preparing the new

---

75 Quoted in "Laurence Housman, 93, Dead; Was Author of Victoria Regina," The New York Times February 21, 1959.

76 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years pp. 224-225.

77 Laurence Housman, Lysistrata A Modern Paraphrase from the Greek of Aristophanes ...

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lysistrata was to circumvent the original's licentiousness, considered extremely offensive by English mainstream morality standards. "If any of it shocks you," wrote Housman to a female friend, "consider how modified a version mine is."[78] Indeed, the adaptation was "discreetly worded" and passed through the strict censorship inspection.[79] If the original's licentiousness presented problems to the translator, its contemporaneity facilitated his task.: "Some of the most modern passages," claimed Housman, "are the most literally translated."[80] In fact, however, paraphrasing is extensive, aimed not only at masking indecency but also at conveying feminist determination.

Housman's Lysistrata closely follows the original's linear development. The play's episodes have been organized into two long scenes, connected by a brief interlude of the female chorus. The first scene ends with the debate with the Proboulos, — referred to as Committee-Man in this version — and the second begins with the choral battle immediately following the debate in the Attic comedy.[81] All choral passages have been included, even though some have been drastically abridged or moved from their original position. Generally, Housman has avoided tedious choral tirades by redistributing the passages of each sex to four choral Leaders, in addition to a chorus. Finally, the feminist author had the inspiration to add to the original numerous dramatic effects in the form of stage directions,

---

78 Letter of Laurence Housman to Sarah Bancroft Clark, April 14, 1912, p. 3, in the Laurence Housman Manuscript Collection, Somerset County Library (Street Branch), Somerset.

79 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years p. 208.

80 Letter of Laurence Housman to Sarah Bancroft Clark, April 14, 1912, p. 4, in the Laurence Housman Manuscript Collection, Somerset County Library (Street Branch), Somerset.

81 Aristophanes, The Lysistrata, Vol. III, translated by Benjamin Bickley Rogers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), l. 614-705, pp. 64-72. Henceforth, references to this work will be abbreviated to 'Loeb.'

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

enhancing his interpretation's clarity and vivacity.

In the original, the women's scheme to end the war is yet another Aristophanic utopia. The notion of a universal female abstention from sex is as fantastic as Trygaeos' journey in Peace, or as the conclusion of a personal peace treaty with the Spartans, explored in The Acharnians. Aristophanes does not and indeed has no interest in realistically working out the complex consequences of the women's abstention. For example, it is certainly true that men could go to courtesans, an alternative which Donnay was happy to provide for, complementing his naturalist interpretation of the original. However, Aristophanes is not earnestly proposing a viable peace plan. The women's scheme is deliberately simplistic, as Lysistrata centrally aims at exposing the absurdity of war.

The Peloponesian war has been comically reduced in this play to its essential minimum: fighting. War is presented as a self-destructive activity, fundamentally depriving men of life's primal pleasures, especially sex, which they can only enjoy in peace. Lysistrata confronts the forcefulness of Proboulos, who wishes to regain possession of the Acropolis with common sense.[82] She declares: "We'll save you."[83] responding to his claim that money from the treasury is needed to continue the war, in the interest of safety. He is exasperated and replies revealingly: "I do not want to be saved, dammit!"[84] Lysistrata's response clearly highlights male absurdity: "All

---

82 "Frankly, you don't need crowbars nearly so much as brains." Loeb, l. 432, p. 42. Translated by Douglass Parker: Douglass Parker, tr., "Lysistrata" in Aristophanes Four Comedies, edited by William Arrowsmith (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 34. References to Parker's translation will henceforth be abbreviated to 'Parker.' Even though not always exact, his translation captures the spirit of the original.

83 Loeb, l. 497, p. 48; Parker, p. 39.

84 Loeb, l. 501, p. 50. Parker, p. 40.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the more reason. It's not only from Sparta; now we'll have to save you from you."[85] Indeed, in the debate, Proboulos is constantly driven to making a fool of himself. The pathetic old men and Kinesias similarly become laughing stock.

Even though highly effective in ridiculing men, women are not positively portrayed in Lysistrata. Rather, Aristophanes' perspective is misogynist. Through continuous engagement in fighting, men have become so ridiculous that they can even be outwitted by the women's simplistic scheming. Male absurdity is humorously portrayed as having generated more absurdity, catapulting women into the center of political life. At the end of the play all is well, friends and foes are off to a rich banquet in the Acropolis. However, happiness is fictitious here, as is highlighted by the paradoxical joint choral song, subverting the rosy picture.[86] Indeed, it is not as if peace has actually been achieved. Aristophanes has simply offered food for thought, drawing attention to the absurdity of war and to the desirability of peace.

Housman has interpreted the women's plan for peace not as a playful fantasy but as a realistic political proposal, unanimously affirmed by a vigorous female assembly. In the modern version, the women are efficiently organized into a feminist mobilization, mature and militant enough to prevail on the reactionary male establishment, achieving peace. Housman transparently depicts a female activism in his own time rather than in antiquity. The Attic comedy has been shaped into a propagandist play for the feminist movement.

Similarly to her ancient prototype, Lysistrata is a strong leader with a sound political instinct. The original character, however, is a popular heroine, sharing in the camaraderie. By contrast, her English namesake keeps herself aloof and is

---

[85] Loeb, l. 502, p. 50. Parker, p. 40.

[86] Loeb, l. 1042-1072, pp. 100-103.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

widely acknowledged as a superior woman by her comrades. Upon her appearance in front of the Committee-Man, women spread their cloaks and make a carpet for her to walk on.[87] Her principal and highly valued function is to be the play's spokeswoman par excellence, instilling on her comrades a political conscience that is distinctly feminist. Indeed, in the English version, the heroine's unsophisticated quick wit has become remarkably polished. Lysistrata expresses herself in lofty, high-flown language, like a statesperson and has a constant tendency to politicize any and every issue. Moreover, her supreme social and political conscience leads her to adopt a patriotic, emotive tone, at variance with the original's immediacy and humor.

The ancient Lysistrata's opening remark upon not finding the women at the appointed meeting place is simply, "There's not one woman to be seen."[88] The English heroine, however, takes it to heart and is moved to make a brief patriotic sermon: "Now I stand alone/Uncomraded; and these soft hearts are stone/While stricken Greece goes stumbling to her death."[89] Later, when Myrrhina shows up late, she stings her patriotic conscience: "So slow Myrrhina, when Greece seeks our aid?"[90] When Lysistrata starts talking to the women, the original conveys the sense that she is among friends, asking a simple question: "Do ye not miss the fathers of your babes./always on service?"[91] In the English version her remark has been shaped into the formal opening of a political speech: "O wives and mothers, to whom war decrees/A life unhusbanded, do ye not yearn/For those who gave you children to

---

87 Laurence Housman, Lysistrata, p. 34. Henceforth, references to this work will be abbreviated to 'Housman.'

88 Loeb, l. 4, pp. 6-7.

89 Housman, p. 5.

90 Loeb, l. 70-71, pp. 12-13: "I'm sorry, Myrrhina,/That you should come so late in such a business." Housman, p. 10.

91 Loeb, l. 99-100, pp. 14-15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

return?"[92]

Later, she reproaches women with political irresponsibility, when they initially refuse to abstain from sex: "Oh, wretched race, which makes all Greece its grave!"[93] By contrast, in the original, Lysistrata is humorously phlegmatic: "O women! women! O our frail, frail sex!/No wonder tragedies are made from us.[94] 19 In explaining the women's role in abstention, the original Lysistrata is content if they simply "Repel them firmly, till they [men] end the war."[95] However, in the modern play the heroine expects women to have political awareness and a voice: Civil strife will end "when a harder fate/Meets [men's] advances, and a voice cries 'Go! /Not till ye bring us peace!' "[96]

The modern Lysistrata's emphasis on politics is combined with a puritanical reticence on sexual subjects. The original heroine too, expresses some diffidence about joking lewdly with her friends and she certainly has firm control over her libido. The female leader in the English version, however, is more extreme, regarding preoccupation with sexual matters as demeaning. In the original, Lysistrata remarks impatiently on the women's delay, "though I told them to be here betimes./To talk on weighty business, they don't come./They're fast asleep."[97] In Housman's version the heroine imagines that lust is getting in the way of their social duties, interpolating: "For Athens' sake, naught did they care! ... [They] make sleep the cover of their

---

[92] Housman, p. 12.

[93] Ibid., p. 15.

[94] Loeb, l. 137-138, pp. 18-19.

[95] Ibid., l. 153-154, pp. 18-19

[96] Housman, p. 15.

[97] Loeb, l. 13-14, pp. 6-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

crimes! ... sloth and slavish lust have made them tame!"[98] Similarly, the original Lysistrata ironically responds to Calonica that had the point of the meeting been sexual, "we'd already be in session."[99] Housman has preferred to insert a disagreeable metaphor. If sex were at stake, women would "have buzzed like flies to tainted flesh!"[100]

At the end of the play, unlike everybody else, Lysistrata does not hurry to get paired off with her husband, Lycon. The danger of succumbing to sexual desire is clearly, losing one's head. Lysistrata, who has no libido, is the most thoughtful character in the play, standing higher than everybody else, literally and symbolically. After all men and women have been paired off, Housman's directions indicate that Lysistrata is alone at the center of the upper stage.[101] She looks after the revellers thoughtfully, while the lights of the feast are fading away. Finally, she exits from the opposite direction, "away from the sounds of revelry."[102]

No other woman is like Lysistrata. Her consorts all have strong sexual desires, but are noticeably inferior to her intellectually and less articulate. Moreover, their political sense, at least at the beginning of the play, is rudimentary. Thus, Calonica voices the traditional male-indoctrinated objections to Lysistrata's ideas. As in the original, she expresses lack of confidence in women's abilities to accomplish anything other than dressing well. Elaborating on the original pattern, Housman presents her as dependable, relying on her husband's opinions on the political relations between Athens and Sparta: "Did I not hear of late/My husband say never

---

98 Housman, p. 6.

99 Loeb, l. 25, p. 8. Translated by Parker, p. 10.

100 Housman, p. 7.

101 Ibid., p. 77.

102 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was there such hate/As now? Later, a Corinthian woman objects to Lysistrata that "'Twould be so useless — so unwomanly" to abstain from sex.[103]

As in the original, Lampito is more determined than the rest of the women and proves an efficient auxiliary to Lysistrata. The heroine praises the Spartan's muscular strength warmly, favorably comparing her to a male hero, Theseus: "Were Minotaur your match, you'd throttle him."[104] In an interpolated line, Lampito responds: "I would try any way! I am a match for men, at fight or play."[105] She proudly displays her biceps, to the admiration of the entire gathering.[106] Interestingly, however, she is neither stupid, nor sexless. Thus, Lampito is sceptical about whether Athenian women can stop the financial supply of the war, clearly raising a modern objection: "Voteless ye cannot!"[107] 16 This independent character is also for free love and has a lover back in Sparta. In this version then, Lampito is presented as an alternative model of a feminist to Lysistrata. As shown, this prototype was later inverted in the American interpretation and employed to portray an unattractive lesbian.

The varied depiction of women at the meeting, ranging from the docile housewife to the militant feminist, conveys the message that the feminist movement embraces women from all walks of life. Departing from the original, Housman traces the spectacular change of housewives into active supporters of a political cause, showing how drastically the movement can affect women's lives. The conversion of the women is gradual. At Lysistrata's address, they are sighing as she recounts the plight

---

[103] Ibid., p. 15.

[104] Loeb, l. 80, pp. 12-13: "here's an arm could fairly/Throttle a bull." Housman, p. 10.

[105] Housman, p. 10.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., p. 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of war, passively indicating approval.[108] Then, after the familiar objections to abstaining, Housman imagines they are "gradually won over" when the heroine insists it is in their power to lure men and then thwart them. He reasons that the speech "appeals to their sex vanity."[109]

Taking the oath is easy for Lampito, who readily swears to "Mother Earth."[110] However, the experience is extremely trying for Calonica, assigned to repeat the terms after Lysistrata. At various points, the stage directions indicate that her voice is breaking, she is doubtful and apprehensive, half laughing and half crying. Finally she breaks down completely at the end of the ceremony, sobbing over the wine cup.[111] Her despair though is liberating, as she immediately "drinks deep" from the cup, forgetting her unfeminist sorrow and at the same time confirming the oath.[112]

As a skillful tactician, Lysistrata has taken care to politicize the women's consent. Indeed, the proposal to take the oath is noticeably more formal than in the original and the scheme is referred to as "a cause." Compare Aristophanes' "Let's take the oath to make this binding," to Housman's "So, that our cause may stand inviolable,/Now take the oath, then forward let us fare."[113] The English Lysistrata is particularly insistent in characterizing the women's action "a cause," even though there are no such references in the original. As the ceremony is about to start, she repeats: "so, having cried/Our common cause, thereto shall ye abide."[114] The

---

[108] Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

[109] Ibid., p. 15.

[110] Loeb, l. 198, pp. 22-23: "Hech, the braw aith! my certie, hoo I like it." Housman, p. 18.

[111] Housman, p. 20.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Loeb, l. 181-182, p. 20. Translated by Parker, p. 18. Housman, p. 17.

[114] Loeb, l. 210-211, pp. 24-25: "One speak the words, repeating after me./Then all

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

abstention scheme is also repeatedly referred to, in orthodox feminist vocabulary, as "the Women's War."[115]

The conclusion of the oath in the original is very brief. In the English version it has been dramatically expanded through having the old men approach the Acropolis while the women are fortifying themselves within. This gives a good opportunity to panegyrically project the women's meeting as a movement, demonstrating the converted women's determination and solidarity. The leaders of the chorus make sarcastic comments about the men and all the women "laugh and flourish defiantly."[116] At that point, the stage directions indicate that Lysistrata raises her hand authoritatively and the women now immediately rally round her.[117] Feminist vocabulary is again used strategically. In an interpolated passage the heroine asks them to defend "our cause" and encourages them, "Be brave, quit you like men!"[118] The chorus proclaims the message once more, in an invocation to Athena: "make, with lifted spear,/Our cause thine own!/O walls of Athens, homes of Greece,/The women's war shall bring you peace."[119] It is noteworthy that the female mobilization is placed here under the auspices of the wise and collected Athena, as opposed to the pathetic and sensual Aphrodite, invoked in the original.[120]

In the English version, the male chorus and the Committee-Man represent the reactionary establishment, which is primarily identified here as misogynist and anti-

---

the rest confirm it." Housman, p. 19.

115 For example see Housman, pp. 7, 21 and 23.

116 Ibid., p. 22.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., pp. 22-23.

120 Loeb, l. 252-253, pp. 26-27. For additional interpolated references to Athena see Housman, pp. 28 and 43.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

feminist. In freely paraphrased passages, the old men insistently and repeatedly refer to the Acropolis as an exclusively male possession. Taking his clue from the first choral song in the original, where the old men mention once that the women have seized "my Acropolis," Housman has elaborated on the idea considerably.[121] The phrase is uttered by a male Leader and repeated as a refrain by the other three. He continues, "And [women] blocked the Propylaea — yours and mine." and the three Leaders comically echo, "Yours and mine!"[122]

In a later choral song men refer to practically everything as male property. Women are entrusted "Our homes, our wealth, our children and ... live/Only by our consent."[123] The old men then interpret the seizure of the Acropolis as a revolt, intended to usurp male power. Indeed, women are repeatedly characterized "rebels" in the English version, who have been led by Lysistrata to raise "a barricade .../Against the rod of man's authority!"[124] The male chorus wishes to put woman back in her place and to restore order. Housman has changed the lewd choral invocation to Zeus, imploring him wishfully to toss woman up in the air and have her fall on man's penis. The old men newly pray that woman will "Fall to be trodden, a thing of little worth,/Under the feet of men."[125]

The Committee-Man's view on women's mobilization is not only ardently misogynist, but also perhaps more specifically anti-feminist, since he is an official state representative. In his initial speech, the Committee-Man disapproves of female noisy commotion, not at the feast of Adonis as in the original, but "at public

---

121 Loeb, l. 262, p. 28.

122 Housman, p. 24.

123 Ibid., p. 48. The passage is an interpolation.

124 Ibid., p. 47. For more references to women as 'rebels,' see pp. 26, 27 and 34.

125 Loeb, l. 977-979, p. 94. Housman, p. 64.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meetings."[126] Indeed, he gives two concrete examples of women's disruption of war policy debates with feminist slogans, such as "What about women?"[127] Similarly, he transparently regards the occupation of the Acropolis as an act undertaken by insurgent feminists: "There they combine, call themselves 'comrades,' 'sisters,'/Rebels and law-breakers and tax-resisters!"[128]

In his portrayal of Proboulos, Housman mentions that he alluded to the Head Censor.[129] Indeed, identifying Proboulos with the Lord Chamberlain was a most appropriate choice from a feminist perspective, as this functionary represented the status quo par excellence: he was chiefly responsible for safeguarding the voice of the establishment, by curtailing the women's and other dissident minorities' freedom of speech. The Lord Chamberlain in office at the time was nicknamed Bobby Spencer, for being always impeccably dressed.[130] In Lysistrata, when he reappears on stage after women have dressed him in their own clothes, "He is in fresh attire, newly oiled and curled."[131] Housman's contemporaries could not have failed to draw the analogy. The author even inserted an actual phrase in his version from the Lord Chamberlain's address in Parliament: "No agricultural laborer am I," widely perceived as notoriously comical at the time, given Bobby Spencer's elegance.[132]

The interpolated phrase was a clever trap. Housman directly provoked the actual

---

126 Housman, p. 32.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid., p. 34.

129 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years, p. 208.

130 Ibid.

131 Housman, p. 66.

132 In Lysistrata, the phrase has been assigned to 1st Leader of Men, Housman, p. 48. See also Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years, p. 208.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lord Chamberlain 'to speak,' by cutting out the line, which, however, happened to be his very own utterance. In this case then, the Head Censor would be censoring himself. It did not work. Housman was surprised to find that Lysistrata had come back from the Censor with that phrase undeleted.[133] Perhaps though, the audience's recognition of the line and their wonder at how it was not banned was just as effective, turning the actual Lord Chamberlain into an intriguing character, present by his absence in the play, like Godot. Had the line been forcefully omitted, the public would probably never have known it.

The Lord Chamberlain's line is but a small sample of Housman's bag of tricks in subverting the establishment. Departing from ancient Greek choral technique, the author has assigned to the two choruses entirely different functions, again revealing his bias in favor of the dissidents. The organization of the male chorus is oligarchical. There is a distinction in status between the four Leaders and the body of the old men who have come to defend the Acropolis. Leaders are both in charge of delivering the choral passages and of heading the expedition against the women. At the initial appearance of the male chorus, the multitude's contribution is limited to comically repeating each Leader's last phrase like an echo: "1st Leader: And the occasion/Most melancholy and most uncalled for. Several men: Ho-hopp! Uncalled for!"[134] The comical sound indicating they are heavily burdened is frequently employed in the initial choral passage. Indeed, the stage directions clarify that the four Leaders are forward, leaving the others to do the carrying of the logs.[135]

Leaders, too, have a comical routine of occasionally repeating each others' ponderous statements. However, repetition here does not indicate compliance, as in

---

133 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years, p. 208.

134 Housman, p. 23.

135 Ibid., p. 25.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the case of the multitude. Rather, it conveys the impression that the Leaders form a closed circle, complacent and self important. In the example about the ownership of the Acropolis, cited earlier, it is actually Leaders who repetitively and emphatically claim it as their own possession, not the male multitude as a whole.[136] The male multitude is obedient and unable to take any initiative. In a later choral song, where the 4th Leader describes vividly how they will burn the women, men "follow him in dumb show."[137] However, upon the appearance of the threatening women they retreat hastily, continuously "getting behind each other" until they disappear from the stage.[138] Choral uniformity is employed then to show the multitude's lack of individuality. In the English version, the misogynist ideology is expressed principally by a ridiculous male oligarchy and uncritically echoed by a stupid male multitude following them.

By contrast, the female chorus is more democratically organized. While the multitude's contribution is brief, it effectively indicates heartfelt solidarity rather than obedient compliance. For example, during the choral battle, the 2nd Leader invokes Athena, praying and at the same time signalling to the women: "Send thou down — Rain!"[139] The chorus in unison repeats the phrase, lifting their pitchers. Rather than execute an order, they are acting in the name of Athena, clearly conveying the message that women are engaged in a just and holy war. Unlike the male principals, female Leaders are constantly concerned about all women and are more open and communicative with the choral multitude.

Indeed, their function is to encourage women in their struggle for the cause and to

---

136 Ibid., p. 24.

137 Ibid., p. 49.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid., p. 28.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

broaden the support for the mobilization. In the interlude, the 1st Leader is clearly inviting: "O women, turn back from your labours,/And leave in their niche by the wall/Your pitchers, and hark to the call/Of friends in their need ..."[140] Women gather around her to listen. The Leader is the voice of the movement. She speaks in the name of all women, even of "the silent mothers of yore.": "They, too, who spake not a word,/They too, brave hearts, could have told/Their tale of the wrongs unheard."[141] The speech is concluded with an incitation to women, to continue fighting. Characteristically, the female leader pleads and inspires, she does not issue orders: "So forward I bid you, nor fail,/Nor yield what ye hold in your hand/For this wind which blows in your sail/Shall bear you to land."[142]

Housman systematically employs the female choral passages to propagandize the feminist movement. Their positioning in the modern play is frequently significant, demarcating a major success of the mobilization. Thus, the interlude is very loosely based on an original passage of the female chorus, delivered in the debate scene.[143] In the English version, the speech has been strategically placed after the debate with the Committee-Man, celebrating Lysistrata's victory and boosting female morale for future confrontation. Indeed, during the speech, women are distributing arms to the chorus.[144] As already discussed, the oath ceremony is similarly sealed with an interpolated choral invocation proclaiming to all of Greece, "the women's war shall bring you peace."[145] Again, the choral battle of lines 614-705 is concluded earlier.

---

[140] Ibid., p. 44.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Loeb, l. 539-550, pp. 54-57.

[144] Housman, p. 44.

[145] Ibid., p. 23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

on line 680, with the retreat of the male chorus. Alone on stage, women deliver the final choral passage, conveying the inspiring message that the movement has widespread support: "Call ye us rebels? full soon shall ye know/How Greece is with us!"[146]

Long propagandist passages are occasionally assigned to a single female leader, so that she can take her time to fully develop a persuasive, didactic argument. Besides the interlude, another monologue is the choral on lines 636-658, assigned to the first Leader. This passage, summoning "fellow hags," in the original is here addressed to the "happier mothers of the race" and proposes to be instructive: "set your burdens down while I relate/Why, we, weak women, seek to serve the State/As well as men."[147] Indeed, women sit around to listen a newly focused speech on sex equality.

In the Greek original, the Leader modestly and economically points out that though a woman "... my word is as good as my bond,/because I hold stock in Athens, stock I paid for in sons."[148] In the English version the text has been elaborated, so that the woman's contribution can be well assimilated. The Leaders' speech is noticeably more assertive, richly emotive and has a persuasive, dialectical character: "I, too pay taxes: from my flesh there runs/Rich tribute; ye bear arms, but I bear sons/And daughters; ye bring death, but I raise life;/I build the fruitful home, while ye breed strife/Envy and fear! "[149] In the original, the speech ends abruptly with the women comically threatening to kick men's jaws. In the modern play, the threat is distinctly more symbolic. The Leader warns men that "we will stand/Instead of you"

---

[146] Ibid., p. 50.

[147] Loeb, l. 637-639, p. 66. Housman, p. 46.

[148] Loeb, 649, 651. Translated by Parker, p. 48.

[149] Housman, p. 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as the women "rise to their feet."[150] Finally, moving up the steps of the Acropolis she threatens: "we ... will tread you down!"[151] It is noteworthy that men are in a particularly vulnerable position, as they are below the steps, while the women address them looking down from the staircase. [152]

The ensuing male choral in response to the women does not allow men an equal opportunity to be persuasive. For the male chorals, Housman invariably observes the practice of breaking down long passages into brief interjections. These have a strong comical flavor, exposing a lack of reasoned arguments. By comparison to the women's, men's propaganda is rudimentary, reduced to cheer leading: 3rd Leader: Shall woman — 1st, 2nd and 4th Leaders: Woman! 3rd Leader: In a majority/govern the State? 4th Leader: Never, I will defeat it! 2nd Leader: No, no! a thousand times: and I repeat it — No. no!"[153] In this passage, men have stripped for action. revealing "very thin and scraggy" naked bodies.[154] Physical frailty contrasts with verbal vehemence, enhancing the comical effect. It is noteworthy that the original's symmetrical incitation to the female chorus to undress has been interpreted symbolically in the English version. After the men have already retreated. the female Leader prompts her comrades, "put off this yoke of woman's weeds."[155]

The female chorus is not only more sophisticated than the men in persuasive argumentation, but is also versed in provocative and defense tactics. designed to ridicule and overpower the enemy. Housman has elaborated on the already rich stock

---

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., p. 47.

[152] See stage directions, Housman, pp. 43, 47.

[153] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

[154] Ibid., p. 47.

[155] Loeb, l. 637, p. 66. Parker. p. 48: "Let's not be hasty. fellow ... hags. Cloaks off first." Housman. p. 66.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the originals' confrontational episodes. The female attack on the three policemen is replete with stage directions, showing clearly that Housman has conceived it in contemporary terms as a confrontation between feminists and the police of his own day. In the original, women are an anarchic, frantic mob of "egg-and-seed-and-potherb-market girls" and "garlic-selling-barmaid-baking-girls," pouring forth from the Acropolis to defend Lysistrata, who calls on them to "smack and whack and thwack."[156] Housman presents the policemen advancing menacingly in a compact body towards the heroine, with poles. As she is backing up the steps, women open right and left, to protect her and hold scarves, ready to noose the policemen. Some get hold of their poles. Eventually, in a full scale attack, they tie them up and drag them into the citadel.[157]

During the debate, women cry derisively "Quack, Quack" at intervals when the Committee-Man speaks.[158] The scene concludes with the dressing up of the state representative in female clothes. In the original, this episode occurs within the debate, and, at the end, women prepare him for a mock-funeral. Housman's alternative choice appropriately highlights this version's feminist perspective. In dressing and tying him up in their own clothes, women are dissociating themselves from male stereotypes about the femininity traditionally imposed upon them.[159] As a conclusion to the debate, the women's provocation is politically more poignant.

The scene between Myrrhina and Kinesias is also distinctly more provocative than in the original, with a strong political rather than sexual flavor. Indeed, all jokes revolving around raised penises have been removed. With her delaying tactics,

---

156 Loeb, l. 457-459, pp. 44-45.

157 Housman, p. 36.

158 Ibid., p. 35.

159 Loeb, l. 532-537, pp. 54-55. Housman, p. 42-43.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Myrrhina is not solely interested in arousing Kinesias, but also in giving vent to a muted aggression towards the male. Thus, Myrrhina suffocates Kinesias with the cushions and draperies she has supposedly brought to make him comfortable. Kinesias finds his movement restricted and complains he has been wrapped up in the shirt of Nessus.[160]

Presently, Myrrhina has the novel inspiration to tie a fillet tightly around his head. Then, on a whim she takes it off and under pretense of combing his hair, she pulls hard and he winces.[161] To top it all, rather than innocently sprinkle him with a particularly strong perfume, as in the original, she brings in cooking oil and pours it down his face.[162] In the English version, her activism has immediate effects. Kinesias' servant, Manes, interrupts the courting to tell his master that his ship is ready to sail for a new expedition.[163] As soon as Myrrhina leaves, he comes in with arms to dress Kinesias, who snatches them impatiently, throws them away and kicks him out.[164]

At the end of the play, the entire male establishment come openly to recognize women's instrumental role in achieving peace. As in the original, the female chorus takes the initiative for reconciliation with the male chorus by extracting flies from their eyes, which have been "blurring the vision."[165] The Spartan envoy later appears without an erection, declaring "All Greece endures a need without a name."

---

160 Housman, p. 61.

161 Ibid., p. 62.

162 Ibid., p. 63.

163 Ibid., p. 59.

164 Ibid., p. 64.

165 Ibid., p. 69.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A men's leader replies, "Have you too, got a fly/Or hornet in your eye?"[166] Indeed, in the feminist version, men come to realize they need women principally to relieve them of distorted vision rather than to stimulate erections.

It is noteworthy that the call for the heroine to conduct the peace negotiations is very earnest and formal in the English version, emphatically presented as a State resolution. Thus, Lysistrata's compatriots refer to themselves as "Athenians, come/Of high degree, with powers upon us laid,/Sent by the Senate to entreat her aid."[167] As a result of the mobilization, the establishment has become inviting towards the feminist dissidents, officially conferring on them a political mission of utmost concern to the State. However, Housman is careful to clarify that Lysistrata is not solicited as a unique woman. Indeed, men wish to call, "if a hope remains-/All the Lysistratas the world contains."[168]

Female activism has not only been beneficial to men but also to women, strengthening their faith in themselves and in their movement. As peace is concluded, women "utter a cry of joy and wonder" at their own success.[169] The heroine's final word before lapsing into contemplative silence at the end of the play is: "we conquer but to serve," spoken in the name of all women.[170] Even though the female service to the state has been demonstrated and happily recognized in this play, the women's struggle to gain a voice in politics is not over. The open-endedness of the finale, with Lysistrata on the alert, is designed to leave the audience with this message to be borne in mind, obviously for its relevance to

---

166 Ibid., p. 70.

167 Ibid., p. 71.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid., p. 75.

170 Ibid., p. 77.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Housman's own times.

As an engaged feminist play, the English Lysistrata shares important common features with La grève des femmes. Both authors place central emphasis on the socio-political goals of the abstention, deliberately undermining the importance of the sexual factor. They regard the libido suspiciously as a rather primitive expression of female nature and have difficulty in reconciling the sexual and political interests of the insurgents. Interestingly, both have opted to present Lysistrata as asexual and to idealize her as a model of a strong female leader. Clearly, the implication is that female intellectual and political leadership is incompatible with the libido. Housman is more moderate than Després, allowing that Lysistrata's followers do have strong sexual drives. This choice allows him to present the women as broadening their interests and maturing through their support of feminist activism. They learn the significance of solidarity, which is an essential prerequisite to the success of their cause. In the French adaptation, female solidarity is also emphasized insistently. However, it is idealistically almost taken for granted that women are naturally supportive of each other.

Both authors are also concerned with presenting and vindicating anti-feminist opposition to the scheme, employing a variety of dramatically and ideologically effective tactics. Interestingly, both have included a scene where hard core male anti-feminists are vindictively dressed on stage in women's clothes. Departing from the original, the modern authors stress the symbolic value of this act for feminism, encouraging women to step out of their male inflicted feminine roles. However, both Housman and Després have a keen interest in eventually reconciling men to feminism. At the end of both plays, men are portrayed as more understanding towards the other sex, even to the point of being prepared to concede political rights.

The two plays differ significantly on the level of political sophistication. The French adaptation is politically naive. In wishing to have their rights recognized

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

constitutionally, women aim at a highly ambitious and clearly political goal. However, they rely primarily on the superiority of the female nature to achieve it. Their political organization is rudimentary. For example, adherence to abstention is solely a matter of individual conscience, and consequently, there is no sense of a female movement. Similarly, the opposition to feminism is not politically defined, as it is represented by a random band of reactionary male individuals. Thus, in vindicating them, women fail to make a political point. The effectiveness of their victory is limited to personal influence.

In fact, Després is primarily interested in how women can improve their own personal and social, as opposed to their political status. On her conception, feminism is equated with recognizing the worth of woman as an individual. This obviously leads to better interpersonal relationships, as Després shows at the end of her play. However, philanthropy does not make a difference on the political level: polity fundamentally requires individuals who are citizens or who have the conscience of citizens. Neither male nor female characters in Després qualify in either respect.

By contrast, Housman has a sophisticated conception of polity, distinguishing between citizens who make important governmental decisions, forming the establishment and others who simply abide by them, citizens and non-citizens. In mobilizing to serve the state, women are rapidly acquiring the identity of citizens. Their struggle to have their voice heard naturally clashes against the conservative male establishment, which is not prepared to expand citizenship privileges. Thus, they are primarily identified as dissidents. Indeed, the women's confrontation with the anti-feminist state leadership is the central focus of this adaptation. The female mobilization has recourse to politically intricate activist tactics in overpowering the establishment, such as the public debate, provocation and propaganda. By demonstrating their usefulness to the state successfully, women put an end to their exclusion from polity and pave the way to making political claims about citizenship.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Housman has astutely and realistically presented women as winning an important feminist battle, not the war, which lies ahead, beyond fiction.

As a political play, the English Lysistrata is directly comparable to the Soviet interpretation. Indeed, Smolin and Housman have arrived independently at surprisingly similar choices in interpreting the original. Both texts are paraphrases of the Attic comedy, closely following its plot development. Departing from the original, however, both assign socio-political concerns primacy over the sexual urge, which has been drastically curbed. The two modern versions have been effectively shaped into transparent metaphors for political struggles that marked the early modern period. Feminism and communism were both set against a common enemy, the establishment. Thus, the central axis of both interpretations is the conflict between the reactionary status quo and the women's progressive force, pressing for change. In the Soviet version, the establishment is associated with the pre-revolutionary aristocracy, while in Housman's play it is distinctly identified as anti-feminist.

In both plays, the women are organized into efficient activist movements with large followings. In Smolin the mobilization has a solid popular basis, as the female insurgents are drawn from the people. Housman is more conscious of the sex rather than the class identity of the movement. Women are fighting for the rights of their own sex, rather than for the rights of all the oppressed. The English conception of the female movement is essentially exclusive, as it appears to be limited to the middle class, directly reflecting the identity of the equal rights movements of his own time. However Housman like Smolin, insists that the female mobilization has wide support. The feminist and the communist conflicts with the establishment then, both concern society at large. Indeed, this is a major reason why the chorus is all-important in both political adaptations.

The conception of the male and the female choruses in the two versions is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

strikingly similar. The two interpretations have a biased perspective on the conflict. favoring and even idealizing the insurgent movements. Accordingly both authors undermine the male choruses, presenting them comically as monolithic and ridiculous. By contrast, they emphatically enhance female choral contribution, non humorously portraying the women as heroic. In both texts female choruses have a central propagandist function, celebrating and encouraging the insurgent struggle. Indeed, both authors are sensitive to the strategic placement of female choral passages. Thus, both have included a choral after the debate with the Proboulos, demarcating a major victory.[171]

Both also take liberties with the original choral passages, to emphasize didactic value. For example, the paradoxical ending of the choral ode immediately after the conclusion of peace has been altered in both versions. In the modern plays the open invitation to partake of felicity is unequivocal, as the original's proviso that the door will be locked has been removed.[172] In the choral battle about woman's social and political utility, both have also made certain to add that women bear daughters for the state as well as sons.[173] However, whereas Smolin retained the parabatic form of the original in this choral, addressing the argument to the audience, Housman has made no attempt to include a parabasis in his own version. Perhaps the explanation of why he gave up this effective means of propaganda is that the parabasis is primarily a non literary, performance device. Unlike the Russian, the English Lysistrata was not effectively interpreted for the stage. Its influence has been restricted to drama.

---

171 Housman, pp. 43-44; Dmitry Smolin, trans., "Lysistrata," translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes, in Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio (New York: Brentano's, 1925), pp. 41-42.

172 Loeb, l. 1188-1215, pp. 112-115. Housman, p. 76. Smolin, p. 68.

173 Housman, p. 46. Smolin, p. 61.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The two versions differ on the importance they assign to Lysistrata's role in achieving peace. Smolin insists on her similarity to the rest of the women. For example, she too has to struggle with controlling her sexual urge, as is revealed in the choice of giving her Kinesias for a husband. In the Soviet version, she does not receive more credit for success, nor is she presented as a model to be emulated, as in the English text, which emphasizes distinction. At the end of the play, the Russian heroine joins in the revelry, in contrast to the English Lysistrata who remains aloof and watchful.

Indeed, the two plays also have a divergent conception of the ending. Both insist on the successful results of the mobilization, portraying the establishment as more democratic. However, in contrast to the English, the Soviet version leaves no residue. It presents a hearty, closed finale, implying that all has been achieved and the struggles are over. The Soviet version looks to the past, and has a primarily celebratory function: it aims at glorifying the victorious October revolution that had already established communism as the new order in the early twenties. Smolin's interpretation then is mainstream. By contrast, the English version originated in the fringe and looks to the future. Rather than celebrate, its primary function was to provide encouragement for the feminist struggle for the vote that still lied ahead in 1910.

As shown in Chapter III, the production of the Soviet Lysistrata contributed decisively to giving a distinctive character to the communist reading of the play. By contrast, the staging of Housman's version primarily has pioneering rather than interpretative value, as the first feminist production of Aristophanes on the Western stage. The detailed stage directions in the text provide some clues as to the spatial conception of the production. Indeed, the adaptation was published a year after Lysistrata's opening at the Little Theatre, in 1910. It is reasonable to assume then that Housman's spatial stipulations closely reflect the staging choices of the actual

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production.

The setting has two levels, forming an upper and a lower stage connected by a staircase.[174] As certain scenes clearly imply, the gates of the citadel must have been set prominently on the upper stage. For example, at the conclusion of the meeting, women are shown passing through the gates which are eventually "shut and bolted."[175] Similarly, at the confrontation with the police, the insurgents crowd the gates to protect Lysistrata who is on the steps and later, at the heroine's signal to charge, they are shown rushing out through the gates.[176] Apparently, the steps were an integral part of the stage setting. In confrontations, men seem to be invariably on the lower stage, concentrating all effort on attacking the women who are on the staircase.

This is clearly evident in the staging of the police episode, described in detail earlier.[177] Similarly, when the male chorus catch sight of the women at the first battle, it is indicated that they are crouching below the steps.[178] Women were probably threatening to shower them while standing above on the staircase. At opening of the second choral battle, again, it is indicated that men are asleep below the steps.[179] The women, however, probably deliver their own song on the steps, as they hasten to disappear by ascending higher at the finale.[180] Similarly, at the interlude, they sing for the cause while seated on the staircase. A clever dramatic

---

[174] Housman, p. 77.

[175] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[176] Ibid., p. 36.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid., p. 27.

[179] Ibid., p. 45.

[180] Ibid., p. 47.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

device, copied in the American production, is that during the singing, men's voices are heard offstage shouting: "Down with the women, down!" "Down with Lysistrata."[181] This is a most appropriate slogan, given the staircase setting and men's persistent efforts to force their way up.

For the reconciliation scenes women are finally shown descending to the lower stage, of their own accord. Thus, the female chorus comes down to extract the moths from men's eyes and to kiss them.[182] For the peace negotiations, women are instructed by Lysistrata to descend and lead the envoys to the center of the lower stage.[183] Throughout the scene, Lysistrata, Peace and probably also most of the women were standing on the steps and on the upper stage. At the conclusion of the treaty, it is indicated that Peace descends, led by dancers, torchbearers and women strewing flowers.[184] As mentioned earlier, the exultant reunion of husbands and wives took place on the lower stage, with Lysistrata watching from the upper level.[185]

The feminist production then appears to have consistently segregated the sexes, assigning the higher stage with the representation of the citadel to the women and the lower to the men. Most of the play's action was focused on the steps leading to the Acropolis, an area under firm female control, functioning as the target of all male attacks. It is highly probable that the central importance of the staircase to the spatial conception was inspired by Max Reinhardt's interpretation of Lysistrata which was still in production in 1910. In his review of the English production for The

---

[181] Ibid., p. 44.

[182] Ibid., p. 69.

[183] Ibid., p.72.

[184] Ibid., p. 77.

[185] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Times, J. T Grein, mentions that the mise en scène "in many respects" reminded him of the Kammerspiele.[186] He also found that the construction plan of Kingston's Little Theatre "paid homage to Berlin theatrical architecture."[187]

Besides the set design, the conception of the grand atmospheric finale can probably also be traced back to Reinhardt. The reunion of the couples, with men and women running to join each other happily, had been a well appreciated feature of the German finale. Other atmospheric highlights, such as the moonlit sky, the crowded, exultant processions of dancers and torchbearers, were perhaps also copied from Max Reinhardt's production, as the director had a predilection for lushly romantic spectacles. If Housman's stage directions arouse strong suspicions of German influence, the text of the English Lysistrata confirms it. Manes, the lowest of the low characters gives Housman away, as he is not a character in the original. He first appeared briefly in Greiner's adaptation, before re-emerging in an identical scene in Housman's version.[188]

Even though Max Reinhardt's interpretation was probably an influential prototype, the English Lysistrata's feminist orientation obviously dictated new staging choices. Housman recounts that "great expectations were raised at rehearsal," as "certain episodes threatened to become 'dangerous' if given free play."[189] He is referring mainly to the scene of the debate and the potential of offending the censor by emphasizing the analogy between the Committee-Man and the Lord Chamberlain. However, Kingston objected that "épater les bourgeois" was not a good policy for a

---

186 J. T. Grein, "The Little Theatre: Lysistrata" The Times, October 16, 1910.

187 Ibid.

188 Housman, pp. 59 and 64; Leo Greiner, Lysistrata (Berlin: Bücher des Deutschen Theaters, 1920), pp. 94-108.

189 Laurence Housman, The Unexpected Years, p. 208.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

newly opened theatre and prudent counsels eventually prevailed.[190] From a historical standpoint, it is unfortunate that the English Lysistrata's potential for offending the establishment was not explored boldly enough in production. Indeed, the focus on provocation, which is a major feature of Housman's text, might well have given the feminist production its distinctive mark. Perhaps then, Lysistrata would have emerged as an anti-heroine.

The production opened at the Little Theatre on October 11, 1910, with Gertrude Kingston in the title role. As Housman aptly assessed, the Waterloo of the feminist production was precisely that the establishment could afford to ignore it. Thus, the critic of The Times did not find the adaptation's or the production's feminism offensive.[191] He recognizes that Housman, through appropriate alterations, has made "a satirical plea for the suffragist cause;" however he finds it "feeble" and has no interest in discussing it.[192] Grein praises Kingston solely for delivering Lysistrata's harangues "with great earnestness and with obvious conviction."[193] Somewhat patronizingly, he snapped that the women surrounding her were amateurish, "employed in characters they did not seem to grasp."[194]

Interestingly, the critic appears to find Lysistrata shocking, not on feminist, but on sexual grounds. He characterizes the original "a primitive classic" and finds it "truly pornographic."[195] Housman's cleansing process has had negative results, reducing the Attic comedy to a hazy innuendo. The critic reproaches Kingston for following

---

190 Ibid.

191 J. T. Grein, "The Little Theatre: Lysistrata" The Times, October 16, 1910.

192 Ibid.

193 Ibid.

194 Ibid.

195 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the dramatic fashion of the day in mounting Lysistrata. The modernized Lysistratas of Paris and Berlin were indeed, dazzlingly successful, "naughty" and "amusing." However, Grein objects, "that is no criterion for us, for this is a moral city; we are moral people, the police send us to bed, and the Censor, like a good old grandmother, watches over the spoken word."[196] Judging from these comments, the production could easily have been "hair raising," as Housman wishfully anticipated.

About a month after Lysistrata's premiere an excerpt from the play was performed in a benefit matinee for the feminist cause, arranged jointly by the Actresses' Franchise League and the Women Writers' Suffrage League.[197] This was the scene of the debate and the heroine was again played by Kingston. Lysistrata formed part of a program that included songs, as well as a modern feminist play entitled Stuffing. Performance of feminist propaganda plays in benefit matinees was quite common in London during this period. These plays were generally of low quality pedestrian prose and had one dimensional characters and rudimentary plots, projecting female righteousness in triumph over male iniquity. Lysistrata compares favorably to such feminist dramatic production. It is well written, politically subtle and even amusing. Moreover, as a classic, the play offered a lurid opportunity for propaganda, along the lines that Marie Stopes had indicated earlier . Lysistrata could be used to show that feminism had a long tradition, going back to ancient Greece.

Housman's Lysistrata was published by The Woman's Press in 1911. A year later, Women in the Assembly was paraphrased by W. H. Mallock and published in

---

196 Ibid.

197 The benefit matinee took place at the Aldwych Theatre on November 18, 1910. See "Programme" of the event, file on Lysistrata, National Museum of the Performing Arts, London.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the periodical Nineteenth Century, whose very title indicates it upheld tradition.[198] Indeed, Mallock interprets the Attic comedy as an anti-feminist play and employs it to satirize the suffragists of his own time. In the modern play, Praxagora has been entered as Mrs. Pankagoras, transparently evoking Emmeline Pankhurst. The heroine has many affinities to Housman's Lysistrata, indicating that her portrait was probably closely modelled on the actual feminist leader of W. S. P. U. Mrs. Pankagoras has the State on the tip of her tongue continuously and talks as if she has a holy mission to accomplish. She is clearly superior to her comrades and knows how to keep her distance.

Her opening speech to the lamp carries faint reminiscences of Lysistrata's arguments against Proboulos. Amusingly, the satire appears to be directly targetted against Housman's play: "Too long we have watched [men], with o'er-patient eyes,/tearing the State to pieces ... To watch and wait/we can endure no longer. Woman today/Shall save the State of die."[199] The female chorus in the anti-feminist play is composed of blind, enthusiastic followers, incapable of understanding and judgement. "Let me count my flock," says Mrs. Pankagoras, "Yes, all are here."[200] Later, she reprimands a woman for laughing, appearing as humorless and as devoted to the cause as Housman's Lysistrata: "Did I hear you utter the word 'fun'?/In woman's cause what do you find that's funny?[201]

Indeed, it was actually the supporters of the cause who would have the last laugh. During World War I, the feminist interpretation of Lysistrata was popular enough to interest the Samuel French publishing house. The play was published in 1915 in an

---

198 W. H. Mallock, "Women in Parliament," The Nineteenth Century (August 1912): pp. 292-318.

199 Ibid., pp. 292-293.

200 Ibid., p. 294.

201 Ibid., p. 295.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

acting version prepared by Winifred Ayres Hope.[202] The author indicates in the preface that Lysistrata has "strikingly modern features. It may be called a Peace Play, a Feminist Play, or an argument for Woman Suffrage."[203] As the stage directions clearly reveal, Lysistrata's feminism presented no obstacle to mounting a popular production. According to the author, Myrrhina is an ingenue and Kinesias a jeune premier. As for Lysistrata, while no longer young "she should be handsome."[204] The new version does not appear to have been influenced by Housman's text. Hope's Lysistrata is closer to the original, translating it into a rather dull prose.

By the 1920s equal rights movements had lost their vigor and rebelliousness, as many Protestant countries, including England, had given women the vote shortly after the war. The decline of feminism's combative spirit perhaps explains the movement's loss of interest in Lysistrata. Indeed, no new feminist adaptation of the play emerged in early inter-war period. Interestingly, however, the connection between Lysistrata and feminism had became a firmly established mainstream credo in the twenties. Lysistrata was widely regarded by the large public as the first feminist heroine in literature. Indeed, as discussed in chapter IV, the Russian Lysistrata was promoted in America as a feminist play, to avoid the pitfall of its communist ideology.

Towards the end of the 1920s, the prestigious backers of the Philadelphia Theatre association regarded Housman's feminist text faithful enough to the original to be included in the production series "comedy through the ages." Even though eventually not produced, Housman's text formed the foundation for Seldes' new

---

202 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, adapted and arranged by Winifred Ayres Hope (London: Samuel French, 1915).

203 Ibid., p. 5.

204 Ibid., p. 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American adaptation. However, it proved necessary to water down the prototype's orthodox feminism: sexlessness and militancy were strictly confined to the heroine. All other women were "normal" and there was no danger of their being led astray; Lysistrata had no power or interest in spreading feminist doctrine. With suitable modifications then, Housman's Lysistrata which had originated on the fringe was finally upgraded to a mainstream text.

In the 1920s, 'Lysistrata' had also come to designate the feminist or the modern emancipated woman, in contexts independent of theatre. Thus, in an article entitled "Lysistratas modernes," which appeared in the Parisian press in 1926, modern women are negatively characterized "Lysistratas," primarily for displaying 'masculine' qualities.[205] Marcel Pillon finds them too forceful and antagonistic, striving to resemble men in every way, even in dress. But, he warns, it is impossible to go against nature. Lysistratas had better cultivate their very own femininity.

Probably the quaintest use of Aristophanes' play at that period occured in a vehemently anti-feminist tract entitled Lysistrata or Woman's Future and Future Woman by Anthony Ludovici.[206] His study focuses on the roles of the sexes and especially of the female in modern society. The name of the ancient heroine is employed to characterize the engaged feminists who are the "Lysistratas of the modern world."[207] These are primarily identified as sexually impaired, "abnormal or masculinoid" women who have thwarted their natural instincts in an unsuccessful attempt attempt to emulate men.[208] Just like Aristophanes' Lysistrata, feminists have

---

205 Marcel Pillon, "Lysistratas modernes," Echo, July 21, 1926, file on Lysistrata, Rf 57025 III, Rondell Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

206 Anthony Ludovici, Lysistrata or Woman's Future and Future Woman (London: Kegan Paul, 1924).

207 Ibid., p. 47.

208 Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a plot "to convert girls to sexless life," by weaning them away from the object of finding a mate and directing them towards careers.[209] In this effort, they employ "tactics as old as Lysistrata herself, calling attention to disasters attending pregnancy and childbirth in the abnormal and the diseased."![210]

Besides the hard core feminist, 'Lysistrata' also denotes the "future woman." Indeed, the purpose of the book is to warn that feminism is dangerously spreading. Ludovici presents a nightmarish vision of an impending matriarchy, ruthless towards men. "The Lysistratas of the Feminist world" in the future will either be using men as "lackeys" for procreation, or they may even succeed in making them altogether redundant, through recourse to artificial insemination.[211]

It is noteworthy that Ludovici's grotesque conception of Lysistrata has affinities to earlier interpretations of the character considered in this chapter. Clearly, the presentation of the heroine as sexless was a prominent feature of the two major feminist adaptations that emerged while the movement was in its prime. Moreover, the leading feminist characters indeed had a tendency to look upon the other women's sexual preoccupation with condescension and even contempt. The propagandist orientation of these plays could naturally lead to the conclusion that firm control over the libido was an aspiring ideal in the feminist agenda. Thus Ludovici appears to respond directly to the feminist malaise of Lysistrata's relation to sex, especially in the extremist form it is presented in La grève des femmes.

The author's solution to the spread of the Lysistrata canker is the regeneration of the "manly man" who is no other than the fascist superman: The leaders of the "masculine renaissance," "will remodel national life without recourse to the

---

209 Ibid., p. 79.

210 Anthony Ludovici, The Future of Woman (London: Kegan Paul, 1936).

211 Anthony Ludovici, Lysistrata or Woman's Future and Future Woman (London: Kegan Paul, 1924), p. 91.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discredited and preposterous vote."[212] The program of reforms is now familiar enough to everybody. Highlights include "a new metaphysic purged of the elements of former religions ... rigorous selection at birth [and] the gradual elimination of the undesirable dregs of society."[213] Superman's world will be purged of Lysistratas, as female claims to equality will be silenced. Woman "will recover the lost joy of looking up to her mate [and] the serenity of a dependent existence will be restored to her."[214]

It is noteworthy that Ludovici revised and published his book again in 1936, leaving 'Lysistrata' out of the new title: The Future of Woman.[215] With the spread of fascism in Europe, the author was now more relaxed, as he could clearly see "a movement towards enlightenment." In retrospect he found that his future prediction about woman was not as grim as he had anticipated. The model of the ruthless Lysistrata matriarch had been left out of the picture, as the spread of feminism was no longer perceived as a threat.

I started out this chapter with the regrets and complaints of Després and Housman that their feminist Lysistratas had gone unnoticed. On the way there emerged one more interpreter of the play, Aubrey Beardsley, who, going against the grain, sought actively to erase his Lysistrata from historical memory. All three Lysistratas support woman's liberation and originated as unconventional, even provocative works, on the margins of bourgeois respectability. The feminist authors, however, directly clash with Beardsley on the importance assigned to sex in Lysistrata. The former are uniquely concerned about woman's enfranchisement and tend to clinically regard sex

---

212 Ibid., p. 108.

213 Ibid., pp. 110-111.

214 Ibid., p. 111.

215 Anthony Ludovici, The Future of Woman (London: Kegan Paul, 1936).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

simply as a means of achieving it. As emphasized throughout this chapter, Housman and Després systematically undermine the importance of the libido to woman. Female interest in both politics and sex is regarded as irreconcilable. This effectively constitutes a distinctive mark of the feminist Lysistratas, along with their strong propagandist intent. In diametrical opposition to the feminist authors, Beardsley employs abstention as a means of affirming the female libido and appears to celebrate woman's sexual autonomy. The all-powerful libido, however, minimizes political concerns.

Even though isolated and marginal, the feminist Lysistratas have turned out to be more important than their own authors realized at the time. They are directly comparable to all major interpretations considered in this study, drawing attention to an alternative, critical perspective. The adaptation of Després is ideologically and artistically naive, it did not have any influence as a text and was never produced. Yet it deserves to be remembered as the unique text associated with the French interpretation, responding to it critically rather than mimetically. This includes major adaptations, whose authors were fascinated to copy Donnay's misogynist choices. The criticism of Després is particularly interesting for its systematic character. The feminist author opens up a discourse with Donnay, answering him point for point. She thus lays bare all misogynist assumptions by presenting an alternative — albeit arbitrary — conception of the innate determination of sex roles. Similarly to Després, Beardsley also attacks the French mainstream interpretation, positing a contrastive, pro-feminine conception of Lysistrata's hedonism.

Even though important as the first feminist Aristophanic production, Housman's Lysistrata did not succeed in finding its way to a distinctive theatrical interpretation. The play, however, had a less solitary fate than the French adaptation. Indeed, it originated in a pro-feminine Aristophanic context. Moreover, it is related to almost all major interpretations of Lysistrata. Max Reinhardt's production appears to have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been an influential prototype for the spatial conception of the English play. as suggested by the stage directions. Comparison of Housman's Lysistrata to the independently inspired Soviet interpretation revealed surprising commonality of adaptation choices, allowing for an identification of central features of the political Aristophanic adaptation at that period. To Housman's credit, it should be noted that the feminist political interpretation preceded the communist by 13 years — which perhaps explains its bad luck —. Finally, the English Lysistrata directly influenced the American mainstream interpretation.

The connection between Lysistrata and feminism, which originated in the fringe, was gradually popularized, until, in the 1920s it was accepted by the mainstream almost as self evident. From modest beginnings, the rebellious feminist Lysistrata ended up in America where she wonderfully adapted and prospered, running the state and the corporate structure. Or so the story goes. As for her real father, Aristophanes, in the early modern period he appears to have developed a schizoid personality. When he was not misogynistically inclined, as he tended to be most of the time, he voted for women. He was definitely not anti-suffragist, except on very rare occasions. However, even though a little paranoid with women on account of Lysistrata, he was always very generous at that time towards those who fostered his child, securing them fame, or better still, notoriety. Housman, Després, and even the maladjusted Beardsley did not after all lose their place in history. Thanks to Aristophanes their stars are now twinkling.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 5-1 "Lysistrata shielding her coynte," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

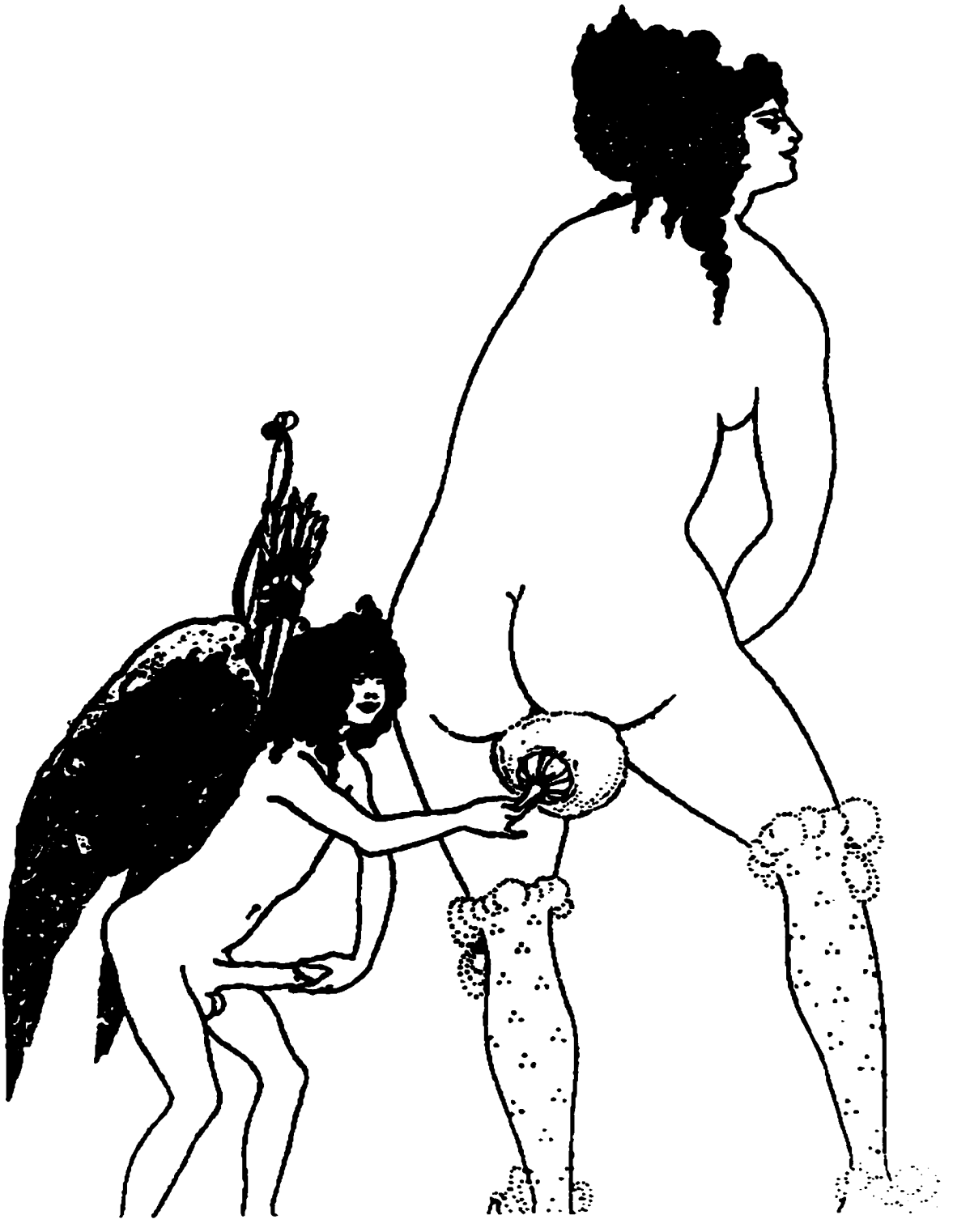

Fig. 5-2 "The toilet of Lampito," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 5-3 "Lysistrata Haranguing the Athenian women," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 5-4 "Lysistrata defending the Acropolis," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 5-5 "Two Athenian women in distress," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 5-6 "Cinesias entreating Myrrhina to coition," illustration, by Aubrey Beardsley, for the English, anonymously translated and privately printed Lysistrata (1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

In the previous chapters, I analysed the distinctive features of each Lysistrata interpretation. Furthermore, adopting a comparative approach, I fleshed out the textual and theatrical inter-relations between the major Lysistratas. In all five interpretations considered, Aristophanes is approached as a contemporary author rather than as a classic. There is no sense that his work is the product of a different culture, exhibiting features alien to the modern Western sensibility. Indeed, faithful translations of Lysistrata in non-classical contexts are rare at that period. These are uniquely directed towards an elitist, highly restricted public. The most notable effort in this direction is the anonymously translated, unexpurgated English Lysistrata, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, published in 1896.[1] Around the same time, the play was also more civilly, but faithfully translated and staged in France and in Germany.[2] These timid attempts to get more directly acqainted to the original occur at the turn of the century, just as the first major interpretation of Lysistrata was being firmly established in France. However, they were not artistically challenging and had no influence on the professional stage of the period.

For the most part, Lysistrata is produced in drastic adaptation. In all major interpretations, the original is shaped into a modern play. The Aristophanic licentiousness, all the crude sexual and scatological jokes are scrupulously removed. Gone also are the personal and topical allusions. The play's structure is tightened, by the rigorous integration of choral parts into the action. The original is uniformly

---

[1] Aristophanes, Lysistrata wholly translated into English and illustrated with eight full-page drawings by Aubrey Beardsley (Paris: Privately printed, 1934). See chapter V.

[2] See chapters I and II. The French translation was published: Robert de la Villehervé, Lysistraté (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rendered into prose and long passages are shortened or reshaped into a more accesible, conversational form. The alienating device of the parabasis has been revised into the familiar form of the prologue in the French and the German versions, securing continuity of dramatic action.[3] Only in the Russian version, is the parabasis employed within the play, with a propagandistic intent that has close affinity to its ancient use.[4]

In all interpretations at that period then, features peculiar to Attic comedy are either removed or incorporated into a modern framework. Lysistrata's structure, however, is not simply purged of foreign elements but is significantly altered as well. The original essentially has two plots, corresponding to the women's dual plan for achieving peace, sexual abstention from the men and the occupation of the Acropolis. The latter is connected to the episodes involving the debate with the Proboulos and the mobilization of the elderly choruses. All early modern versions tend to emphasize exclusively either the sexual or the political strand of the women's plan, modifying Lysistrata into a play with a single plot. Interpretations are thus distinguished into sexual and political. The French and the German belong to the first category, while Housman's feminist Lysistrata and the Russian are clearly political.[5] The American has a hybridic plot, combining both concerns.[6] The exclusive choice of theme in the modern versions directly affects the interpretation of

---

[3] Maurice Donnay, Lysistrata (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896); Leo Greiner, Lysistrata (Berlin: Dr. Wedekind and Co. G. M. B. H., 1908).

[4] Dmitry Smolin, trans., Lysistrata, translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes, in Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio (New York: Brentano's, 1925), pp. 1-78.

[5] Laurence Housman, Lysistrata (London: The Women's Press, 1911).

[6] Aristophanes, "Lysistrata. A new adaptation in two acts translated from the Greek by Gilbert Seldes," in A Treasury of the Theatre, edited by Burns Mantle and John Gassner. Vol. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), pp. 1475-1510.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the chorus.

Sexual Lysistratas systematically depoliticize the original. The women are mainly preoccupied with sex and the strike provides the impetus for an exploration of sensuality. The Aristophanic Lysistrata is transformed into a lusty spectacle. The French is the most distortive version, as the occupation of the Acropolis and the original choruses have been entirely ignored. Certain elements from the political plot have been drastically revised and incorporated into the sexual context. This technique is extensively employed in the German Lysistrata, which superficially appears to be more faithful to the original. Choruses however, though greatly multiplied, have been relieved of civic duties and placed in the service of Dionysus and of spectacle. In the compromising American version, the young women are solely interested in sex, while Lysistrata and the old women tend to the political aspects of the mobilization. As in the German version, choruses contribute for the most part to spectacular effect. All sexual Lysistratas are misogynist, in presenting the women as incapable of rational political action. They are also conservative, in reaffirming the old patriarchal order at the end of the play and in positing that female sexuality is a potentially dangerous force that needs to be tightly controlled by the male establishment.

Political interpretations avoid projecting female sexuality. The strike is clinically regarded simply as a means of achieving the termination of war. Depicting the ideological sophistication and efficiency of the female mobilization becomes central in these versions. In contrast to the sexual Lysistratas, political interpretations are more faithful to the original, in emphasizing the civic identity and functions of choruses. In the English feminist and the Soviet Lysistrata, choruses form the central axis of the play's conflict. The male chorus is interpreted as the reactionary establishment, opposing the female movement's pressure for societal change. Political versions are progressive in propagandizing the women's cause as essential

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to the amelioration of society. At the end of the play, the women are successful not only in bringing peace but also in altering the status quo.

In spite of their differences, sexual and political Lysistratas exemplify a common approach to adapting the original. Aristophanes presents the female scheme playfully, as a fantastic possibility. In all modern versions, Lysistrata is essentially turned into a thesis play, aiming to prove or disprove female political adeptness. To serve this demonstrative purpose, the strike is presented as a sane, non utopian proposition and its consequences are explored within a realistic framework. In choosing to concentrate on a single plot, modern authors shift the focus of the original from war and men to women. Moreover, they give up on Aristophanic irony, as the sexual and the political concerns no longer function antithetically. Rather, they are presented as mutually exclusive, facilitating the shaping of Lysistrata into a thesis play: high interest in sex proves female political inadequacy. Effective female performance on the public sphere is irreconcilable with a strong libido.

In the early modern period then, Lysistrata is approached primarily as a play about women. The theme of war and peace is assigned secondary importance, especially in sexual and pre-war Lysistratas. Thus, in the French and the German versions, the catastrophic force of war is treated lightly and playfully. These two productions were revived shortly after the first world war, cashing on the immediate relevance of Lysistrata to actuality. However, both interpretations were criticized in the post-war period for frivolity. In contrast to the sexual, political Lysistratas present peace as a momentous social issue. Far from constituting the women's unique concern, though, it is included in a broader agenda of societal reforms. In the Russian Lysistrata there is greater didactic emphasis on the value of peace than in Housman's pre-war version.

All interpretations, with the exception of feminist Lysistratas, project mainstream ideological conceptions. These are expressed in popular dramatic and theatrical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

forms of the period, ensuring the comedy's appeal to the large public. In the major productions, popular features reflect low as well as high, cultivated taste and are frequently combined with avant garde elements. Thus, in France, Lysistrata is adapted and staged as a typical boulevard play of artistic quality. Nemirovich-Danchenko in the Soviet Union employs realism in a constructivist, formal setting. Reinhardt in Germany and Bel Geddes in America weld with ease the apparatus of light entertainment with symbolist and modernist devices. Major interpretations had an impact on Lysistrata imitations associated with both high and low popular culture. Predominatly, though, these tend to be lower, more popularized versions of the prototypes.

In the early modern period, the theatricality of Attic comedy is newly and strongly emphasized. Aristophanes is dicovered as an author for the stage. Lysistrata adaptation is primarily directed towards the audience, not the reading public. The significance of production to Aristophanic interpretation was first highlighted in the German version. The primacy of the theatrical over a literary or text-based approach to Attic comedy was also theoretically defended in Hofmannsthal's prologue, consciously projecting Max Reinhardt's production as a landmark.[7] The director was the first to put Attic comedy on the stage in a modernist framework. His mise en scène introduced a set of theatrical features that typified Aristophanic production at that period. Nemirovich-Danchenko and Bel Geddes adopted and creatively elaborated on solutions already proposed by Reinhardt.

All action is set on a modernist architectural set of steps and platforms that enhances the Attic comedy's playfulness, creating imaginative possibilities for movement. The staircases are also skillfully employed in staging spectacular

---

[7] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Prolog geschrieben für die erste Aufführung der Lysistrata des Aristophanes im Deutschen Theater," in Das Deutsche Theater in Berlin, edited by Paul Legband (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909), pp. 78-81.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

effects. At the same time, the set integrally serves interpretation. In the Soviet and the American productions, the scenic constructions reflect the functions of the communist and the capitalist systems, as presented in the adaptations. Acting is robust and physical, combining a variety of styles from popular entetainment. Choral crowds are centrally prominent on stage. In all early modern interpretations, the number of choral members is multiplied impressively. Mass is carefully orchestated and choreographed, producing theatrically effective spectacular, comic and even epic scenes. Spectacle is as important as comic entertainment in the staging of the play. Yet, in the Soviet Lysistrata, it is no longer sexually charged. Rather, it has an epic dimension, serving to glorify the people. The Soviet production is unique during that period in presenting an interpretation of Aristophanes as théâtre du peuple. The mise en scène deliberately emphasizes popular elements and creatively exploits techniques of propaganda and audience engagement.

These then are the main features of Aristophanic interpretation in the early modern period. In spite of the difference in orientation between the sexual and the political Lysistratas, the approach to the text and to its production are broadly similar in the two variants. Somewhat surprisingly, the approach to Lysistrata remains relatively constant from the first interpretation to the last, notwithstanding geographical and time barriers. Indeed, the American Lysistrata incorporates features of all earlier interpretations, indicating that these were still relevant in America, in 1930. The only difference between pre-war and post-war Lysistratas is that the latter display greater sensitivity to the play's political content. Purely sexual adaptations wane in popularity in the 1920s. The most significant new development after the war is that there emerges a major production of a political Lysistrata, projecting an interpretation of the play as théâtre du peuple.

By the end of the 1920s, Attic comedy had lost its theatrical glamour in Europe. The spectacular productions of Lysistrata for wide popular audiences had been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

committed to oblivion. The time was ripe for a novel approach to Aristophanes. In the inter-war period, the Attic playwright was rediscovered by Charles Dullin. The French director transferred production of Aristophanic drama to the non-mainstream art theatre associated with the left. Entirely independently of Nemirovich-Danchenko, Dullin was among the pioneers to stage Attic comedy as théâtre du peuple. However, he ignored Lysistrata, turning his attention to the hitherto less frequently performed plays. He directed The Birds, Peace and Plutus, which are all perhaps more readily adaptable to didactic purposes than Lysistrata.[8]

To his credit, Dullin trusted Aristophanes more than Nemirovich-Danchenko. Bernard Zimmer's adaptation of The Birds, staged in 1928 is highly sophisticated politically and at the same time more faithful to the original, preserving its irony, even when it is directed against the people.[9] The interpretation of Aristophanic drama as théâtre du peuple became increasingly important after the second world war, with the advent of directors sensitive to the vision of political popular theatre, such as Joan Littlewood, Jean Vilar, Beno Besson and Karolos Koun.[10] Nemirovich-

---

[8] All productions were presented at the Atelier, in Paris: The Birds, adapted by Bernard Zimmer, opened on January 20, 1928 and was revived in 1935 and 1937. Peace, adapted by François Porché opened in 1932; Plutus, adapted by Simone Jollivet opened in February, 1938. All productions were presented at the Atelier.

[9] Bernard Zimmer, Les Oiseaux (Paris: Gallimard, 1928).

[10] Joan Littlewood directed Lysistrata, in an adaptation by Ewen MacColl at the Theatre Union, in Manchester, in 1937. Her production had revivals in Great Britain in 1940, 1941 and 1953. Jean Vilar directed Peace in 1960 for the Théâtre Nationale Populaire at Chaillot, in Paris. Peace was also staged by Beno Besson, in an adaptation by Peter Hacks at the Deutsches Theater, in Berlin, in 1962; it was re-staged at the Edinburgh Festival in 1970. Karolos Koun is the modern director par excellence most intimately associated to Aristophanes. Notably, he directed Plutus, adapted by M. Khourmouzes (1956); The Birds, translated by V. Rotas (1959); The Frogs, translated by K. Stamatiou (1966); Lysistrata, translated by K. Varnalis (1969); The Acharnians, translated by L. Zenakos (1976); Peace (1977). These productions premiered at his own theatre, Theatro Technes, in Athens. With the exception of Plutus, all other productions were included in the company's extensive touring in Western and Eastern Europe in the 1960s and 70s through to the mid-80s.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Danchenko's Lysistrata then is forward looking, as the only Aristophanic interpretation of the early part of the century relevant to a modern and perhaps still influential approach. But that is another story.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alberti, Johanna. Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-1928. Houndmills, Basingstoke and Hampshire, England: Macmillan, 1989.

Albistur, Maité and Daniel Armogathe. Le grief des femmes: anthologies du textes féministes du 2nd empire à nos jours. Poitiers: Editions Hier et Demain, 1978.

Amiard-Chevrel, C. Le Théâtre Artistique de Moscou 1898-1917. Paris: CNRS,1979.

Anderson, Bonnie S. and Zinsser, Judith P. A History of Their Own. Women In Europe. Vol. 2. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

Antoine, André. Mes souvenirs sur le Théâtre-Libre. Paris: A. Fayard, 1921.

_____. Recollections of the Théâtre-Libre. New York: Theatre Arts, 1925.

_____. Le Théâtre. Paris: Editions de France, 1932.

_____. "Causerie sur la mise en scène." In La revue de Paris. (April 1, 1903): 596-612.

_____. "Mes souvenirs sur Réjane." La Force Française 7 (July 1920):1-7.

Antona-Traversi, Camillo. Réjane. Paris: Editions le Calame, 1930.

Appelbaum, Stanley, ed. The New York Stage: Famous Productions in Photographs. New York: Dover, 1976.

Aristophanes. Comédies. Vol. 3 of Théâtre des Grecs. Translated by R. P. Brumoy. Paris: Rollin, 1730. Revised edition by De Rochefort and Du Theil. Paris: Cussac, 1785-1789.

_____. Les nuées. Translated by C.-M. Ploucquet. Tubingue: Balz, 1788.

_____. Les comices d'Athènes ou les femmes orateurs. Translated by Eugène Scribe and Varner. Paris: Ladvocat, 1817.

_____. Théâtre d' Aristophane. Tranlated by R. P. Brumoy, revised by Raoul Rochette. Paris: Veuve Cussac, 1820-1821.

_____. Comédies d' Aristophane. 6 Vols. Translated by M. Artaud and M. Destainville. Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1830.

_____. Plutus. Translated and annotated by M. Cattant. Paris: Hachette, 1843.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Lysistrata." In Aristophane. Comédies. Translated with an introduction and notes by C. Poyard. Paris: L. Hachette, 1860.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by H. Dauphin. Amiens: E. Yvert, 1861.

_____. Les oiseaux. Translated by H. Dauphin. Amiens: Yvert, 1863.

_____. Les oiseaux. Avec quelques mots sur la mise en scène dans Aristophane. Translated by F. Rabbe. Paris: Parvillez, 1888.

_____. "Lysistrata." In Aristophane. Comédies. Translated by Ch. Zévort. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1889.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by L. Battaillocles [Battaille] and J. Mersethos [Merset]. Music by Alfredos Patussetas [pseud.]. Paris: A. Patay, 1898.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated and with an introduction by Ch. Zévort. Illustrated by Notor. Paris: Fasquelle, 1898.

_____. OEuvres complètes. Translated by C. Poyard. Paris: Hachette, 1903.

_____. Théâtre. 2 Vols. Tranlated by Louis Bodin and Paul Mazon. Paris: Flammarion, 1908.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Lucien Dhuys. Illustrated by F. Kupka. Paris: A. Blaizot, 1911.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated into German by J. J. C. Donner. Illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. Privately printed, n. p., 1913.

_____. Lysistrata. Adapted by Winifred Ayres Hope. London: Samuel French. 1915.

_____. Lysistrata. New edition of the 1806 translation by Aug. Chr. Borheck Munich: Hyperionverlag, 1925.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Louis Artaud. Illustrated by And. Delignières. Paris: A l' Enseigne du Pot Cassé, 1926.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated into English and illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. London: Beardsley Press, 1927.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Raoul Vèze [Jean Hervez]. Illustrated by Carlègle. Paris: G. Briffaut, 1928.

_____. L' assemblée des femmes. Translated by E. H. Guitard. Illustrated by P. Gervais. Paris: Occitania, 1929.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by C. Poyard. Illustrated by Barta. Paris: Editions de la Cigogne, 1932.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated from the Greek of Aristophanes. Illustrations by Norman Lindsay. New York: Illustrated Editions Co., 1933.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Gilbert Seldes. Illustrated by Pablo Picasso. New York: Limited Editions Club, 1934.

_____. Lysistrata. A new adaptation in two acts translated from the Greek by Gilbert Seldes." In A Treasury of the Theatre, edited by Burns Mantle and John Gassner. Vol. 2. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Emile Chamontin. Illustrated by Jacques Touchet. Paris: E. Chamontin, 1941.

_____. "Lysistrata." Translated and adapted by Georges Vertut. In Dialogues de courtisanes, translated by Georges Eudes. Illustrated by Le Mengeot. Paris: Athéna, 1946.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by M. Artaud. Illustrated by Maurice Leroy. Paris: Dr. H. P. Heincken, 1948.

_____. Lysistrate. Translated by Ludwig Seeger. Edited by Otto Seel. Incudes prologue to the play by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1949.

_____. Lysistrata. Adapted by Dudley Fitts. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954.

_____. Three Comedies. Translated by William Arrowsmith and Douglass Parker. Edited by William Arrowsmith. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969.

_____. Four Comedies. Translated by Douglass Parker and Richmond Lattimore. Edited by William Arrowsmith. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated by Benjamin Bickley Rogers. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.

_____. Lysistrata. Edited with an introduction and commentary by Jeffrey Henderson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

_____. Plays. 2 vols. Translated by Kenneth McLeish. London: Methuen, 1993.

Arnould, Ed. De la comédie d' Aristophane. Avec une appendice sur les reprises de quelques-unes de ses pièces. Paris: n. p., 1842.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Art in Revolution. Soviet Art and Design since 1917. Catalogue. London: Hayward Gallery, 1971.

Ascarelli, Roberta. "Max Reinhardt. Il giullare e il teatro di massa." Quademi di Teatro 9 (August 1980): 24-33.

Bablet, Denis. "Max Reinhardt et la France." Theatre Research 5 (1963): 143-150.

_____. Esthétique générale du décor de théâtre de 1870 à 1914. Paris: CNRS, 1965.

_____. Edward Gordon Craig. Translated by Daphne Woodward. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1967.

_____. La mise en scène contemporaine I. 1887-1914. Brussels: La Renaissance du Livre, 1968.

_____. The Revolutions of Stage Design in the 20th Century. Paris and New York: L. Amiel, 1977.

_____, ed. Les voies de la création théâtrale. 15 vols. Paris: Editions du C. N. R. S.. 1970-1987.

Bailey, Paul. "Norman Bel Geddes' 'Hamlet'." The Drama Review 91 (Fall 1981): 39-54.

Baldensperger, Fernand. La critique et l' histoire littéraire en France au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle. New York: Brentano's, 1945.

Banks, Olive. Faces of Feminism. Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981.

Bapst, Germain. Essai sur l' histoire du théâtre. La mise en scène, le décor, le costume, l' éclairage, l' hygiène. Paris: Hachette, 1893.

Baron, Philippe. "Théâtre de moeurs et moeurs théâtrales en France de 1891 à 1914." Doctoral dissertation, Université de Dijon, 1986.

_____. "Un grand succès de la fin du XIXe siècle: Madame Sans-Gêne de Victorien Sardou et Emile Moreau." Littérature et Nation 5 (March 1991): 39-51.

Bathille, Pierre [Labracherie, Pierre]. Maurice Donnay: son oeuvre. Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1932.

Baumgarten, Franz Ferdinand. Zirkus Reinhardt. Potsdam: H. H. Tillgner, 1920.

Beardsley, Aubrey, trans. Lysistrata. Translated into German. Illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. Privately printed. Wiener Verlages, Fritz Freund, 1905; Berlin: H. Streisand, 1906; Vienna: Gilhofer and Ranschburg, 1907.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. The Later Work of Aubrey Bearsley. London: J. Lane, 1901.

_____. Under the Hill and Other Essays. London: J. Lane, 1904.

Belis, Alexandre. La critique française à la fin du XIXe siècle. Paris: Librairie Universitaire, 1926.

Bell, Susan Groag and Karen M. Offen, eds. Women, the Family and Freedom: The Debate in Documents. Vol. II, 1880-1950. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983.

Benedetti, Jean. Stanislavski: A Biography. London: Methuen, 1988.

Bercy, Anne de and Armand Ziwès. A Montmartre ... le soir. Paris: Bernard Grasset. 1951.

Bermel, Albert. Farce. A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Bernard, J. J. Mon ami le théâtre. Paris: A. Michel, 1958.

Bernheim, Alfred L. The Business of the Theatre. New York: Actors' Equity Association, 1932.

Bertheroy, Jean. Aristophane et Molière. Paris: Armand Colin et Cie, 1897.

Bickley Rogers, Benjamin. The Revolt of Women. Freely translated from the Greek of Aristophanes. London: George Bell and Sons, 1878.

Bier, Marcus. Schauspielerportraits: 24 Schauspieler um Max Reinhardt. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1989.

Bigelow Dixon, Michael and Christopher Boyer, eds. Moscow Art Theatre: Past, Present and Future. A Monograph from the 1989 Classics in Context Festival. Louisville: Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Inc., 1989.

Bogusch, George. "Unity in the New Stagecraft: A Study of Productions Designed and Directed by Norman Bel Geddes." Doctoral dissertation. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms, 1972.

_____. "An American in Paris; Norman Bel Geddes Produces Jeanne d' Arc." Theatre Design and Technology 17 (October 1969): 4-10.

Bordman, Gerald. American Musical Theatre. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bordman, Gerald, ed. The Oxford Companion to American Theatre. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Bourdet, D. Edouard Bourdet et ses amis. Paris: Editions de la Jeune Parque, 1946.

Braulich, H. Max Reinhardt. Theater zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit. Berlin: Henschel, 1966.

Braun, Edward. The Director and the Stage. From Naturalism to Grotowski. London: Methuen, 1982.

Brenner, J. Les critiques dramatiques. Paris: Flammarion, 1970.

Brisson, Pierre. Au hasard des soirées. Paris: Gallimard, 1935.

_____. Du meilleur au pire à travers le théâtre. Paris: Gallimard, 1937.

_____. Le théâtre des années folles. Genève: Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1943.

Broneer, O. "Eros and Aphrodite on the North Slope of the Acropolis." Hesperia 1 (1932): 31-55.

Brown, John Mason. The Modern Theatre in Revolt. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1929.

_____. Upstage: the American Theatre in Performance. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1930.

_____. Two on the Aisle. New York: Crown, 1970.

_____. Dramatis Personae. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Budge, Alice and Pam Didur. "Women and War: a Selected Bibliography." In Mosaic 23 (Summer 1990): 37-54.

Burnet-Vigniel, Marie Claude. Femmes Russes dans le combat révolutionnaire. Paris: Institut d' Etudes Slaves, 1990.

Cailhava, Jean François. Athènes pacifiée. Comédie tirée des onze pièces d' Aristophane. Paris: Ch. Pougens; Boulard, 1797.

Caine, Barbara. "Feminism, Suffrage and the Nineteenth Century English Women's Movement." Women's Studies International Forum 5 (1982): 537-550.

Carlson, Marvin, ed. Theatre Research Resources in New York City. New York: CASTA, 1992.

_____. The French Stage in the 19th Century. N. J: Methuen, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "The Golden Age of the Boulevard." The Drama Review 61 (March 1974): 25-34.

Carr, E. H. History of Soviet Russia. New York and London: Macmillan, 1950.

Carré, Albert. Souvenirs de théâtre. Paris: Plon, 1950.

Carter, Huntly. The Theatre of Max Reinhardt. London: Frank and Cecil Palmer. 1914.

_____. The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia. London: Chapman and Dodd, Ltd., 1924.

_____. The New Spirit in the European Theatre 1914-1924. New York: George Doran Company, 1925.

_____. The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917-1928. New York: Brentano's Ltd., 1929; Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970.

Centenaire du cabaret du Chat Noir. Paris: Musée de Montmartre, 1981.

Chafe, William. The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic and Political Roles, 1920-1970. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Chapple, Gerald and Hans H. Schulte, eds. The Turn of the Century German Literature and Art 1890-1915. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1981.

Charon, J. Moi, un comédien. Paris: Albin Michel, 1975.

Chatelain, U. V. "Aristophane en France de Pierre de Ronsard à François Porché." L' Esprit Français (April 1933): 411-418.

Chaussard, Pierre Jean Baptiste. Fêtes et courtisanes de la Grèce. 5 vols. Paris: F. Buissons, 1801; revised ed., 1821.

Cheney, Sheldon. The New Movement in the Theatre. Conn: Greenwood Press, 1914.

_____. Stage Decoration. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1928.

Chinoy, Helen Krich and Linda Walsh Jenkins. Women in American Theatre. Careers, Images, Movements: an Illustrated Anthology and Sourcebook. New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1981.

Clark, Kenneth. The Best of Beardsley. London: John Murray, 1979.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cocroft, Thoda. Great Names and How They Are Made. Chicago: Dartnell Press. 1941.

Cogniat, Raymond. Cinquante ans de spectacles en France. Les décorateurs de théâtre. Paris: Librairie Théâtrale, 1955.

Colette, Sidonie Gabrielle. La jumelle noire, quatre années de critique dramatique. Paris: Editions Férenzi, 1934-1938.

_____. Cahiers Colette. Paris: Flammarion, 1977.

Comoedia Illustré 9 (July- August 1920). Entire issue on Réjane.

Confield, Mary Cass. Grotesques and Other Reflections on Art and Theatre. New York: Harper, 1927.

Corvin, Michel. Le théâtre de boulevard. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989.

_____. "Boulevard et société 1890-1914." Littérature et Nation 5 (March 1991): 5-17.

Couat, A. Aristophane et l' ancienne comédie attique. Le gouvernement, la religion, l' éducation, les moeurs. Paris: Lecève, 1892.

Craig, Edward Gordon, ed. The Mask. New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967.

_____. On the Art of the Theatre. Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1905.

_____. Towards a New Theatre. London: Dent, 1913.

_____. E. G. Craig on Theatre. Edited by Michael Walton. London: Methuen, 1983.

Davies, Cecil. Theater for the People. The Story of the Volksbühne. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.

Descotes, Maurice. Histoire de la critique dramatique en France. Paris: Jean Michel Prace, 1980.

Després, Marie [Raynal de Tissonière]. La grève des femmes. Paris: Albert Savine, 1895.

Dickinson, T. H. Theater in a Changing Europe. New York: Henry Holt, 1937.

Dietrich, Marg. "Music and Dance in the Productions of Max Reinhardt." Revue d' Histoire du Théâtre 14 (1963): 265-274.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Donnay, Maurice. Ailleurs. Paris: Ollendorff, 1892.

_____. Lysistrata. Paris: Ollendorff, 1893.

_____. Phryné. Paris: Ollendorff, 1894.

_____. Chères madames. Paris: Ollendorff, 1895.

_____. Lysistrata. Nouvelle édition conforme à la représentation du Vaudeville. Paris: Ollendorff, 1896.

_____. L' affranchie. Paris: Ollendorff, 1898.

_____. "Lysistrata." L' Illustration Théâtrale 130 (November 1909): 5-36.

_____. "Les éclaireuses." La Petite Illustration 5 (May 1913): 3-38.

_____. Lovers; The Free Woman; They. Translated into English by Barrett H. Clark. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1915.

_____. La Parisienne et la guerre. Paris: Grès, 1916.

_____. Foreword to Pages inédites sur la femme et la guerre, edited by Alexandre Mellor Paux. Paris: Devambez, 1916.

_____. Premières impressions-après. Paris: Grès, 1917.

_____. Lysistrata. Paris: Fasquelle, 1919.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated into English by Helen Davenport Gibbons. Paris: Fasquelle, 1919.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated into Hungarian by Jeno Heltai. Budapest: R. T. Kiadasa, 1921.

_____. Autour du Chat Noir. Paris: B. Grasset, 1926.

_____. Théâtre. 8 Vols. Paris: Fasquelle, 1908-1927.

_____. Lysistrata. Translated into English by William A. Drake. Foreword by George Jean Nathan. New York: Knopf, 1930.

_____. L' assemblée des femmes. Paris: Les OEuvres Libres, 1931.

_____. Des souvenirs. Paris: A. Fayard, 1933.

_____. Mes Débuts à Paris. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1937.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. J' ai vécu 1900. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1950.

_____. Mon Journal 1919-1939. Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1953.

Donnay, Maurice and J. Marni. Dialogues des courtisanes par Lucienne. Paris: Ollendorff, 1892.

Donnay, Maurice and Jules Lemaître. "Le mariage de Télémaque." L' Illustration Théâtrale 152 (June 1910): 3-32.

Dorziat, G. Côté cour, côté jardin. Paris: Editions de la Palatine, 1968.

Du Fresnay, André. "Notes sur le théâtre de Maurice Donnay." Revue Critique (February 1913): 257-273.

Dullin, Charles. "Poésie et théâtre." Revue d' Histoire du Théâtre 37 (Jan. -March 1985): 7-27.

Dussane, B. J' étais dans la salle. Paris: Mercure de France, 1963.

_____. Dieux des planches. Paris: Flammarion, 1964.

Edmonson, Linda Harriet. Feminism in Russia, 1900-1917. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1984.

Elderkin, G. W. "Aphrodite and Athena in the Lysistrata of Aristophanes." Classical Philology 35 (1940): 387-396.

Elliott, Bridget. "Covent Garden Follies: Beardsley's Masquerade Images of Posers and Voyeurs." Oxford Art Journal 9 (1986): 38-48.

Elliott, Bridget. "New and Not So 'New Women' on the London Stage: Aubrey Beardsley's Yellow Book Images of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Réjane." Victorian Studies 31 (Autumn 1987): 33-57.

Emmel, Felix. Das ekstatische Theater. Prien: Kampmann und Schnabel, 1924.

Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo. 9 vols. Rome: Casa Editrice Le Maschere, 1954-1962.

_____. Aggiornamento 1955-1965. Rome: Unione Editoriale, 1966-1968.

Epstein, Max. Max Reinhardt. Berlin: Winckelmann und Soehne, 1918.

Esslin, Martin. "Max Reinhardt. High Priest of Theatricality." The Drama Review 21 (June 1977): 3-24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Evans, Richard J. The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia, 1840-1920. Rev. edition. London: Croom Helm, 1979.

Eysoldt, Gertrud. "How Reinhardt Works With His Actors." Theatre Arts 5 (October 1921): 316-318.

Faris, Alexander. Jacques Offenbach. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1980.

Feaver, William. Masters of Caricature. Edited by Ann Gould. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

Fehling, Jürgen. Die Magie des Theaters. Hannover: Friedrich, 1965.

Felton, Felix. "Max Reinhardt in England." Theatre Research 5 (1963): 134-142.

Fernandez-Arias, Adelardo and Cuenca, C. L. Lysistrata. Madrid, 1905.

Flannagan, Hallie. Arena. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965.

Fletcher, Kathy. "Aristophanes on the Victorian State: J. R. Planché's Adaptation of The Birds." Theatre Studies 26-27 (1979-1981): 89-98.

Fouquier. H. "Réjane: La reprise de Madame Sans-Gêne." Théâtre 36 (June 1900) 1-6.

Freeman, Joseph, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick. Voices of October. New York: Vanguard Press, 1930.

Freeman, Joseph. An American Testament. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936.

Freydkina, L. Dni i gody Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, letopisv khzni i tvorchestva. Moscow: Bserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1962.

Friedländer, P. "Aristophanes in Deutschland." In Die Antike VIII-IX (1932-1933).

Führich-Leisler, Edda and Gisela Prossnitz. Max Reinhardt in Europa. Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1973.

_____. Max Reinhardt in America. Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1976.

Führich-Leisler, Edda. "Max Reinhardt, der Schauspieler." Maske und Kothurn 3-4 (1984): 295-304.

Fülop-Miller, René. The Mind and Face of Bolshevism. London and New York: Putnam, 1927.

Gaston-Gérard. Devant les trétaux. Paris: Hachette, 1936.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gavault, Paul. Plutus. Music by Xavier Leroux. Paris: H. Simonin Empis, 1896.

Geddes, Norman Bel. A Project for a Theatrical Presentation of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. New York: Theatre Arts Inc., 1924; Boni and Liveright, 1927.

_____. Horizons. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1932.

_____. "The Theatre of the Future." In American Scene Design Catalogue. New York,1919; reprinted in Theatre Arts Anthology. New York,1950.

_____. Miracle in the Evening: An Autobiography. Edited by William Kelley. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1960.

Georges-Michel. Un demi-siècle de gloires théâtrales. Paris: A. Bonne, 1950.

Gesamtverzeichnis des deutschspachingen Schriftums. 1700-1910. Munich, New York, London and Paris: K. G. Saur,1979.

Gidel, Henri. Le vaudeville. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986.

Gorchakov, Nikolai A. The Theatre in Soviet Russia. Translated by Edgar Lehrman. New York: Columbia University Press,1957.

Gorelik, Mordecai. New Theatres for Old. New York: Samuel French, 1941.

Gourfinkel, Nina. Le théâtre russe contemporain. Paris: Editions Albert, 1930.

_____. "L' apport du théâtre étranger au début du XXe siècle." La Revue des Lettres Modernes 3 (April 1954): 3-15.

_____. "L' apport du théâtre étranger au début du siècle." La Revue des Lettres Modernes 4 (May 1954): 18-31.

_____. "La politique théâtrale russe et le réalisme." In Le théâtre moderne, hommes et tendances. Paris: CNRS, 1958.

_____. "La théâtrologie soviétique." Cahiers Théâtre Louvain 9 (1968-69): 15-20.

Granville-Barker, Harley. "The Theatre Exhibition in Berlin." The Times (November 7, 1910): 16.

_____. "The Theatre in Berlin." The Times (November 19, 1910): 6 and (November 21): 12.

_____. "Two German Theatres." Fortnightly Review 89 (January 1911): 60-70.

Gray, Paul. "Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology." The Drama Review 9 (Winter 1964): 21-60.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gregor, Joseph and Fülop-Miller, René. Das Russische Theater. Zurich, Liepzig and Vienna: Amaltheaverlag, 1928.

Greiner, Leo. Lysistrata. Berlin: Dr. Wedekind and Co. G. M. B. H., 1908; Bücher des Deutchen Theaters, 1920.

_____. "The Executioner's Song." In Cabaret Performance. Europe 1890-1920, selected and translated by Laurence Senelick. New York: PAJ Publications, 1989.

Guilleminault, Gilbert. Prélude à la Belle Epoque. Paris: Denoël, 1956.

Guiochet-Jouanny, Sylvie. "Les représentations du succès dans les mémoires d' actrices vers 1900." Littérature et Nation 6 (July 1991): 29-48.

Guitry, Sacha. If memory serves. Translated by Lewis Galantière. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1936.

_____. Le petit carnet rouge et autres souvenirs inédits. Edited by Henri Jadoux. Paris: Perrin, 1979.

Hadamowsky, Franz. Max Reinhardt. Vienna: Georg Prachner, 1963.

_____. "Max Reinhardt and Austria." Translated by Stanley Radcliffe. Theatre Research 5 (1963): 120-127.

Halliday, John. "Censorship in Berlin and Vienna during the First World War: A Comparative View." Modern Language Review 83 (July 1988): 612-626.

Hamilton, Edith. The Greek Way. New York: The Modern Library, 1930.

Hamon-Siregols, Christine. Le Constructivisme au theatre. Paris: C. N. R. S., 1992.

Harris Smith, Susan. "Twentieth Century Plays Using Classical Mythic Themes: A Checklist." Modern Drama 29 (March 1986): 110-132.

Harrison, Fraser. The Dark Angel: Aspects of Victorian Sexuality. London: Sheldon Press, 1977.

Harrison, Tony. The Common Chorus. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1992.

Henderson, John. The First Avant-Garde 1887-1894: Sources of the Modern French Theatre. London: George G. Harrap, 1971.

Henderson, Mary. The City and the Theater. Clifton, New Jersey: James T. White and Co., 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. Theater in America. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986.

_____. Broadway Ballyhoo. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989.

Henry, Marc. Trois villes: Vienne-Munich-Berlin. Paris: Payot, 1917.

_____. Villes et paysages d' Outre-Rhin. Paris: Payot, 1919.

Herald, Heinz. Max Reinhardt. Ein Versuch über das Wesen der modernen Regie. Berlin: F. Lehmann, 1915.

_____. Max Reinhardt. Bildnis eines Theatermannes. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1953.

Herbert, Jan, ed. Who's Who in the Theatre. Detroit: Gale Research, 1981.

Herse, La. (May 1922). Entire issue on Maurice Donnay.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. The Age of the Empire 1875-1914. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.

Hoffman, François Benoit. Médée. Music by Cherubini. Paris: Huet, 1797.

_____. La femme de 45 ans. Paris: Favart, 1799.

_____. Lisistrata ou les Athéniennes. Paris: Huet, 1802.

_____. Les rendez-vous bourgeois. Opera bouffe. 1807.

_____. OEuvres de François Benoit Hoffman. Vols. 1-6. Paris, Lefebre, 1829.

_____. Dialogues Critiques. Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1811; G. Ducasse, 1833.

Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. "Max Reinhardt." Freeman 8 (September 1933): 66-67.

_____. "Prolog geschrieben für die erste Aufführung der 'Lysistrata' des Aristophanes im Deutschen Theater." In Das Deutsche Theater in Berlin, edited by Paul Legband. Munich: Georg Müller, 1909.

Hoover, Marjorie. Meyerhold: The Art of the Conscious Theatre. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974.

Horch, Franz. Die Spielpläne Max Reinhardts 1905-1930. Munich: Piper, 1930.

Horn-Monval, Madeleine. Répertoire bibliographique des traductions et adaptations françaises du théâtre étranger du XVe siècle à nos jours. Vol. 1, Théâtre grec antique. Paris: C. N. R. S., 1958.

Houghton, Norris. Moscow Rehearsals. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Housman, Laurence. Lysistrata. London: The Women's Press, 1911.

_____. Articles of Faith in the Freedom of Women. London: Heretical Booklets, 1910.

_____. "Ignorance in Sex Relations." Lecture delivered at Essex Hall, London, 1911.

_____. "The Relation of Fellowfeeling to Sex." Lecture delivered at the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology, London, 1917.

_____. Laurence Housman 1865-1959. A Brief catalogue of the collection of books, manuscripts and drawings presented to the Street Library by the family of Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clark to mark the centenary of Laurence Housman's birth. Edited by Ivor Kemp. Somerset County Library (Street Branch), 1967. Microfiche.

_____. The Bawling Brotherhood. London: The Women's Press, 1913.

_____. The Unexpected Years. Indianapolis, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1936.

Howard, Diana. Directory of Theatre Resources: a Guide to Research Collections and Information Services. London: The Society for Theatre Research and the Library Association Information Services Group, 1986.

Hughes, Glenn. A History of the American Theatre 1700-1950. New York: Samuel French, 1951.

Hunter, Frederick J. Catalog of the Norman Bel Geddes Theatre Collection. Austin. Texas: Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, 1973.

_____. "Norman Bel Geddes." The Texas Quarterly 5 (Winter 1962).

Illustrierte Klassiker des Deutschen Theaters nach Inszenierungen von Max Reinhardt. Berlin: 1912.

Izard, Forrest. Heroines of the Modern Stage. New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1915.

Jacobsohn, Siegfried. Das Jahr der Bühne I-X. Berlin: Österheld, 1912-1921.

_____. Max Reinhardt. Berlin: E. Reiss, 1910.

Jacquinet, P. "François Hoffman, sa vie, ses oeuvres." In Mémoires de l' Académie Stanislas. Vol. 10. Nancy, 1878; Burger Levrault, 1878.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Janssen-Jurreit, Marielouise. Sexism: The Male Monopoly on History and Thought. Translated by Verne Moberg. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982.

Jelavich, Peter. Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance 1890-1914. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Jhering, Herbert. Regisseure und Bühnenmaler. Berlin-Wilmersdorf: Dibyllenverlag, 1921.

_____. Max Reinhardt, Jessner, Piscator oder Klassikertod? Berlin: Rowohlt, 1929.

_____. Berliner Dramaturgie. Berlin: Aufbau, 1947.

_____. Von Reinhardt bis Brecht. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1967.

Joll, James. Europe since 1870. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973.

Jomaron, Jacqueline de, ed. Le théâtre en France. Paris: Armand Colin, 1992.

Jones, Lynne, ed. Keeping the Peace: A Woman's Peace Handbook. London: The Women's Press, 1983.

Kahane, Arthur. Tagebuch des Dramaturgen. Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1928.

Kahane, Henry. "Arthur Kahane, Reinhardt's Dramaturge." Theatre Research International 4 (October 1978): 59-65.

Kamester, Margaret and Jo Vallacott, eds. Militarism Versus Feminism: Writings on Women and War. London: Virago, 1987.

Kerr, Walter. Journey to the Center of the Theatre. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979.

Kindermann, H. Mélanges. Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1975.

King, Beatrice. "Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, Greatest Figure in 20th Century Theatre." Anglo Soviet Jour 4 (1943): 153-160.

Knudsen, Hans. "Max Reinhardt in Berlin." Translated by Estelle Morgan and H. Winter. Theatre Research 5 (1963): 128-133.

Komisarjevsky, Theodore. Myself and the Theatre. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1930.

Kortner, Fritz. Aller Tage Abend. Munich: Kindler, 1959.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. Die Sendung der Lysistrata. Filmscript. Munich: Verlegt bei Kindler, 1961.

Koun, Karolos. Kanoume theatro gia ten psukhe mas. Athens: Kastaniotes, 1987.

Krutch, Joseph Wood. The American Drama since 1918. New York: Random House. 1939.

Kueppers, Brigitte. "Max Reinhardt's 'Sumurun'". The Drama Review 24 (March 1980): 75-84.

La Villehervé, Robert de. Lysistratè. Paris: Ollendorff, 1896.

Lacour, L. "Maurice Donnay." Revue de Paris (January1903): 379-400.

Langner, Laurence. The Magic Curtain. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1951.

Lannoy, L. de. "Lysistrata." Mnemosyne 44 (1991): 201-204.

Larroumet, Gustave. Le Centenaire de Scribe. Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1892.

Larson, Orville. Scene Design in the American Theatre From 1915 to 1960. Fayetteville, London: The University of Arkansas Press, 1989.

Law, Alma H. "Meyerhold's 'The Magnanimous Cuckold'." The Drama Review 26 (Spring 1982): 61-86.

Le Brun, Maurice. Maurice Donnay. Paris: Bibliothèque internationale d' édition, 1903.

Lecocq, Charles. Plutus. Opera. Paris: M. Lévy, 1880.

Legband, Paul, ed. Das Deutsche Theater in Berlin. Munich: G. Müller, 1909.

Lejeal, Gustave. "Le mouvement féministe." Revue Encyclopédique (1893): 585-596.

Lemaître, Jules. Impressions de theatre. Vol. 5. Paris: Societe Francaise d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1901.

_____. Theatrical Impressions. Selected and translated by Frederic Whyte. New York: Kennikat Press, 1924.

_____. Selections from "Impressions de théâtre". Edited by Russell Scott, 1930.

Lemonnier, L. "Le théâtre de Maurice Donnay." La Grande Revue (September 1922): 422-445.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lenin, V. I. The Emancipation of Women. New York: International Publishers. 1978.

Lincke, Paul. The Glow-Worm. Song from the operetta Lysistrata, words by Lilla Cayley Robinson. London: Hawkes and Son, 1905.

Loden, Brigitte. Max Reinhardts Massenregie auf der Guckkastenbühne von 1905 bis 1910: ein Versuch zu Darstellungsmittel und Regieintention. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1976.

Loraux, Nicole. Les enfants d'Athéna. Paris: François Maspero, 1981; Seuil, 1990.

Lorcey, Jacques. Sacha Guitry: cent ans de théâtre et d' esprit. Paris: editions PAC, 1985.

Lounatcharsky, Anatoli Vassilievitch. Théâtre et révolution. Paris: François Maspero, 1971.

Lucas, Hippolyte. Les nuées. Paris: C. Tresse; Pernin, 1844.

Lucie-Smith, Edward. The Art of Caricature. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Lugné-Poë, Aurélien-François. Dernière pirouette. Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1946.

Mabille, P. Le communisme et le féminisme à Athènes. Paris: Fourneau Libraire. 1900.

Macdonald, Sharon, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener, eds. Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.

Macgowan, Kenneth and Robert Edmond Jones. Continental Stagecraft. London: Benn Brothers Ltd., 1923.

Macgowan, Kenneth. "American Note-book Abroad." Theatre Arts Monthly 6 (October 1922): 299-312.

_____. Footlights Across America. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929.

Magarshack, David. Stanislavsky: A Life. London: Faber and Faber, 1986.

Mallock, W. H. "Women in Parliament." The Nineteenth Century (August 1912): 292-318.

Markov, Pavel Aleksandrovich. Rezhissura Vl. I. Nemirovicha-Danchenko v muzykalnom teatre. Moscow: Vserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1960.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. The Soviet Theatre. New York: B. Blom,1972.

Marks, Elaine. "'Sapho 1900.' Imaginary Renée Viviens and the Rear of the Belle Epoque." Yale French Studies 75 (1988): 175-189.

Marquet, M. Les impérissables. Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1948.

Maske und Kothurn 16 (1970). Entire issue on Max Reinhardt.

Maske und Kothurn 19 (1973). Entire issue on Max Reinhardt.

Masson, J-Y., ed. Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Textes, études, témoignages. Revue Littéraire Bimestrielle. Hors Série, 1990.

Mates. Julian. America's Musical Stage: Two Hundred Years of Musical Theatre. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Matskin, A. Portrety i nablyudeniya. Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1973.

Max Reinhardt 1873-1943. An Exhibition Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of His Death. Catalogue. Edited by Alfred G. Brooks. Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives,1968.

Max Reinhardt. An Exhibition of Theatrical Designs and Historical Materials from the State University of New York at Binghamton Theatre Collections. Catalogue. Edited by Allan S. Jackson. Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1970.

Max Reinhardt 1873-1973. An Exhibition Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of His Birth. Catalogue. Edited by Alfred G. Brooks. Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1973.

Mazon, Paul. Essai sur la composition des comédies d' Aristophane. Paris: Hachette, 1904.

McMullen, Sally. "From the Armchair to the Stage: Hofmannsthal's 'Elektra' in its Theatrical Context." Modern Language Review 80 (July 1985): 637-651.

Meilhac, Henri and Ludovic Halévy. La belle Hélène. Music by Jacques Offenbach. L' Avant Scène Opéra 125 (November 1989): 25-83.

Mendès, Catulle. L' art du théâtre. Paris: Fasquelle, 1897-1900.

Meunier, Dauphin. "Madame Réjane." The Yellow Book. (July 1894): 197-199.

Meyerhold, V. E. Meyerhold on Theatre. Translated and edited with a commentary by Edward Braun. New York: Hill and Wang, 1969.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. Ecrits sur le théâtre. Edited and translated by Béatrice Picon-Valin. Lausanne: La Cité, L' Age d' Homme, 1975.

_____. The Theatre of Meyerhold: Revolution on the Modern Stage. Edited and translated by Edward Braun. New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1979.

Millaud, Albert and Gaston Jollivet. Plutus. Paris: M. Lévy, 1873.

Miquel, Pierre. Au temps de la Belle Epoque. Paris: Hachette, 1989.

Mirsky, D. S. A History of Russian Literature. Edited by F. J. Whitfield. New York: 1949.

Modern Drama 12 (1969). Entire Issue on Greek myth in modern drama.

_____. 29 (March 1986). Entire Issue on the classical heritage of modern drama.

Mordden, Ethan. The American Theatre. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Morris, Lloyd. Curtain Time: The Story of the American Theatre. New York: Random House, 1953.

Moses, Montrose and John Mason Brown. American Theatre as Seen by Its Critics. New York: W. W. Norton, 1934.

Moskvin, I. The Soviet Theatre. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939.

Nakhoph, J. M. "E kleronomia tou Aristophane." In Aristophanes. Meletes. Translated from the Russian into Greek by M. Garides. Athens: Mokhlos, 1957.

Nemirovich-Danchenko, Vl. My Life in the Russian Theatre. Translated by John Cournos. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937.

_____. Dni i Gody. Moscow: Vserossiyskoe Teatralvnoe Obshchestvo, 1962.

New York Times Directory of the Theater. New York: Arno Press, 1973.

New York Times Theatre Reviews 1920-1970. 10 vols. New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1977.

Newman-Gordon, Pauline. Hélène de Sparte: la fortune du mythe en France. Paris: Debresse, 1968.

Nozière, Fernand. Les oiseaux. After Aristophanes, in the translation of Th. Lascaris. Paris: Ed. de l' OEuvre, 1911.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Odell, George. Annals of the New York Stage. 15 Vols. Columbia University Press. 1927-1949.

Paech, Joachim. Das Theater der russischen Revolution. Berlin: Scriptor Verlag. 1974.

Pankhurst, Christabel. "The War." A speech delivered at the London Opera House on September 8th, 1914, sponsored by the Women's Social and Political Union.

Paris-Moscou 1900-1930. Exhibition Catalogue. Centre Nationale d' Art et de Culture, Georges Pompidou. 2nd rev. edition. Paris: 1979.

Patterson, Michael. The Revolution in German Theatre,1900-1933. Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

Pearson, Anthony. "The Cabaret Comes to Russia; the Theatre of Small Forms as a Cultural Catalyst." Theatre Quarterly 9 (1980): 31-44.

Pilikian, H. "Max Reinhardt and Total Theater." Drama 91 (Winter 1968): 45-50.

Pillement, G. Anthologie du théâtre Français contemporain. Le théâtre du boulevard. Paris: Editions du Bélier, 1946.

Pinthus, Kurt. "Max Reinhardt and the U. S. A." Theatre Research 5 (1963): 151-163.

Poggi, Jack. Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968.

Porel, Jacques. Fils de Réjane. Souvenirs 1895-1920. 2 Vols. Paris: Librairie Plon. 1951.

Porel, Paul and Jules Huret. "Réjane." Théâtre 36 (June 1900): 8-32.

Preddy, Jane. "Costumes and Clowns: Bizarre Projects of Norman Bel Geddes." Journal of Popular Culture 20 (Fall 1986): 29-39.

Purdom, C. B. Harvey Granville Barker. Man of the Theatre, Dramatist and Scholar. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1956.

Quéant, Gilles, ed. Encyclopédie du théâtre contemporain. Vol I: 1850-1914. Paris: Les Publications de France, 1957. Vol. II: 1914-1950. Paris: Olivier Perrin, 1959.

Rearick, Charles. Pleasures of the Belle Epoque. Entertainment and Festivity in Turn-of-the-Century France. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Reed, Joseph Verner. The Curtain Falls. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reily, Catherine W., ed. Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War. London: Virago, 1981.

Reinhardt, Gottfried. The Genius: A Memoir of Max Reinhardt by His Son. New York: Knopf, 1979.

Reinhardt, Max. "Conversation with Dantchenko." The New York Times (August 22 1926): sec. IV, p. 16.

_____. Foreword to A Project for a Theatrical Presentation of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, by Norman Bel Geddes. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927.

_____. Ausgewählte Briefe, Reden, Schriften und Scenen aus Regiebüchern. Edited by Franz Hadamowsky. Vienna: Prachner, 1963.

_____. "Of Actors." In Max Reinhardt 1873-1973. A Centennial Festschrift, edited by E. Wellwarth and G. Brooks. Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1973.

_____. Max Reinhardt Schriften. Edited by Hugo Fetting. Berlin: Henschelverlag, Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1974.

Réjane, Gabrielle. Loges et coulisses. Réjane racontée par elle même. Paris: Editions de la Revue Blanche, 1901.

_____. "On Dramatic Art." National Review 41 (March-August 1903): 959-968.

Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre 37 (Jan. -Mar. 1985). Entire issue on Charles Dullin.

Richardson, Joanna. The Courtesans: The Demi-Monde in Nineteenth Century France. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1967.

Richepin, Jacques. Xantho chez les courtisanes. Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1910.

_____. La grève des femmes. Paris: Fasquelle, 1919.

Rudnitsky, Konstantin. Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932. Translated by Roxane Permar. Edited by Lesley Milne. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988.

Russell, Robert and Andrew Barratt, eds. Russian Theatre in the Age of Modernism. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Sackett, Robert, E., ed. Popular Entertainment, Class and Politics in Munich, 1900-1923. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Sarcey, Francisque. Quarante ans de théâtre. 8 vols. Paris: Hachette 1900-1901.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sayler, Oliver, ed. Max Reinhardt and his Theatre. New York: Brentano, 1924.

Sayler, Oliver. Inside the Moscow Art Theatre. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1925.

Schneidereit, Otto. Paul Lincke und die Entstehung der Berliner Operette. Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1981.

Scribe, Eugène and G. Lemoine. Une femme qui se jette par la fenêtre. Paris: Beck. 1847.

Segel, Harold. Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Seigel, Jerrold. Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930. New York: Viking, 1986.

Seldes, Gilbert. The Seven Lively Arts. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1924.

_____. "Adapting Lysistrata." Theatre Guild Magazine (October 1930): 60-62.

Shattuck, Roger. The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France. 1885 to W.W. I. Revised edition. New York: Vintage, 1968.

Sideres, Giannis. To arkhaio theatro ste nea ellenike skene. Vol. 1, 1817-1932. Athens: Ikaros, 1976.

Simonson, Lee. The Stage is Set. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1932.

Smith, Bonnie G. Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Smolin, D, trans. Lysistrata. Translated into English by George S. and Gilbert Seldes. In Plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio. New York: Brentano's, 1925.

Stanislavski, Constantin. My Life in Art. Translated by J. J. Robbins. London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1924; Methuen, 1980.

Stern, Ernst and Heinz Herald, eds. Max Reinhardt und seine Bühne. Berlin: Dr. Eysler and Co., 1918.

Stern, Ernst. My Life, My Stage. Translated by Edward Fitzgerald. London: Gollancz, 1951.

_____. Bühnenbildner bei Max Reinhardt. Berlin: Henschel, 1955.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Stopes, C. "The Greek Satirist on Women." The Humanitarian 5 (November 1897): 237-241.

Stoullig, E. Les annales du théâtre et de la musique 1910. Paris: Ollendorff, 1911.

Stowell, Donald C., Jr. "The New Costuming in America: The Ideas and Practices of Robert Edmond Jones, Norman Bel Geddes, Lee Simonson and Aline Bernstein, 1915-1935." Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1972.

Styan, J. L. Max Reinhardt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Surel-Tupin, Monique. Charles Dullin. Louvain-la-Neuve: Cahiers Théâtre Louvain. 1985.

_____. "Les oiseaux d'Aristophane chez monsieur Dullin." In Cahiers Renaud Barrault. (February 1985): 91-111.

Symons, Arthur. Dramatis Personae. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1923.

Taubman, Howard. The Making of the American Theatre. New York: Coward. McCanne Geoghegan, 1965.

Traubner, Richard. Operetta. A Theatrical History. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1989.

Ussher, R. G. "Aristophanes' Lysistrata." American Journal of Philology 110 (Fall 1989): 502-509.

Veinstein, André, ed. Bibliothèques et musées des arts du spectacle dans le monde. Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1960.

Volbach, Walther. "Memoirs of Max Reinhardt's Theatres 1920-1922." Theatre Survey 8 (Fall 1972): 1-92.

Walker, R. A. The Best of Beardsley. London: Chancellor Press, 1983.

Wellwarth, E. and G. Brooks, eds. Max Reinhardt 1873-1973. A Centennial Festschrift. Binghamton, New York: Max Reinhardt Archives, 1973.

Wicks, Charles Beaumont. The Parisian Stage: Alphabetical Indexes of Plays and Authors. 4 vols.. University of Alabama Press, 1950-1967.

Willett, John. Art and Politics in the Weimar Period. The New Sobriety 1917-1933. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Williams, William Carlos. Selected Essays. New York: New Directions, 1954.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Worrall, Nick. "Meyerhold's 'The Magnificent Cuckold'." The Drama Review 17 (March 1973): 14-34.

Yon, André. Dictionnaire des critiques littéraires. London: University Park, 1969.

Yurka, Blanche. Bohemian Girl. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1970.

Zimmer, Bernard. Les oiseaux. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1928.

Zola, Emile. Le Naturalisme au théâtre. Paris: Charpentier, 1912.

Archival Material

Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Paris, Rondell Collection. Files on Lysistrata (Rf 57,025 Vols. I, II and III), Maurice Donnay, Gabrielle Réjane (RT 10,327) and Cora Laparcerie (Rt 8497).

Max Reinhardt-Forschungs-und-Gedenkstaette, Salzburg. File on Lysistrata.

The Max Reinhardt Archive, Special Collection, Glenn G. Bartle Library, Binghamton University, State University of New York. Files on Lysistrata and Ernst Stern.

The Museum of the City of New York, Theatre Archives, New York. Files on Lysistrata, Lee and J. J. Shubert and Norman Bel Geddes.

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York. Files on Lysistrata, The Moscow Art Theatre, Norman Bel Geddes and Max Reinhardt.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.